

HASS JOURNAL INTRODUCTION

2024-2025

At OPGS Sixth Form we allow our students to follow their own routes of academic inquiry. At the end of Year 12 students in the HASS (Humanities, Arts and Social Science) Faculty submitted research projects for publication in this journal. I have selected the best and most diverse entries for this edition. Happy reading!

Ms A Hern
Director of Sixth Form

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CAMERON JONES

Since the 2024 general election, polling has shown a shift away from the standard, two party system of the Conservative and Labour parties. Instead, we see the rise of the Reform party, since the end of 2024, headed by Nigel Farage. This moves the UK towards a multiparty system, instead of its traditional two party system. Meaning, that instead of two main parties dominating polling and controlling the majority of the seats in the House of Commons and therefore debate, we are looking towards a multiparty prospect where Reform becomes a dominant competitor towards these two main parties, taking seats and polling points, allowing for more open and diverse debates and scrutiny. One could argue that the end of the two-party system is approaching, due to the fact that Reform has been able to secure support and council position across the country, displaying a shift in public opinion in regard to important matters like, immigration and policing.

However, they are still a minor party and much like Farage’s previous parties (UKIP + BREXIT

Party), blips like these are common after a new government comes into power, and often do not last long enough to see the next general election

One might argue that the 2025 elections show that the UK has seen ‘the end of two-party system in regard to the parliamentary level. Since the 2024 general election, where Labour won a landslide majority of 411¹ seats. This was compared to that of the 119 seats given to the conservatives and the five seats received by Reform UK, Reform has continued to remain in the headlines, with its leader involving himself in controversial topics like immigration and British identity, allowing for his party to remain relevant for a longer extent than his previous parties. This means that as of the 2nd of May 2025, Reform is polling on the Politico website, 3% higher than Labour and 7% higher than the conservatives at 27%². These polls have been brought to life by the recent win by Reform in the constituency of Runcorn and Helsby by-election, which saw Reform win a sixth seat, holding 38.72%³ of the vote

with a relatively high turnout rate for by-elections of 46.2%. Considering Runcorn has traditionally been a Labour safe seat, it could be argued that public opinion has shifted in a way that would allow for the two-party system to end, encouraging new ideas and perspectives in the House of Commons on a dominate level. However, the stronger argument is that 2025 elections does not show that the UK has seen ‘the end of two-party system in regard to the parliamentary level. While at first glance it does seem as though Reform is on its way to dominating UK politics in the near future, one must first look at the wider context of public opinion. As of April 25th, 2025, over 70% of those polled on the YouGov website⁴, stated that they disapproved of Kier Starmer, the Labour leader. This is likely caused by the disillusionment of Labour’s policies, after a tough year of tax increases and increased military spending in the face of Donald Trump. Furthermore, Kier Starmer’s handling of Trump although at times applauded for his diplomacy, has ultimately come off as weak, with over 70% of Brits desiring the UK to stand up to trump while only 30% wishing to build a positive relationship with the Trump administration, according to YouGov polling⁵. Many also fear the repercussion to the UK economy in regard to tariffs (10% flat rate tax⁶) and Trumps uneasy and of-

“the reform party has been able to secure 677 councillors”

ten times erratic approach to foreign policy in regard to Ukraine and Canada, has left the UK having to find money to protect itself against foreign threats like Russia. In summary, although the reform party has recently performed well in certain areas of the country, managing to gain control of a sixth seat in Runcorn, it is likely that these polls are based on the recent uncertainty caused by trump with many turning to more extremist parties, wanting a firmer grasp on the situation. Having had the conservatives for 14 years and now Labour since 2024, many voters have become apathetic towards there two main parties due to their continued broken promises and lies, like that of Keir Starmer’s new Welfare reform acts, which adds to the shift in public opinion. Therefore, while for now, public opinion is in favour of Reform and its ideology, the end of the two-party system is not near with many of the wins for Reform coming off the back of bigotry and resentment caused by

fear mongering towards the government and immigrants.

One might argue that the 2025 elections show that the UK has seen ‘the end of two-party system in regard to the local government level. The county council elections have seen reform take control of a majority of the seats able to be competed in, with them winning 10 out of 23 councils. The con-

servative lost 16 of these councils, labour lost 1. This means that the reform party has been able to secure 677 councillors, giving them control and influence on a local level⁷. This shows a pull away from the two-party system, especially since the conservatives often dominated council elections in the past.

Furthermore, Reform was able to win by a large percentage in many of these council:

Chadsmoor, Staffordshire - 62.9%, Romney Marsh Kent - 63.6% and Thornley & Wheatley Hill, county Durham - 65.1%⁸. However, the stronger agreement is that the 2025 elections shows that the UK has not seen 'the end of two-party system in regard to the local government level. While reform did win 10 out of the 23 councils in the recent elections⁹. The total amount of councils in the UK is 382 with 317¹⁰ in England alone. This means that although reform did manage gain over 677 new councillors and 10 councils, it is more so insignificant in the grand scheme of things. Moreover, in total there is approximately 20,000 local councillors in the UK¹¹. In the 2023 local elections, Labour won, 6,507 seats and the Conservatives won, 5,702 for comparison¹². In conclusion, while Reform has been able to take control of the majority of councils and councillors' seats available in the recent elections, which would let in influence policy and expand its message to more

“Reform did win 10 out of the 23 councils in the recent elections.”

of the electorate, the majority of their councils won are concentrated in the midland, with only two in the north and one in the south-east. This paints the picture that while some areas are convinced by Reforms ideas, many are still not, which means that while gains have been made, it is not enough

as of the 2025 elections to have much impact on the status quo.

One might argue that the 2025 elections show that the UK has seen 'the end of two-party system in regard to the Mayoral level. In the 2025 elections there was six mayoral positions. Reform managed to win two out of these six. They won in Greater Lincolnshire and Hull and East Yorkshire. In Lincolnshire they won with 42% of the vote compared to the Conservatives 26.1%. In Hull and Yorkshire, they won with 35.8% of the vote compared to the Lib Dems, 27.7%. The reform party was also able to compete tightly with the traditional parties in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (28.4% went to the conservatives, 23.4% went to Reform) along with Doncaster (reduced the labour majority by 698 votes)¹³. This means that Reform has become overwhelmingly more popular, with them being able to take over traditional party strongholds and contest them tightly. This could also mean that the public are now more willing to vote for whom they

truly believe is the best candidate instead of the sticking to the safety of picking a traditional party. However, the stronger agreement is that the 2025 elections shows that the UK has not seen 'the end of two-party system in regard to the mayoral level. Although Reform, managed to gain two out of six mayoral positions¹⁴ and was able to compete heavily with another two, once again this is small in comparison to the wider picture. Furthermore, the places in which they won, often had voted in favour of leaving the EU along with opposing the winter fuel tax, a matter that Ros Jones complained about in her acceptance speech (Mayor for Doncaster¹⁵). This means that while they did win seats it was only in areas with high concentrations of voters who felt unheard and unseen by both major parties in regard to Brexit and recent legislation. This indicates that like the other elections, it is based heavily on current events and feeling towards that, rather than long term commitment to a certain ideology. Many of the electorate are ex-conservative voters, which indicates that if the conservatives were to gain a strong leader and replace Kemi Badenoch, then they may revert back, thereby indicating that these results and polling are only temporary, and even if they are not, currently, they are still unable to end the two-party sys-

“one might argue that the 2025 elections show that the UK has seen ‘the end of two-party system,’

tem. In summary, while Reform UK has made gains, just like with the council elections, their influence is concentrated around the midlands, which results in their national influence likely not being enough to end the two-party system as of 2025.

In conclusion, one might argue that the 2025 elections show that the UK has seen 'the end of two-party system, due to the recent rise of the Reform Party, in which they have taken control over 10 councils, two mayoral positions and added one seat in the House of Commons. these achievements, provides legitimacy and mandate for the Reform party to potentially challenge that of its rival traditional parties. The recent elections, displays a clear lack of apathy and engagement from the public in regard to maintaining the status quo. After 14 years of Conservative rule and a weak start for Kier Starmer's Labour government, the electorate appears to be drifting away from the traditional parties, seeking more radical and impactful polices. Since Brexit, the UK economy has not been growing has quickly, with many suffering from the Covid-19 and the recent recession causing job losses and a decreased standard of living for much of the working and middle class, with interest rates at 4.5%. The electorate now having seen how both parties at-

tempt to deal with the growing situation, and in many local cases failing, especially in regard to cutting NHS wait times and reducing waste and bankruptcy by local councils like Medway. Therefore, Reform is appearing as a viable option, which could possibly encourage radical change and a reverse to 'British Values' which it is growing in popularity due

The Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill 2025 also aims at strengthening law enforcement's ability to combat organised immigration crime.

to fear mongering around Muslims and immigrants, an issue amplified during the summer riots, which Kier Starmer was heavily criticised for. However, the stronger argument is that 2025 elections does not show that the UK has seen the end of two-party system. Although, public opinion has shifted in many circumstances, these opinions are likely to shift over the next 4 years. As of 8th May 2025, new trade deals between the UK and India / USA have been announced, which should combat growing fears over investment and job opportunities in the UK. This in turn should increase economic growth within the UK, and therefore reduce the cost-of-living crisis. Furthermore, the Bank of England has announced a reduction in interest rates from 4.5% to 4.25%, which should encourage savers and businesses to spend and consume more. In regard to immigration, the Labour Party has

also begun implementing immigration reforms, aimed at reducing net migration and enhancing integration. These include a new requirement for immigrants to demonstrate English proficiency at an A level standard rather than

a GCSE-level requirement. The Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill 2025 also aims at strengthening law enforcement's

ability to combat organised immigration crime. These policies, over the next 4 years should, reduce fears over immigration and the economy, which would shift many voters' opinions more towards the centre right, voting for the conservatives again and away from the more far right views found in the Reform Party. Furthermore, due to the Reform party's recent creation, many of its members are not loyal to the party as they have not been associated with it for as many years as other traditional parties, it has also seemingly attracted many members who seek their own individual success not just the parties and in turn Nigel Farage. This can and has caused rifts within the party, especially on more controversial policies, which could lead to a rebellion within the party, dashing any hopes of becoming the opposition party let alone the governing party.

Footnotes & appendix

CAMERON JONES

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How does John Donne manage the experience of space and distance in the following poem?

JOHN DONNE'S 'THE GOOD-MORROW'

IFAN BAMBURY

In three seven-line stanzas, John Donne draws out then destroys spatial boundaries as he distils space and distance into language and structure. In my analysis, I use Donne's metaphor of the cave, viewing him, before his experience, as one of the 'Seven Sleepers' trapped in the claustrophobic environment of ignorance. However, after the sexual or romantic encounter (although still within the cave) his new powers give him the ability to widen all physical constraints – his soul from his body, his body from the cave, space from the lack of space.

I use the cave as part of my own analogy – arguing that Donne introduces and never leaves the tight space, widening the location to "an every-where". The good-morrow is perfectly reflective of the metaphysical genre of poetry that Donne pioneered, with his use of conceit and extended metaphor explor-

ing transcending, abstract concepts. The space and distance exemplified ranges from duality, universe, adventure, cartography, to the rhyme scheme itself. These can be separated into two distinct categories: the physical and the metaphysical. Donne's writing is demonstrative of his cultural background: the Elizabethan "Age of Exploration". Donne uses these themes to manipulate the reader's perception of boundary.

But establishing how Donne creates this effect is half of the whole key in unlocking the poem, the other half lies in why he exploits space

and distance. The poem is a demonstration of his own battle between his rationality and his desires. Arguably, the poem is modelled on Donne's own reality: "the beloved addressed in The good-morrow must be Anne More Donne". He fell in love with

and married the daughter of Sir George More who he worked for. They were wed in secret, aware of More's distaste for Donne, partly based on the poet's Catholicism. More imprisoned Donne after the truth was uncovered. Such a backstory animates the poem and the cave as a demonstration of the rigid structure of Donne's stifling father-

in-law. The parity to Donne's later life is supported by his maturity in the poem, as opposed to his earlier erotic works. He is not pessimistic in the face of More's restraints, for this physical boundary has no effect upon the narrator. He can transcend human limits due to the love that he feels. He remains within secrecy's cave but can experience a sort of freedom. Donne's employment of the rhyme scheme enhances this concept and intensifies the distance and space that he outlines.

1. The Distance of the Metaphysical

Stanza one establishes the shape of the cave – there is little distance, and none of the supernatural experiences of later. He focusses on the "country pleasures" of sensory experiences that he "suck'd on... childishly". The verb "suck'd" is tri-faceted. He emphasises innocence, whilst incorporating sexual undertones,

or is referring to breastfeeding. Alternatively, he is suggesting that although he engaged in some erotic acts, it is only Anne who has fully woken him. Here is an example of a small distance (the act requires extreme closeness) in a reference to his

mother who was "one of the two omnipresent women in his life". This maternal figure is

replaced by his wife Anne, as seen in the poem. Donne introduces the allusion of the "seven sleepers den", a story recounted by ancient authors about seven people in Ephesus who hid in a cave to escape persecution, sleeping for 187 years before being forced awake by a farm owner, after which they discovered a new Christian world. When he describes himself as having "snorted" in this den, zoomorphism dehumanises his past self, suggesting that he developed into a human form after finding his partner. The metaphor of the cave strikes distinct parallels to Plato's Allegory of the Cave – he is like the prisoner who finds the true meanings of the shadows before him and the "cause of all those things that he and his companions used to behold". He is exculpated from the fetters of ignorance and becomes aware of reality. Unlike the prisoner, Donne does not leave the cave to become enlightened but is awakened by an internal con-

"dehumanises his past self, suggesting that he developed into a human form after finding his partner."

nection.

John Donne demonstrates a boyish humour in the CCC rhyme section of Stanza one – he desired her but all he got was “but a dream of thee”, referring to his time before marriage. This is typical of Donne’s wit – he reminds her of his sexual experience (“all pleasures fancies be”) but then shifts the perspective back onto flattery (“if ever any beauty I did see”). This is not to incite a jealous response but highlighting to Anne that he only experiences her in the metaphysical, setting her apart from all previous physical lovers. Using the dramatic present throughout the poem gives an immediacy to his writing and his direct personal address closes the distance between himself and the reader, who he intended to be Anne. He is demonstrating that they are always close.

“John Donne demonstrates a boyish humour in the CCC rhyme section of Stanza one”

The volta in Stanza two models the arduous path of Plato’s freed prisoner – opening the true perception of reality: “And now good morrow to our waking soules”. At this point Donne explores metaphysical qualities to contrast the previous limited distance and space. Donne’s relationship with his wife is spiritual (“soules”), whilst his connection to his mother was physical (“suck’d”). This stanza is where he has replaced the maternal-

istic position of his mother with his wife - Anne More Donne, who he “married in daredevil secret” . Donne’s use of the conjunction “and now” as a seg-way into the world of the soul imbues the delay and space of time. The good-morrow itself is duplex – both representing actual morning after a night before (with sexual undertones) but also the awakening of his soul to this new way of life, post conversion experience.

In his poetry Donne prefers large spaces, deeming the human frame “too narrow” in *Of the Progress of the Soul: The Second Anniversary* where he bemoans the scientific discoveries contradicting long held beliefs about the body – relevant in our time where scientists look to examine the universe from the greatest to the smallest detail and meddle with consciousness through the development of AI. James Joehoon Lee describes how Donne’s poems “play with the idea of the two souls as a way to define the relationship of two lovers” , and I’d agree that this is apparent in *The Good-Morrow*. Using both the Aristotelean tripartite view of the soul with three levels of ability and the Christian understanding of the soul as eternal and essential for salvation, Donne highlights where

his Classical soul dominated over the Christian. Aquinas describes the Christian soul that “orders itself by its own reasoning”, in contrast to the sensitive and appetitive aspect of Aristotle’s. Donne was aware of the dangers of marriage to the daughter of the Chancellor of the Order of the Garter, but he allowed natural passion to overcome his logos, irrespective of the consequences.

Inviting the reader into the unrestricted space of souls emphasises their closeness. Even in the vast expanse of “everywhere”, they still have the desire to have their “two loves be one”. They do not “watch each other out of fear” but are confident that in the whole large vessel of the universe they will still be drawn to another – they are not jealous. Donne, who is the “great exemplar” of metaphysical poetry uses the “essential nature of reality” as a vehicle for showing genuine affection that’s pure,

“a vehicle for showing genuine affection that’s pure, strong and true.”

strong and true. I would argue that Donne finds this space in the metaphysical comforting – it allows the pair to shake off the many constraints of the body and the physical world, a spatial concept popular with metaphysical poets: “O, who shall from this dungeon raise / A soul enslaved so many ways?” (Andrew Marvell, *A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body*).

2. The Distance of the Physical

In the middle stanza, we begin to see the metaphysical dominate the physical, in a way that did not occur before the volta. The cave’s constraint becomes meaningless – he now has powers to expand the fabric of existence. The poet juxtaposes their lack of power in the claustrophobic cave with the love that “of other sights controules”. They haven’t escaped the cave, but their perception of the cave has fundamentally changed, they can make “one little room an everywhere”. The lovers, unlike the Sleepers, aren’t allowed to leave the cave but open it up. These expanses are a direct juxtaposition to the claustrophobic Stanza one.

Donne himself was seafaring, being involved with “the Cadiz expedition of 1596, on which Donne had gone as a gentleman-volunteer”. He uses his knowledge of exploration as a metaphor to encapsulate the love between him and Anne More Donne. He introduces the concept that they themselves are “sea-discoverers” still within the cave, that has become “an everywhere”. The worlds he describes are symbols for he and his wife – they are new areas for them both to explore physically and

psychologically. Donne especially “insists on his oneness”, repeating it three times in the final line of the stanza. He craves this unity after the “rift that marked... that earlier relationship with his mother”. There is a contrast between the immense space and he and Anne’s close connection. This intensifies their bond – they themselves “hath one world” but can also share the “singleness of the world”. It highlights the magnetism of the two, they inevitably come together within this conceit.

Towards the end of the poem, Donne introduces cartography as an image of his romance: “cordiform or heart-shaped maps which were the creation of sixteenth-century cartographers”. Maps allow the poet to “play with space”. Donne, through this metaphor, is intending to express that their hearts are “two... hemispheres”; they both are necessary to the relationship – there is no united “one world” without “Sharpe Northe” and “declining West”.

Donne’s poem ends with a satisfying resolution that embodies space within time. He concludes with the optimistic view that “none can die”. But Anne passed away at 33 in childbirth to their twelfth child – “their love killed her in childbirth.”. This had a profound effect on Donne, never writing another love poem

or remarrying – he “treasured [her] long after she had passed”. Even after physical death, she lived on in his daily memories, and then within the afterlife. Donne’s conclusion is that even if the physical degrades, the metaphysical will live on all throughout eternity. Donne’s final line is drawing upon the Renaissance tradition of a poem holding the life of a love, as explored in Shakespeare’s Sonnet 18: “so long as men can breathe and eyes can see, / so long lives this and gives life to thee.”.

3. The Distance within the Structure and Rhyme

Although Donne’s language is the primary tool to emphasise and outline clear spatial boundaries, structure is equally as effective. He divides the poem into three stanzas of equal length – a rigid structure, supporting the idea that the whole poem is spent within this metaphorical cave, but inside (through language) he can expand limits through his psychological power.

Moreover, I believe that the number of lines per stanza intentionally equates to the number of “Seven Sleepers”, which extends support for the structural representation of the cave on the page. The three stanzas also match how the lov-

ers “each hath one” world, and “is one”. That makes three different worlds, unified into one whole poem, or one whole world. The middle stanza acts as a bridge between the two worlds and is the point where the lovers unify – the structure coincides with the content.

“the path to his love was difficult, but not impossible.”

The rhyme scheme that Donne employs is a regular ABABCCC, which he consistently uses throughout the poem. The rhyme of three at the end of each stanza, is demonstrative (yet again) of the three worlds that Donne explains that he and his lover are involved with. The consistent choice of triplets demonstrates a structure in his thinking. Donne does not ramble about love but speaks coherently (as the poem would have been read in the Royal Court). This down to its freeing effect on him. He closes the poem with a rhyming resolution, but with less strength than a couplet in a sonnet. A Shakespearean sonnet by contrast has 12 lines of mental turmoil, that is resolved by the final two (as demonstrated by the above Sonnet 18 quote). Not choosing this form reduces this so-called mental turmoil – the path to his love was difficult, but not impossible. By expanding from two lines (a tight restriction like a cave), Donne is imitating his own romantic story.

The ABAB rhyme at the start of each stanza demonstrates har-

monious love, the two are separate in their natures (like in the one world they “possess”), but become “one” through the resolution of rhyme within one world (or stanza). Donne is actively choosing to continue the concept of “oneness” even within the rhyme scheme.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I see the good-morrow as an allegory for John Donne’s life. He understands that he is forced to remain in the cave by society’s structures, by the father of the woman that he loves disapproving of their marriage due to religion. The poet had to conceal their relationship, which he demonstrates here by exploring space and distance. Donne draws up these constraints through a carefully plotted rhyme scheme, with inter-textual references, wit, conceits and extended metaphors typical of his genre of poetry. But to Donne, these transitory restrictions are futile – with pure passion he can alter the enclosure that he’s in. His core message is that when with Anne, life’s limits fade away and he transcends to a higher reality, the realm of the metaphysical where the pair can live in a blissful eternal harmony. That’s what I take away from the poem: that despite our worldly claustrophobic caves, “two loves” can and always will “be one”.

Footnotes & appendix

IFAN BAMBURY

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South Africa is dubbed “The Rainbow Nation”, but have the effects of apartheid really been conquered?

ELISA ROSINA

I am researching the sociological impact of apartheid on South African society and the changes that have occurred since the end of apartheid in 1994. The topic is relevant to Sociology as apartheid was a society where racism was a policy unlike its counterparts with similar colonial history. Moreover, in a sociological context it is an important topic to understand how a society's views have developed overtime after South Africa's history, and if Mandela and Desmond Tutu's dream was actually idealised. The research methods I have used are content analysis and unstructured interviews - it was sometimes difficult to assess the inequalities today in South Africa, due to the current governments grouping of 'townships', which black people were confined into during apartheid, and continue to primarily reside in and rural suburbs which white people have always resided in. My findings are that while the South African racial economic

gap has progressed since 1994 there is still much to be done about racial inequality.

Overview

The cultural and racial stratification that was prevalent in South Africa during apartheid carries on now. I use the term Stratification observing the high level of segregation between the not just races but cultures and tribes alike which from my qualitative data gathered was unlike other countries, the Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Tswana, Tonga, Venda, Sotho and Ndebele separated in hate and stereotypes prevailing in everyday life. From the number of tribes just between indigenous South Africans we can see that the black population are non-homogenous. Additionally we must not forget the apartheid in South Africa from the 1940s-1994 was not just of 'White' and 'Black' people as stereotyped but of 'Coloured' and Indian people to pre-deter-

“The cultural and racial stratification that was prevalent in South Africa during apartheid carries on now.”

mining their life chances: where individuals could live, work, who they could marry and limiting their employment in the country they were born in. However, the discrimination does arguably with black South Africans, but additionally white South Africans were stratified too in the sense of passports, language spoken. Such as if you are English a different status is given and I can assess from my knowledge prejudice is given and taken in the 'Rainbow Nations' society. What I mean by this is racial slurs and stereotypes were assigned to and from white people terms such as 'rock' given to English speaking South Africans: though I stress the importance that the stratification of white South Africans in not comparable to that of black South Africans, though from the analysis of my data described earlier in creating apartheid white South Africans essentially divided themselves. This can be linked to Marxist theory - the concept of capitalism working under a 'divide and rule' tactic, though in the intense racial discrimination and human rights offenses that were innate in apartheid law white South Africans damaged their own homogeneity by creating a sense of Xenophobia between each other within each 'race' in South Africa.

Though I use the term race, it's a socially constructed term by the

racist to justify their prejudices, however it is much accepted in western society. Moreover, we can argue that South Africa is a unique case, a paradox which has no sense of rationality in the case of apartheid. It is assumed that from my conclusions South Africa damaged itself from the detrimental impacts of apartheid which 'can't be solved in a generation, one person, one party and so on' in which it is difficult to grasp the level of discrimination between each tribe, languages etc.'

Interracial marriage and multiracial households - Have they increased since 1994?

I can conclude that interracial prejudice has decreased in South Africa due to the increase in proportion of multiracial households Statistics South Africa Department found, that in 2001 from the percentage was 1.3% and in 2022 in increases to 11.4%. Meaning that this percentage has increased more than 11-fold in 21 years. A simple subjective conclusion could argue from

this piece of data that due to the increase of multiracial households that interracial inequalities have heavily decreased in the past 20 years or so, this can be argued due to the fact that an increase in multiracial households mean that more children are

mixed race and are being raised by for example both white and black parents which theoretically decreases inequality as children are raised by two different backgrounds which partly reap the rewards of the wealth gained by white people from apartheid. This in turn could create a higher redistribution of wealth for disadvantaged groups. However, this

“progressive policies such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion legislature have attempted to decrease racist ideologies and the racial glass ceiling in South Africa”

data could be skewed in the interests of the South African government which may seek an impression from external individuals that progress has been enormous since the fall of apartheid in 1994. Though, this figure is positive considering the fact that just over 30 years ago interracial marriage was a crime this statistic can't objectively prove that racial inequality has decreased 11-fold. However, in South Africa, only 1% or less of male and female whites and blacks are intermarried. Illustrating white South African ideologies may have stayed the same as in apartheid.

In addition, progressive policies such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion legislature have attempted to decrease racist ideologies and the racial glass ceiling in South Africa. Though this statistic of multiracial households varies from province to province. The

highest concentration of multi-racial households in 2022 was found in the Western Cape at 17,0%, and Gauteng at 14,6%. In contrast, Limpopo and Northwest recorded the lowest proportions at 6,7% and 7,3%, respectively, reflecting regional variations in demographic and social patterns. Additionally, we must consider that the level of multiculturalism in South Africa is extremely high with 76% of the population black, 12.8% White, 2.6% Asian and 8.5% 'coloured' (the apartheid term for mixed decent) and 11 national languages. Considering these figures the level of multiracial households is low. However, when we look at how these multiracial households are scattered around South Africa 4/5 of the households were located in cities, suggesting that increased economic opportunities, diverse social interactions and shifting cultural attitudes are fostering greater integration. An intersectional feminist such as Crenshaw would argue that Black, coloured and Asian women in South Africa face an intersection of discrimination due to prejudice towards their race and sexism because they are women. Furthermore, social mobility remains exceptionally low for the majority of South African women that are not white.

Difficulties assessing inequalities

The difficulties in assessing if the townships and suburban white areas remain to be as segregated as during apartheid by racial inequalities were due to the South African government now grouping townships together with well-serviced suburbs as 'formal residential neighbourhoods' making it difficult to track the actual improvements in quality of life since the end of apartheid. Interpretivist sociologists would explain the decision to group these two types of areas which do not have the same level of foundational equality as an attempt to conceal dark data. Equally, this decision by the government may be due to the government attempting to conceal the level of inequality after the 2022 classification of the world bank of South Africa as the most unequal country in the world. In South Africa, the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, rooted in racial and spatial segregation, continues to reinforce inequality of outcomes.

Racial wealth gap

Despite formal apartheid ending in the early 1990s, unparalleled levels of wealth concentration have persisted: the top 10 per cent own 86 per cent of aggregate wealth, 10% of South Africans

owned 86.1% of wealth in 1994. Essentially meaning that the wealth divide in South Africa has not improved. Marxists would argue that the government haven't done much to improve these figures since the end of apartheid because they want to maintain their own wealth in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Though given the wealth gap in 2019, 6% of the top 10% of South Africa's wealth were black while in 1984 this figure was close to 1%, while this figure is still largely disproportionate as black South Africans make up 81.4% of the population. This data leads me to the conclusion that since 1994 the racial wealth gap has persisted, inequality and the glass ceiling for black people is deeply ingrained.

“10% of South Africans owned 86.1% of wealth in 1994.”

Although progress has been made due to the increase in black South Africans in the top 10% richest, illustrated by the data I have collected. However, given the data collected there is another argument alongside that of the South Africa's post-apartheid 'de facto segregation' argument, that inequality has persisted in terms of social class. Evidence to support this argument is Seekings and Nattrass 2008 study Class, Race, and Inequality in South Africa (2005). The authors make the argument that whereas inequality was racial in its manifestations in the apartheid years, in the post-apartheid period inequality has taken on a

more class dimension. It is worth noting that Seekings and Nattrass 2008 arrived at this conclusion using the limited data that was available at the time of their writing. Moreover, primary qualitative data that I collected supported this claim 'when I talk to people that are still in South Africa inequality is still visible but there is sort of a class difference more than a race difference'. However, it is important to note that given my findings race identity prevails as a mode of stratification due to the efforts of the apartheid system which maintained black people especially as a passive racial group in terms of wealth share. Unemployment now stands at a staggering 31 percent among black South Africans and 23 percent among Coloureds. For whites, the figure is just under seven percent. Despite the introduction of DEI policies in companies, According to Solidarity's 2025 Transformation Barometer, 56% of South Africans believe DEI policies are now "mainly about ticking boxes, not real change" [Solidarity, 2025].

The Democratic Alliance is often accused of trying to protect the economic privileges that white people built up during Apartheid a charge it denies. This explains how the racial wealth gap is still prevalent despite DEI policies maintaining that the racial wealth

gap is still extremely prevalent. Weberian theory would explain the DA protecting the economic privileges by social closure which is a process by which hegemonic white people try to keep their privileges from others.

“equality is still visible but there is sort of a class difference more than a race difference”

A 2020 Amnesty international report found out of 23,471 schools' public schools, 20,071 had no laboratory, 18,019 had no library and 16,897 had no internet. This quantitative data aligns with the previous policy during the Apartheid system: The Bantu Education Act of 1952 ensured that Blacks receive an education that would limit potential and remain in the working class. This law systematically disadvantaged the Native South African, with much of the middle-aged South Africans which grew up in this dystopian reality. A 2004 Stanford University report stated that the post apartheid legacy in South African education left a 'de facto segregation'.

Education

Though since 2004 no-fee schools were introduced in 2007 and today more than nine million children attend no fee schools, representing 80 percent of our schools. This has led to significant advancements since prior to 2007 when all schools required fees depending on the funds the school needed to maintain facili-

ties which meant the largest fees fell upon the suburban schools with mainly white populations and the lowest fees were in the township schools. The Progress in International Reading Study, showed that illiteracy among children rose from 78% in 2016 to 81% in 2024 of. This astoundingly high figure is a direct legacy of apartheid education legislation,

where over 80% of the population's schools were purposefully underfunded, creating a generational education-

al divide persistent with children today. This quantitative data disproves postmodernist theory, sociologists such as Paluski and Waters who argue that traditional identities such as class and race are no longer relevant in postmodern society. The racial gap in tertiary educational attainment had increased between black Africans and whites (from 28,4 percentage points in 2002 to 35,7 percentage points in 2018). In addition, progress has gone backwards in terms of education in South Africa. No concerted efforts were made to promote or enforce school desegregation, and there is no nationally representative evidence on the extent to which schools have desegregated. Therefore, in terms of education the racial gap since apartheid has remained largely unchanged due to lack of government efforts.

Conclusion

In summary, while there has been significant progress since apartheid illustrated by the increase in diversity of the top 10% of South Africa's richest and the increase in multiracial households, there is still much progress to be done. The wealth gap in South Africa has remained early unchanged

“in the education sector where progress has gone backwards as the gap between White and Black people has widened in terms of tertiary education”

since 1994, along with the divide in tertiary education among black and white people and the illegibility rate

which has increased. Moreover, the gap in the unemployed between races is still significant despite DEI initiatives and there is still a long way to go to assist the social mobility of Black, Coloured and Asian groups especially for the women in these racial groups. In my opinion in many aspects of South African society the remnants of apartheid can be found especially in the education sector where progress has gone backwards as the gap between White and Black people has widened in terms of tertiary education. Therefore, from my understanding statistically in some ways South Africa has changed since the end of apartheid however in some respects such as education it has not changed, and little change has been made in the inequality in wealth between races.

Footnotes & appendix

ELISA ROSINA

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Is fashion still used as a form of resistance in modern day society?

FLORA GILLIES

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Throughout history, fashion has been used as a form of resistance, an outlet in which people express opinions and ideologies that may not conform to dominant groups in society. In this context, the term resistance refers to the refusal to accept or comply with mainstream norms, trends and expectations. This is a broad category spanning lots of different meanings, from dressing sustainably in mainstream fashion pieces, to dressing as a part of a Spectacular subculture which is completely different to 'normal' society; overall, fashion resistance comes together in a seamless form of rebellion that has continued steadily through many events since the beginning of recorded style – as stated by Hebdige, 'fashion is graffiti on the wall of capitalism'. However, with recent developments influencing fashion, such as the rise of the media and new technologies, fashion as a form of resistance has been questioned – do young people still attempt to express views that stray from mainstream belief through fashion,

“the term resistance refers to the refusal to accept or comply with mainstream norms”

or is this process dying out? This is a strong argument, influenced heavily by postmodernism, suggesting that alongside a growing fluidity in young people's social life, there has been a simultaneous growth in fluidity in fashion: interest is directed by consumerism and 'keeping up with trends' rather than attempts to make statements about wider society. My neo-Marxist viewpoint makes me inclined to the belief that there will always be forms of resistance expressed through fashion, however this can be debated.

Historical resistance through fashion

In order to discuss present-day fashion trends and resistance through style today, historical events need to be considered as a comparison. From as early as the 1850s, as discussed by Strassel in 'Designing Women: Feminist Methodologies in American Fashion', there was a rise of a concept called 'dress reform'.

American feminist Amelia Bloomer began a fashion revolution through the simple act of wearing a short dress over pantaloons. For these women, who were forced to wear long and heavy dresses, status defined by the size of their waists, this 'reform' was a symbol rebelling against social and cultural oppression - the 'bloomer' costume served as a political tool as the inclusion of 'pants' was radical for women at the time, supposedly distracting from standards of stereotypical femininity. The idea of 'dress reform' disappeared in the 1920s when these reforms were adopted into mainstream society, however, this shows the resistance in an incredibly positive light – it was no longer necessary to resist mainstream society as this movement managed to shift norms and stereotypes, changing expectations in America at the time.

“women, who were forced to wear long and heavy dresses, status defined by the size of their waists,”

Fashion has not only been used to change society - it has also been used in an attempt to fit in and resist certain stereotypes. An example of this takes us to the 1940s, in which the first boats of the Windrush generation reached British shores. As discussed in book 'Dangerous Bodies', written by Mahawatte and Willson, the men, women and children arriving in England knew their arrival

would be broadcasted to the media, feeling as if they were 'on the stage', therefore wanted to dress in alignment with what they had seen the mainstream British fashions to be in their own media. This was an attempt to take away from the stereotype of Caribbean people, especially for women at the time – by adopting 'dainty and innocent' English fashions, wearing pearls and frock coats, these women were attempting to contrast the idea of bold and brash Caribbean women. This was similar for men, their appearance hiding their anxiety through wearing items like 'zoot suit' style trousers, shiny two-tones shoes and conks (brushed hair) - this stylistic image implied that the men were mentally and physically put together when they were in trepidation. However, these attempts to fit into British society weren't entirely successful: fashion had

limitations for the performative elegance of the Windrush generation, there's only so much it could do to dissuade people from the racist ideologies of the time – through my neo-Marxist lens, this shows the influence of the Hegemony's attempt to divide a group that could have become powerful if accepted. This links back to resistance of stereotypes through fashion, showing how people, through-

out history, have attempted to change public perception of themselves through their stylistic choices.

Sometimes, like in Amelia Bloomer's case, these attempts have resulted in impactful change, however there are other cases in which the resistance has been inverted: it has been, rather than an attempt to stand out, a plea to fit in, and in these cases, it has not always been a success.

Subcultures

A different element of resistance that needs to be considered is the late 20th century, which was arguably the UK's peak of spectacular subcultures. In a time of conflict, tension, and rising communication through growing media and technology, youth culture thrived, and it was not afraid to fight. Resistance through fashion was at a prime, from the political proletarianization of upper-class styles from the 1950 Teddy Boys, to the 1970 Goths who resisted mainstream fashion norms whilst being mostly middle class themselves – there seemed to be an explosion of rage at both institutions and societal norms, and this was vigorously reflected through fashion in all forms.

A particularly interesting figure to discuss in this topic is Vivienne Westwood, who was one

“This involved a style called 'bricolage' in which consumers were encouraged to fashion their own items with household objects like bin liners and safety pins”

of the UK's leaders of the Punk movement. Westwood's initial work was inspired by the situationist movement of the 1970s,

which was anti-capitalism, and wanted to challenge the ruling class: this style was adopted by the working-class youths of England, in this society that was 'charged with ethnic tension, a jaded establishment and industrial and military unrest (Savage, 1991)'. This involved a style called 'bricolage' in which consumers were encouraged to fashion their own items with household objects like bin liners and safety pins, as well as Westwood's more high-end items which made bolder statements: bondage suits in military tartan, or lifejackets declaring an end to life. All of the above was used as a statement of resistance to UK capitalist society, which, at the time, was causing mass suffering for the working-class youths of England.

A study on this, by Jean Clarke and Robin Holt (Considered consumption: Vivienne Westwood and the ethics of consuming fashion) used a combination of 'interview data, participant

observation, internal and external documents and literature' to form a case study of the subject matter, and found that 'consumers showed an understanding an interest in the symbolic power of Westwood's clothing both to evoke history while at the same time subverting traditional notions of class, status and British nationalism'. This shows that those who adopted Westwood's punk style were aware of the statement and political reasoning behind their choices, the study also showing that consumers saw the brand as a 'story' or 'narrative' rather than simply for profit: 'Westwood's customers see themselves as fashion bricoleurs who combine and adapt what is currently available to them'.

“Stop all this consumerism...I just tell people, stop buying clothes. Why not protect this gift of life while we have it?”

However, there is a sense of contradiction in this supposed resistance. Westwood, throughout her career, has consistently made statements encouraging sustainable fashion, and for audiences to cut down on their own consumption, yet her brand has been adopted, by the media, into mainstream fashion.

Mainstream fashion today – the media

Quickly after Westwood's rise in subcultural fashion, the media took a hold of punk and made

it mainstream - this decreased the rebellion against capitalism, which arguably breaks down the point of the brand. In 2010, after presenting her collection during London Fashion Week, Westwood made a stand against consumerist society saying backstage to reports "Stop all this consumerism...I just tell people, stop buying clothes. Why not protect this gift of life while we have it?" (Katz) . This contradicts to the ideas that she is still the figurehead of a brand that encourages consumption: the show was to market her own clothes and new collections that feature mainstream items like logoed t-shirts and cheap jewellery. There is a juxtaposition in Westwood's ideologies: as an activist, she doesn't want buyers to consume

fashion trends, yet as a brand, this is necessary for her success. There have been some internal criticisms of this, also discussed in Clarke and Holt's study, referring to the idea that the brand 'sell to the wrong people now'. Looking at this research through a postmodernist lens, this might be used to show the falling significance of resistance in fashion, with less people buying items as a political statement and more materialist consumption. However, my neo-Marxist perspective also can link this to the prevalence

of the hegemony in the art of persuasion: mainstream audiences are encouraged to adopt this subcultural heroism (as described in Muggleton's writing) as a force to stop the resistant groups gaining power: it is a method of divide and rule.

To extend on the postmodernist viewpoint that fashion is becoming less and less resistant, the media as a catalyst for trends and mainstream fashion needs to be considered. As stated in a study by Laura

“The postmodern individual can be compared to a ‘restless tourist or gambler’, constantly influenced by consumerist trends encouraged in online content.”

Bovone, 'Urban style cultures and urban cultural production in Milan: Postmodern identity and the transformation of fashion', the postmodern individual can be compared to a 'restless tourist or gambler', constantly influenced by consumerist trends encouraged in online content. The article investigates how we, as individuals, dress our identities: from being personal, to being shaped by cultural and economic factors that form the fashion industry, and discusses the rise of 'non-occupational identities' (Miller 2004). These non-occupational identities describe the shift in modern society towards identities unrelated to occupation or class, being less political; this increase of neutrality in fashion has been

linked to many factors, however the prominent one is the rise of the media alongside the growth of the internet. Polhemus discussed the change in youth culture into a 'supermarket of style' in which young people pick and choose styles and trends, not feeling a particular sense of identity or loyalty to a particular group for political reasoning,

and this is clearly reflected in fashion. For example, Crane, in 2000, discussed this: 'The emblematic item of postmodern fashion is instead the T-shirt, a never-ending text that everybody can write, which by itself does not have any precise identity connotations regarding gender or status, or any evident geographic origin, "but expresses social identities in many different ways, ranging from identity politics to lifestyles"'. For these reasons, there has been an ongoing debate discussing the downfall of resistance in fashion. In this supposed postmodernist society, factors like class, gender and ethnicity are no longer relevant when young people make stylistic choices. Media producers, magazine conglomerates and trendsetters are focusing entirely on consumption of mate-

rial goods, which can be linked to Pakulski and Waters ideas referring to the societal shift from production to consumption. Whilst in the 20th century, fashion was used to make political statements, some argue this has died down in recent years to allow for these postmodern attitudes. Bauman, in 1996, argued that 'If the modern "problem of identity" was how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, the postmodern "problem of identity" is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open', once again linking back to today's focus on individual purchases to live the most seemingly glamorous lifestyle.

Rebellions in mainstream fashion today

All of that said, there are still elements of resistance in today's fashion that cannot be ignored. An interpretivist study in the mid-1990s, by Bovone and Mora, used in-depth interviews and focus groups with young people from Milan, studying attitudes towards clothing: this research included groups chosen based on either conformity or opposition to adult culture. They found that young people dress as a way to communicate and

send messages, with meaningful answers like "We dress in a particular way to get access to particular circles and environments. But we always avoid being confused with the general public. So, there may be some excesses. We used to have tattoos and piercings. We go in search of something different at any cost (rave group).'

Conclusion

This research overall shows that despite a decline in resistant fashion, meaning is still carried through stylistic choices, the manner in which this has been done has simply shifted. In line with neo-Marxist ideology, these are rises and falls of the capitalist economic market, and this is reflected significantly through clothing, whatever the ongoing situation. We may be in a decline right now, in which the media decreases the ability to rebel through clothing, however there is nearly no doubt that there will be a time in which fashion will come biting back, ready to fight.

“despite a decline in resistant fashion, meaning is still carried through stylistic choices, the manner in which this has been done has simply shifted”

Footnotes & appendix

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Is gentrification the primary cause of London's housing crisis?

GEORGE SAWYER

The term gentrification was coined by the sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964. It describes the process by which working-class areas in London have been gradually taken over by more affluent residents, leading to rising property values and the displacement of long-standing communities. Gentrification is a crucial topic today because it exposes how social inequality is produced and reinforced through urban change. It affects who gets to live where, who is pushed out, and how power and privilege is reflected in the built environment. Gentrification doesn't just reshape communities physically, it transforms them socially, often at the expense of its low-income

and marginalised members. In recent decades, the area of East London, particularly in Hackney and Tower Hamlets, has undergone rapid

change, shifting from traditional working-class, ethnically diverse communities to increasingly affluent, gentrified areas. This es-

say will investigate whether gentrification is the primary cause of London's housing crisis, focussing research specifically on Hackney and Tower Hamlets. Quantitative data studied include trends in property prices, rent increases, and demographic changes, which illustrate how gentrification has affected the affordability and population displacement in these areas. Triangulation with qualitative data has been used such as interviews with residents in the Hoxton area of Hackney and observations of changes in physical appearance of buildings and the businesses that occupy them, thus gaining a first-hand experience of the effect of gentrification. Challenges that arise from this topic largely centre around isolating gentrification from other factors such as housing shortages, austerity policies and im-

“working-class areas in London have been gradually taken over by more affluent residents, leading to rising property values and the displacement of long-standing communities.”

migration. Ultimately, gentrification stands as the central force behind London's housing crisis, fuelling displacement, soaring

rents and the erasure of long-established communities in East London.

Despite this, some would argue that gentrification is not the primary cause of the housing crisis, and that housing shortages lie at the heart of the issue. London's population surged from approximately 7.3 million in 2001 to over 8.9 million in 2021, yet housing construction

has lagged far behind. According to the Greater London Authority, the city requires 66,000 new homes annually, yet between 2011 and 2021, the average output was just 37,000 homes per year, leaving behind an annual shortfall of nearly 30,000 units. Restrictive planning policies also exacerbate this problem with greenbelt land covering 22% of London's total area and has strict limits on its development. Furthermore, in his 1995 work *The People's Home? Social Rented Housing in Europe and America*, sociologist Michael Harloe argues that the dismantling of public housing programmes since the 1980s has further strained supply, pushing lower-income households into an increasingly unaffordable private rental sector. This supply and demand imbalance has been compounded by speculative investments in housing markets, where homes are increasingly treated as assets rather than places to live.

Together, these factors create a systemic failure to meet London's growing housing needs, suggesting that housing shortages are the fundamental driver of the crisis.

However, the stronger argument would be that gentrification is the primary cause of London's

“Hackney's average house price rose from £250,000 in 2010 to over £700,000 in 2023”

housing crisis. This is because it directly drives displacement, unaffordability and social exclusion. In boroughs such as Hackney and Tower Hamlets, once home to diverse working-class communities, properties have surged dramatically; Hackney's average house price rose from £250,000 in 2010 to over £700,000 in 2023, according to the Office for National Statistics. This escalation is mirrored in the private rental sector, where rents have increased by nearly 40% over the past decade. Gentrification reshapes these areas to cater to affluent residents and global investors, all too often at the expense of local, low-income households. Sociologist Neil Smith's concept of the “rent gap” explains this process: landlords and developers target undervalued areas, transforming them to maximise profit while displacing existing residents. In addition, public spaces and amenities in gentrified areas increasingly prioritise commercial interests, contributing to the erosion of

community networks. These dynamics make gentrification not just a contributor but a central driver of the housing crisis, as it systematically reconfigures London's housing market to favour wealthier demographics, exacerbating inequality and displacement.

In contrast, others would argue that gentrification is not the primary cause of London's housing crisis and instead austerity policies are to

blame, as these have systematically dismantled structures designed to provide affordable housing. This is seen as investment in affordable homes plummeted by 60% after 2010, and the number of new social housing units being built by local councils dropped from around 40,000 in the year 2009-10 to fewer than 1,000 in the year 2015-16. Meanwhile, the right to buy scheme has sold over two million council homes since its introduction in 1980 but only 48,000 replacements were built between 2012 and 2024, leaving a net loss of over 76,000 homes. In 2022, 10,000 homes were sold under the scheme and only 3,000 were built to replace this. In addition, housing benefit reforms have also compounded the problem; since 2011, the Local Housing

“investment in affordable homes plummeted by 60% after 2010, and the number of new social housing units being built by local councils dropped from around 40,000 in the year 2009-10 to fewer than 1,000”

Allowance had been frozen at the 30th percentile of local rents, and successive freezes between 2016 and 2020 further widened the gap between housing costs and benefit support. Policies like the 2012 “Bedroom Tax” have left many low-income households unable to afford their rents,

forcing thousands into precarious living conditions or homelessness. Sociologist David Harvey critiques neo-liberal austerity policies, arguing that they prioritise market solutions and privatisation, exacerbating inequality and deepening housing precarity. By dismantling public housing provision, slashing benefits, and relying on market mechanisms, austerity policies have created the structural conditions for London's housing crisis, overshadowing the localised impacts of gentrification.

However, the stronger argument would be that gentrification is the primary cause of London's housing crisis. This is especially prevalent in areas such as Hoxton (an area in Hackney), where rapid socio-economic transformation has displaced long-standing communities. Interviews with local residents reveals the deep human cost behind rising property values and rents. Colleen,

an 82-year-old lifelong resident, reflects on the drastic changes: “I’m one of the few that still live down here, because us old ones, we don’t want to move.” Similarly, Errol, a garage owner, shares how many of his neighbours and customers have left the area saying, “One of my customers said, ‘you’re the last man standing’ and that’s probably the true statement.” These firsthand accounts illustrate how gentrification not only prices out residents but erodes the social fabric of the community. As urban geographer Loretta Lees explains, gentrification acts as a form of “social cleansing”, systematically replacing low-income residents with more affluent residents via economic pressures and cultural shifts. In Hoxton, house prices have more than doubled in the last decade, with rents rising by approximately 45%, creating an unaffordable environment for lower-income residents. Gentrification thus reshapes both the physical landscape and social composition of the area, making it the central driver of London's housing crisis by forcing established communities out in favour of wealthier newcomers.

In addition, it could also be argued that gentrification is the

primary cause of London's housing crisis, functioning as a form of ethnic and social cleansing in many areas. A striking example of this can be seen in the contrasting areas of Docklands and Poplar. Over the past 40 years, Docklands has been transformed into a thriving business district filled with a myriad of high-end shops, including a flagship Waitrose store, luxury jewellery and perfume stores. The area appears to be largely populated by affluent, predominantly white professionals who have clearly benefited from this economic transformation. In complete contrast, less than half a mile away, Poplar remains a working-class town with a massive Muslim community, with markets like Chrisp Street selling affordable essentials, and buildings falling into disrepair. However, gentrification is beginning to escape the boundary of Docklands and

encroach onto Poplar too. There is already evidence of major construction projects being carried out in the area. An unstructured

interview with one local resident also revealed that there are plans to demolish the ex-local authority flats and shops surrounding Chrisp Street Market and replace it with luxury apartments. This proposed redevelopment would

“In Hoxton, house prices have more than doubled in the last decade, with rents rising by approximately 45%, creating an unaffordable environment for lower-income residents.”

threaten to displace long-standing residents, especially younger generations from ethnic minority backgrounds, who are increasingly forced to leave. As a result, the social and cultural fabric of this area is actively being eroded, leaving behind an aging population. This process reflects not just social cleansing, but also ethnic cleansing which is continuing to happen. This could also link to Sharon Zukin's 1987 work where she suggested that gentrification commodifies urban spaces and cultural identities, creating exclusive "consumption zones" that attract wealthy newcomers while also pushing out existing working-class residents. The Docklands-Poplar example therefore illustrates how gentrification only deepens social and ethnic divides and accelerates London's housing crisis by prioritising profit and affluent lifestyles over community needs.

Despite this, some would argue that gentrification is not the primary cause of London's housing crisis, and immigration is, in fact, the main driver of the problem. This can be seen as, between 2001 and 2021, London's population grew by approximately 1.6 million, with net international migration accounting for almost 70%

"This rapid influx has intensified demand for housing, particularly in lower-cost rental markets, where migrants often settle due to affordability and established community networks"

of this increase. The Office for National Statistics reports that from 2015 to 2020 alone, net migration into London averaged around 150,000 per year, significantly outpacing the city's capacity to build new homes. This rapid influx has intensified demand for housing, particularly in lower-cost rental markets, where migrants often settle due to affordability and established community networks. Urban sociologist Saskia Sassen emphasises that cities like London function as global migration hubs, where high levels of immigration can create acute housing pressures by straining existing infrastructure and housing supply. For example, Tower Hamlets, one of London's most ethnically diverse boroughs, saw its population rise by over 35% between 2001 and 2021, with private rents increasing by almost 40% during the same period. This demographic pressure would therefore exacerbate the housing shortage and fuels competition for limited housing, intensifying affordability challenges. While gentrification transforms certain areas, immigration represents a broader citywide demographic force that amplifies housing demand and plays a crucial role in London's housing crisis.

However, the stronger argument would be that gentrification is the primary cause of London's housing crisis as it drives displacement, unaffordability, and the systematic reduction of housing options for lower-income residents. As areas like Hackney and Hoxton have been transformed to trendy hubs, property values and rents have skyrocketed, with house prices in Hackney increasing by 62% between 2011 and 2021, compared to a London-wide average of 50%, and rents rising by 45%. These trends make it one of the most unaffordable boroughs for working-class families. This transformation has been driven by speculative investors and developers prioritising high-end housing, catering to affluent newcomers while ignoring the needs of existing residents. Tom Slater, and urban geographer, describes this as "displacement by design," where systemic forces prioritise profit over people, forcing long-standing communities to leave. Residents in Hoxton provide poignant examples of this impact, such as Colleen and Errol, as well as another resident who remarked, "we'll probably have to move to Southend or Clacton," a common refrain

"This transformation has been driven by speculative investors and developers prioritising high-end housing, catering to affluent newcomers while ignoring the needs of existing residents."

among those priced out of London. Gentrification also disrupts community networks and cultural identity, replacing affordable local amenities with upscale businesses targeting wealthier clientele. This not only alienates remaining residents but further exacerbates the housing crisis by concentrating wealth and erasing affordability in previously accessible areas. Therefore, by accelerating displacement, unaffordability, and inequality, gentrification is at the core of London's housing crisis.

In conclusion, the evidence would suggest that London's housing crisis is a complex issue driven by multiple, interconnected factors, including gentrification, housing shortages, austerity policies, and immigration. However, gentrification emerges as a particularly insidious force due to its targeted and transformative impact on specific communities. By displacing long-standing residents and prioritising wealthier newcomers, gentrification essentially functions as a form of social cleansing, systematically erasing the cultural and social fabric of working-class neighbourhoods in favour of profit-driven redevelopment. Areas like Hackney and Hoxton, once

vibrant hubs for diverse, low-income communities, have been transformed into exclusive enclaves through soaring property prices, unaffordable rents, and the replacement of affordable amenities with high-end businesses. Residents like Colleen and Errol offer a human perspective on this process, describing how they and their neighbours have been pushed out by rising costs and a loss of community cohesion. This phenomenon is not isolated but exists within broader frameworks of systemic inequality. Decades of housing shortages, compounded by the dismantling of social housing through policies like Right to Buy and austerity measures, have left London ill-equipped to meet the growing demand for affordable homes. Cuts to Housing Benefit and freezes on social

welfare have exacerbated the challenges faced by low-income families, forcing many into precarious housing situations. Similarly, immigration

has increased population pressures, intensifying competition for limited housing stock. Yet, while these factors contribute to London's housing crisis, gentrification remains unique in its deliberate and visible role in transforming neighbourhoods.

“This phenomenon is not isolated but exists within broader frameworks of systemic inequality. Decades of housing shortages, compounded by the dismantling of social housing”

Urban geographers like Loretta Lees have described it as a form of “social cleansing,” where economic forces actively exclude those who cannot afford to remain, consolidating privilege and deepening inequality. Unlike broader demographic or policy trends, gentrification directly displaces residents, erodes community networks, and redefines neighbourhoods as commodities rather than homes. Addressing this crisis requires acknowledging the role of gentrification within a larger system of housing inequality. Policy interventions must include constructing genuinely affordable homes, reversing cuts to housing benefits, implementing rent controls, and rethinking urban planning to prioritise inclusion over profit. Without such measures, gentrification will continue to reshape London's housing

landscape, perpetuating displacement and inequality. Ultimately, gentrification represents both a cause and a symptom of London's housing crisis, encapsulating the social and economic disparities that define the city. To resolve this crisis, policymakers must confront the structural forces that allow gentrification to thrive, ensuring that London remains a city for all its residents, not just the privileged few.

ulating the social and economic disparities that define the city. To resolve this crisis, policymakers must confront the structural forces that allow gentrification to thrive, ensuring that London remains a city for all its residents, not just the privileged few.

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Is the television show 'Adolescence' responsible for creating a moral panic about young men and what are the consequences?

LUKE WALLLEN

Is the television show 'Adolescence' responsible for creating a moral panic about young men and what are the consequences?

In this essay, I'll explore the hypothesis that if there is an increase in the amount of media coverage there will be a larger moral panic and therefore more institutional punishment: in particular, looking at the emotional effects of the TV show 'Adolescence', released on the 13th March 2025. The show highlights a supposed 'growing problem' of 'toxic masculinity' in

young men, where the main character Jamie (shown as an incel – meaning male in-

voluntary celibacy, and typically seen where someone acknowledges they are not desirable by mates, so work around that by justifying violence against women) kills a female classmate as a result of her bullying him. With regards to research methods, I

“The show highlights a supposed ‘growing problem’ of ‘toxic masculinity’ in young men,”

conducted a quantitative content analysis of media articles, collected various secondary data sources, with statistics regarding crimes and concerns, and collected semi-structured interview's responses from podcasts about the moral panic from academic professionals. Research proved difficult in the scope of methods being limited (as the data collection was based upon articles and official statistics), but also that operationalization within quantitative data in a content analysis was limited. My most important finding supported

by more than one research outcome was that the moral panic pushed is causing direct 'worry' for society, reinforced by parliamentary and police interviews enhancing the concern.

From 3 articles (BBC, The Guardian x2) which outline what adolescence is, and introduce the moral panic, the lead-

ing sector of vocabulary was moral panic motivated. Holistically, the articles indicate that there is a push for parents and the education system to monitor young boys. There is also a prominent 'toxic' related vocabulary and implies that these young men's minds are 'warped by violence and abuse'; there is also

brief mentions of the proposed effects of young boy's media consumption, being a 'rising problem of violence and misogyny'. Toxic was found 5 times in total across articles: to link to the theory of a moral panic – proposed by Stanley Cohen – repeated labelling and exaggerated language are key components in the formation of a moral panic. Stuart Hall examined how language and symbols created and reinforced stereotypes, with his work on media encoding highlighting how repetition of words such as 'toxic' normalizes social anxieties, producing an enhanced exposure to the supposed behaviors and demeanor of those included in the moral panic. Here, young boys being labelled as toxic provokes a sense of concern for those who should be guiding them, with many articles questioning the state of the male role model scene.

From there, my research progressed on to the parliamentary

and law enforcement side of the moral panic, where officers as well as politicians commented on the dangers of social media : Sarah crew (chief constable of Avon and Somerset and the National Police Chiefs' Council lead on rape and serious sexual offences) stated that 'Young people' are 'by their nature vulner-

able', and that 'this gives those perpetrators who would want to do harm a really direct

channel'. Since the show's release, four of the most senior policing figures in the country told the Times that 'further controls on social media platforms were necessary for public safety, national security and young people's mental health.' This sounds reasonable in theory, but are we dealing with subtle monitoring to ascertain if violence is inspired by social media, or is this a crackdown and demoralization of young boys and their successful aspirations? Tim De Meyer of Surrey police said he was positive that social media is "fueling and enabling crime", arguing a ban for under-16s was crucial. This raises a serious concern by critics, where social media fueling crime is under researched and largely correlation based. Politically speaking, when asked whether the government would consider a ban on under-16s using social media platforms, Yvette Cooper (the home

“repeated labelling and exaggerated language are key components in the formation of a moral panic.”

secretary) told the Times' that "nothing can be off the table", alluding to the potential of government action (showing the series in schools, social media limits etc.). From the writers perspective, Adolescence cocreator and cowriter Jack Thorne believes the series needs to be shown in schools and to parliament, but from an individual's perspective - In men's rights subreddits - comments read: "Ah yes...men/boys bad, as usual," one wrote in response to news that some British schools are now hosting anti-misogyny lessons because of the series. "It's ridiculous how much this 'show' has been in the news." Within an article, it stated 'the boys keep being told they are the problem because women want to act one way but be treated another,' furthermore, a parent claimed 'Adolescence left me reeling', but I didn't see an entirely new crisis. I saw an old one, scaled up. But the reach, speed, and target demographic? That feels terrifyingly new.

"We're seeing how deeply entrenched misogyny...is becoming with our boys, and I think we should be really, really alarmed by this."

Collectively, the image of young men's delinquency and toxicity has been amplified in the masses, and contrary research from the UN found that there is "no clear evidence" that social media leads to more violent behavior: "Violent radicalization generally entails a number of

tools and should be seen in the context of other communication platforms and significant social factors, such as the political, social, cultural, economic and psychological causes."

With regards to the panic itself, we must look in the scope of parents as well as wider society: within the Channel Islands, parents have expressed a need to "come together" after watching the series. Included within a BBC article, several people express their concerns: Vicky O'Neil, from Jersey, has a 10-year-old son and said she found the show "sobering". Ms O'Neil said the show "reiterates this safeguarding crisis that we're having", "We're seeing how deeply entrenched misogyny...is becoming with our boys, and I think we should be really, really alarmed by this. Sally Rochester - interviewed

on the BBC - said that "As parents, we find ourselves wanting to protect our children but letting these devices into their lives for

various understandable reasons puts them at some extraordinary risk." A further look into the societal interpretation of Adolescence is seen in an online forum 'Mumsnet', where parents shared their advice for raising teens in an increasingly digital world, encouraging and normalizing emotional

expression, setting curfews, setting parental controls on social media and phones, discuss usage of social media, limit screen time (broadly of which are highly intrusive, building on and taking action instantly from this moral panic initiated by a fictional series), and encourage spending time with positive male role models - this one being a plausible request (depending on the subjective account of masculinity one aspires to socialize their sons to). Additionally, in a poll of British parents, 3 in 4 say they're concerned about what their children are seeing, hearing or doing online.

"Adolescence" is dramatic storytelling, not a "commentary on young men today,"

Contrary to the so called 'epidemic', the UK Youth Justice Board's latest report through March 2024 found that the "the number of knife crime offences committed by children has been decreasing since the year ending March 2019, with children making up 20% of all knife crime offences in that year to 17% in the latest year." The UK Youth Justice Board report states, "more than 99% of knife offences are for possession alone", San Francisco Chronicle claims it's not the bloodletting "Adolescence" depicts - "Adolescence" is dramatic storytelling, not a "commentary on young men today," that the 'wild accolades for "Adolescence" reveal how aging cultures exploit anti-youth sensationalism to

evade their duties to confront the real, albeit uncomfortable, family and social policy threats facing young people.' This gives us an insight further into the media objectives of consistent attacks on youth, and questions the accuracy of Adolescence, with the scalability of violence suggested as unrealistic. Brendan O'Neill (a political writer) says 'I find it ironic that a mini-series about the social contagion of 'Tateism' has generated such a cultural contagion. Such a suffocating consensus that insists this drama is technically flawless and morally Christ-like'.

A study from a number of University students (Oxford, Bristol etc.) - using data from 2,115 women in the UK-based Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children who self-reported whether they had experienced any IPV (Intimate Partner Violence) since age 18 - found 32% of women experienced any IPV between ages 18 and 21. Women who consistently lived in deprived neighborhoods (chronic high deprivation) had higher odds of experiencing IPV compared to those who consistently lived in non-deprived neighborhoods. Living in more deprived neighborhoods during early childhood, regardless of later exposure, was associated with higher odds of experiencing later IPV. In a Cardiff university study, investigating the associa-

tion between material deprivation and injury sustained in violence by adolescents aged 11-17 years, finding that material deprivation was associated with a higher risk of violence related injury for adolescent girls compared with adolescent boys: boys and girls living in the most deprived areas had higher assault injury rates compared with those living in the most affluent areas. This crucial data alludes to there being a raised rate of violent crime towards women in deprived areas; with child poverty being the highest level ever – a raise of 100,000 since April 2024 to 4.45 million children – we could propose an argument that poverty has links to violence, and poverty running rampant in the UK is linked to the troubles of youth violence. The BBC predicted an extra 250,000 people, including 50,000 children, will be pushed into relative poverty by further changes tightening the benefits system by Rachel Reeves.

William Costello, an evolutionary psychologist and incel studying expert, on Chris Williamson's podcast, emphasized how we shouldn't take action as a society based on fiction: 'policy should be research based, shouldn't be based on emotive performance art', and

“Chris Williamson's podcast, emphasized how we shouldn't take action as a society based on fiction: 'policy should be research based, shouldn't be based on emotive performance art'”

further critiques Adolescence's real world application by stating that it is 'not research backed', with 'the extent to which its being used for policy change' as 'pretty troubling'. He notes that 'there is no epidemic of manosphere inspired violence like depicted in the show, unlike the epidemic of knife violence which is a very real phenomenon', and that the show's violence is 'not representative of prototypical knife violence in the UK'. He adds that 'there has been no 13 year old kid getting good grades in school suddenly killing a girl'. From an evolutionary standpoint, he raises the point that incels (Jamie – as proposed by the show) are in an inferior mating position, and recognizes the 'nihilism of the black pill', (black pill referencing a defeatist and victim attitude in regard to the 'predestined' sexual hierarchy) which is not being

countered by any form of action: he stated that he 'read a comment on Instagram from a mother' who said to 'train men not to be competitive', which he disproved by noting that women select on status, and humans form status hierarchies. He also noted how Andrew Tate – who is mentioned in Adolescence ('that's that Andrew Tate shite) and in the wider moral panic - is an opposition to the

black pill, with incels 'hating guys like Tate' (as we see a message of self-accountability within the Tate message, where young men can transform their lives through action, creating a higher sexual market value as a byproduct of physical and financial successes, contrary to the defeatist black pill incels).

Another psychologist who comments on Adolescence is Jordan Peterson: his approach to Adolescence is that it is purposefully demoralizing young men. He argues that competition between males is seen as 'wrong', and that people 'don't understand that peaceful competition in game like situation is an advanced form of cooperation that socializes aggression.' He also notes that young men are blamed consistently for ambition, being a 'manifestation of the aggressive patriarchy' which is seen as 'pathological', and that their attraction towards women is regarded with extreme skepticism because fundamentally they're nothing but 'would be rapists'; he stated that 'you think strong men are a problem? Wait till you see weak men who are resentful and bitter because of their failure and you'll see real trouble.' Peterson provides a plausible argument for why young men are wrongfully brought to shame, noting satirically that 'toxic young masculini-

ty, and particularly of the Caucasian version, that's the thing that young people should be taught more about because obviously they're not demoralized enough yet'; he claimed that its 'exact-

“Statistics show that there is a link between violence and deprivation”

ly what you'd expect from the progressive play-book', hinting that the intentions were set for Adolescence to paint a narrative of potential misogyny almost universally for young boys, delving deeper into a moral panic, which was set to be escalated institutionally.

The overall findings from my research show there is a strong moral panic in the UK for young boys and misogyny and violence on girls, initiated by the release of Adolescence. Several articles detailing the devastating severity of young men's misogyny are elevated by Adolescence's serious storyline, and subsequently a worrisome mentality is found in many parents and seen in wider society. Statistics show that there is a link between violence and deprivation, and with the increase in poverty in the UK, an increase in crime will likely influence various crime increases such as physical and sexual violence. Popular psychologists both give reasons for why Adolescence is a moral panic – and its demoralizing effects on young men being seen as very prevalent.

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Red Shirts and Revolution: The March of the Thousand and the Fall of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies

JOSHUA FOURACRE

The unification of Italy, or Il Risorgimento, was a sweeping 19th-century movement that reshaped the political landscape of Europe. It brought together disparate states, cultures, and peoples under a single banner—no small feat on a peninsula long fragmented by geography, foreign powers, and internal divisions. Among the key moments in this turbulent process, few stand out as boldly as the Expedition of the Thousand (Spedizione dei Mille), led by the charismatic and battle-hardened Giuseppe Garibaldi in 1860. This daring military campaign marked the beginning of the end for the Bourbon-ruled Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and

set the stage for the proclamation of a unified Italy in 1861. What began

with just over a thousand volunteers landing on the western coast of Sicily quickly escalated into a full-scale revolution that swept across the south. This essay explores the causes, progression, and consequences of

the campaign, shedding light on one of the most iconic chapters in modern Italian history.

Before unification, Italy was a mosaic of states. The north included the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia, controlled by Austria, and the Kingdom of Sardinia-Piedmont, which had become a beacon of liberalism under King Victor Emmanuel II and his brilliant Prime Minister, Count Camillo di Cavour. Central Italy was dominated by the Papal States under Pope Pius IX, while the south—the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies—was ruled by the Bourbon dynasty, first by Ferdinand II and, after his death in 1859, by his

"It brought together disparate states, cultures, and peoples under a single banner"

23-year-old son, Francis II.

The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was the largest Italian state by population, with nearly 9 million people, yet it was among the least developed. Its economy was largely agrarian, its infrastructure weak, and its government deeply conserva-

tive and repressive. Political dissent was silenced by an extensive secret police network, and widespread poverty fostered discontent, particularly in Sicily. Revolts had already erupted in the south in 1820, 1848, and again in 1860, suggesting a brewing revolution. At the heart of the Risorgimento were three key figures: Giuseppe Mazzini, who championed a republican and democratic Italy; Cavour, who saw unification through diplomacy and monarchy; and Garibaldi, who fused both passion and pragmatism. A veteran of revolutions in South America and Italy, Garibaldi represented the romantic ideal of the revolutionary hero. When unrest in Sicily flared again in spring 1860, he saw his moment to act.

The Expedition of the Thousand officially began on May 5, 1860, when Garibaldi and 1,089 volunteers—mostly students, artisans, and former soldiers—departed from Quarto, near

Genoa, aboard two steamships, the Lombardo and the Piemonte. These men, soon known as the Redshirts for their simple uniforms, were driven by idealism, nationalism, and a commitment to overthrowing tyranny. While Piedmont-Sardinia could not openly support the mission

due to diplomatic pressures, Cavour quietly approved of it and helped arrange funding and logistics through the National Society for Italian Unity. British ships, including HMS Argus and Intrepid, happened to be in the harbor at Marsala when the Redshirts landed on May 11, discouraging Bourbon forces from intervening.

The Campaign in Sicily

Garibaldi's first major challenge came at the Battle of Calatafimi on May 15. Facing about 2,000 Bourbon troops under General Francesco Landi, his smaller, less-equipped force fought fiercely and managed to win. The psychological impact was immediate proof that the Redshirts could succeed despite the odds.

“Garibaldi represented the romantic ideal of the revolutionary hero. When unrest in Sicily flared again in spring 1860, he saw his moment to act.”

Garibaldi marched toward Palermo, where tensions were already high. On May 27, with the help of local rebels, his forces—now around 3,000—launched a bold assault on the capital. For five days, street fighting raged against the 18,000-strong Bourbon garrison led by General Ferdinando Lanza. Eventually, Lanza capitulated, and by June 6, Palermo was in Garibaldi's hands. Following

additional victories, including the Battle of Milazzo on July 20, Garibaldi gained control of the entire island. His ranks swelled to over 20,000 thanks to local support and reinforcements. He declared himself “dictator of Sicily in the name of Victor Emmanuel II,” positioning the campaign within a broader national framework.

With Sicily pacified, Garibaldi turned his sights on the mainland. On the night of August 18–19, he secretly ferried around 3,000 men across the Strait of Messina to land near Melito in Calabria. Once again, his forces faced little resistance. The Bourbon army, theoretically 60,000 strong, was riddled with desertions and demoralization. Cities like Reggio Calabria and Catanzaro welcomed Garibaldi as a liberator. By the time he reached Naples on September 7, King Francis II had fled to the fortified city of Gaeta with his wife, Maria Sophie. Garibaldi, entering Naples with minimal bloodshed, established a provisional government and prepared for the final showdown.

The Fall of Naples & Final Confrontation

From October 1–2, Garibaldi's forces met the Bourbon army in the Battle of the Volturno—one

of the campaign's largest confrontations. With about 24,000 men, Garibaldi clashed with roughly 28,000 Bourbon troops under General Giosuè Ritucci. Despite being slightly outnumbered, the Redshirts held their ground, thanks in part to support from Nino Bixio and reinforcements from the north.

Meanwhile, Cavour—concerned about Garibaldi's growing power and radicalism—sent the Piedmontese army south. After defeating the Papal army at Castelfidardo on September 18, Victor Emmanuel II moved into Neapolitan territory. On October 26, the two forces met at Teano. In a symbolic act of national unity, Garibaldi greeted Victor Emmanuel with the words, “Hail to the King of Italy,” and handed over control of the newly liberated territory. He declined any titles or rewards and retired briefly to Caprera. The final Bourbon resistance ended with the fall of Gaeta on February 13, 1861. One month later, on March 17, the Kingdom of Italy was officially proclaimed in Turin, with Victor Emmanuel II as king.

Consequences & Legacy

The March of the Thousand had

a monumental impact. In less than a year, Garibaldi's volunteers helped dismantle the largest pre-unification Italian kingdom. From an initial 1,089 men, his force grew to more than 30,000, supported by local uprisings and military momentum. The expedition demonstrated the power of popular nationalism and the catalytic role of revolutionary action in the 19th century.

Yet unification came with deep challenges. The rapid annexation of the south by the northern-led government created a persistent north-south divide. The imposition of taxes, conscription, and central authority alienated many southern Italians, leading to resistance in the form of brigandaggio (banditry), which by 1863 required over 100,000 Piedmontese

troops to suppress. While the south had been politically liberated, many felt socially and economically colonized.

Despite this, Garibaldi and the Redshirts became enduring symbols of Italian unity and sacrifice. Statues of Garibaldi grace nearly every Italian city, and his legend inspired not only Italians but revolutionaries across Europe and Latin America.

Conclusion

The March of the Thousand was far more than a military campaign—it was a national awakening. Garibaldi's bold expedition from Genoa to Naples reshaped the future of Italy and offered a model for how determined individuals can change history. What began with a thousand volunteers ended in the creation of a new nation. Though the path to unity was fraught with contradictions and consequences, the legacy of the Thousand endures as a powerful reminder of the ideals of courage, sacrifice, and identity that forged modern Italy.

“The rapid annexation of the south by the northern-led government created a persistent north-south divide.”

Footnotes & appendix

JOSHUA FOURACRE

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The Impact of Social Class on Legal Outcomes in the UK

CHRIS ASHER

This research investigates the extent to which social class shapes legal outcomes within the UK criminal justice system. Although the law claims to function with fairness and impartiality, sociological evidence reveals that structural inequalities—particularly those relating to class—consistently shape how justice is administered. This study draws on quantitative data from the Lammy Review, the Ministry of Justice, and the National Crime Agency; academic research by Emmelman and Skarbek; a podcast from BBC Radio 4's Law in Action; and original qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews. It argues that the justice system does not operate as a neutral institution, but instead reinforces class-based hierarchies by treating individuals from working-class and upper-class backgrounds differently at every stage of the legal process—from policing and prosecution to sentencing and representation.

Three key challenges emerged

during this project. First, official legal data does not classify individuals explicitly by social class, so proxies such as postcode, occupation and education level were used to make informed assumptions. Second, class cannot be wholly separated from intersecting factors such as race, gender and age, which complicates attempts to isolate class as an independent variable. Third, white-collar crimes are often underreported and under-prosecuted, contributing to what sociologists call the “dark figure of crime”—offences that exist but are not recorded in official statistics. Despite these methodological challenges, a consistent pattern emerges: individuals from working-class backgrounds receive significantly worse legal outcomes than those from middle- and upper-class backgrounds. Rather than delivering equal justice, the system reproduces inequality through institutional bias and social stratification.

Statistical data reveals the extent

to which legal outcomes correlate with class position, despite the lack of direct categorization by class. The Lammy Review (2017) found that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals comprised 24% of Crown Court defendants and received custodial sentences in 61% of cases, compared with 56% of white defendants. While this data directly reflects racial disparities, it is also class-relevant, as a disproportionate number of BAME individuals live in deprived, working-class communities. Supporting this, the Social Metrics Commission (2020) found that 46% of individuals in families led by Black/African/Caribbean/Black British householders were in poverty, compared with only 19% of those in White-led households. This intersection of race and class intensifies disadvantage—an example of intersectionality in practice.

The Ministry of Justice (2022) provides further insight using geographical proxies. Individuals from low-income postcodes were more likely to be arrested, charged and convicted. When convicted, they received longer sentences. In fact, for the same category of offence, individuals from deprived areas were ten times more likely to be imprisoned. This illustrates how legal decisions are shaped not only by

offence severity but also by social background. It highlights the operation of judicial discretion, where judges' personal interpretations—often unconsciously biased—affect outcomes.

A stark contrast is found in the treatment of white-collar crime. The National Crime Agency (2022) estimated the UK loses over £4 billion annually to economic crimes like fraud and embezzlement, yet only 15% of fraud cases lead to prosecution. There was a 15% increase in the year ending March 2023 compared with the previous year (up from 1,004,282 to 1,151,192 offences), but prosecutions remained limited. Around 86% of fraud cases go unreported. These figures suggest that crimes committed by individuals in high-status professions—usually from the middle and upper classes—are less likely to be reported, prosecuted or punished harshly. When sentenced, white-collar offenders typically receive fines, community service or suspended sentences. This reflects institutional leniency, whereby class privilege shields individuals from the full force of legal punishment.

Public perception confirms this trend. A 2024 survey found that 59% of respondents believed reporting white-collar crime would

“Around 86% of fraud cases go unreported. These figures suggest that crimes committed by individuals in high-status professions”

result in no meaningful action, while 86% supported tougher sentencing for such offences. This aligns with Marxist criminological perspectives, which argue that the justice system operates in the interests of the ruling class, protecting elite offenders while disproportionately punishing the working class.

To explore class disparities in legal outcomes more deeply, six semi-structured interviews were conducted. All participants independently affirmed that social class significantly influenced their experiences of arrest, trial, and sentencing. Person A described how stop-and-search practices disproportionately targeted people in deprived areas using vague justifications like “looking rough” or “hanging around.” This reflects the over-policing of working-class communities. In sentencing, structural disadvantages—such as homelessness or lack of family support—were often treated as aggravating factors. Meanwhile, middle-class offenders facing similar charges were more likely to be described in mitigating terms, such as being under stress or having career potential. This language contributed to more lenient sentences, such as suspended sentences or rehabilitation orders, revealing how class shapes narrative construction in the courtroom.

“By contrast, middle-class offenders were typically deemed suitable for community rehabilitation.”

The remaining five interviewees supported this view, reporting that pre-sentence reports for working-class defendants frequently referenced unstable housing, low educational attainment, and unemployment, which were interpreted as signs of risk. By contrast, middle-class offenders were typically deemed suitable for community rehabilitation. This echoes labelling theory, which contends that deviant labels—especially from authority figures—significantly shape how individuals are treated. Person D raised concerns about legal aid representation. Underfunded and overburdened, legal aid lawyers were seen to offer weaker defence preparation. In contrast, middle- and upper-class defendants who could afford private counsel received strategic advice and thorough preparation. This reinforces Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital, which posits that middle-class individuals possess social resources—such as confidence, language proficiency and appearance—that allow them to navigate legal institutions more effectively.

These class-based disparities are confirmed by academic research. Emmelman (1994), in her work *The Effect of Social Class on the Adjudication of Criminal Cases*, found that courtroom actors used indicators like appearance,

accent and behavior to assess defendants’ credibility. Working-class defendants were frequently perceived as aggressive or dishonest, while middle-class defendants were seen as cooperative. Skarbek (2014) observed that even within prisons, white-collar offenders were housed in low-security wings with better conditions, while working-class prisoners experienced harsher treatment and more frequent disciplinary sanctions. This indicates that class inequality persists beyond sentencing and shapes the full experience of punishment.

Person C cited the long-term effects of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO, 2012), which removed major areas of law from legal aid eligibility. BBC Radio 4’s *Law in Action* (2013) reported that legal aid cases declined by 46%—from 925,000 to 497,000. Maura McGowan QC argued that legal representation had become a “luxury for the few, not a right for all.” These changes have further entrenched class inequality in legal access.

Combining statistical data, interviews, academic work and media sources, this research confirms that class-based inequality affects the entire legal process. In Lon-

don, the most income-deprived 10% of neighborhoods experience crime rates 41% higher than the least deprived areas, with violent and drug-related crime up to 2.5 times more common. Individuals from the poorest areas are ten times more likely to be imprisoned than those from the wealthiest—307 per 100,000 versus 30 per 100,000.

These figures reflect institutional bias and social control, suggesting that deprivation increases the likelihood of state intervention and punishment. Privately hired barristers—used predominantly by the middle and upper classes—offer strategic, tailored support and direct communication, enabling more effective legal outcomes. These clients benefit from expert case preparation and targeted defences, again demonstrating Bourdieu’s cultural capital.

Emmelman found that legal professionals were less likely to explain procedures in detail to working-class clients, assuming they lacked capacity or interest. Middle-class defendants, in contrast, received more thorough guidance and greater involvement in decision-making. Legal practice, therefore, is shaped by class-based assumptions that affect how individuals are treated and what outcomes they receive. Public opinion reflects awareness of

“legal professionals were less likely to explain procedures in detail to working-class clients, assuming they lacked capacity or interest.”

these disparities. A 2024 Express poll reported that 59% of respondents believed white-collar crime went unpunished, while 86% supported tougher sanctions. . These views align with Marxist criminology, which maintains that the legal system protects capitalist elites while targeting the poor.

Overall, the evidence confirms that the criminal justice system is not class-neutral. Working-class individuals are disproportionately policed, poorly represented and harshly sentenced. Privileged defendants are shielded from scrutiny and benefit from leniency. Through discretionary decision-making, inequality of legal resources and the underreporting of elite crime, the justice system reproduces the very hierarchies it claims to dismantle. This study has several limitations. Class was measured using proxies—such

as education, postcode and employment status—which may not capture its full sociological complexity. Class also in-

tersects with race, gender and age, making it difficult to isolate its effect. The interview sample was small and cannot be generalised. Additionally, white-collar crime is under-recorded, contributing to the dark figure of crime. Future research could involve larger-scale qualitative investigations and more targeted data col-

lection.

Despite these limitations, the findings show that class remains one of the most powerful yet invisible forces shaping legal outcomes in the UK. From policing to sentencing, working-class individuals face structural disadvantage, while upper-class offenders benefit from privilege, protection, and judicial leniency. This reflects the Marxist view that law is an ideological tool serving the interests of the ruling class.

To address these injustices, several reforms are necessary. Legal aid must be restored to ensure fair representation. Sentencing guidelines should limit discretionary bias. Judges and probation officers should receive training to identify and counter unconscious class prejudice. Official statistics should incorporate class-related

data. Finally, investigative capacity for white-collar crime must be expanded to improve accountability. The law

should not be a mechanism for preserving privilege. My motivation to study law stems from a desire to confront these inequalities and work toward a justice system that treats all citizens equally—regardless of class. Without systemic change, the law will continue to reproduce the inequalities it claims to eliminate.

“The findings show that class remains one of the most powerful yet invisible forces shaping legal outcomes in the UK”

Footnotes & appendix

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We look forward to receiving your entries.

The OPGS Sixth Form Team

