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8th international conference on diversity in organisations, communities and nations

Diversity, identity and belonging: women's spaces of sociality

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Abstract:

Questions of identity, diversity and senses of belonging have been central to debates about multiculturalism, citizenship and social cohesion. However, there are few studies which specifically examine women's spaces of sociality and how these have contributed to new formations of identities. Developed from feminist and post-colonial theorisations, and drawing on empirical interview data from a research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, this paper explores identities for (primarily) 'White' and 'South Asian' women through the intersections of gender, 'race' and ethnicity with culture, religion and sexuality. It demonstrates how aspects of identities, affiliations, ambivalences or antagonisms are manifested in particular contexts of socialising, and explores how the processes of social identification are played out in informal contexts of socialising. Through a rich source of interviews carried out in London, it demonstrates how post-colonial spaces of sociality in a major international city can be places of intimacy and bonding for women as well as places where 'difference' is constructed, enforced, resisted and performed.

Introduction:

This paper is concerned with diverse and multiple gendered identities, developed through the intersections of gender with 'race' and ethnicity, with culture and religion, with social class and with sexuality. It addresses ways in which identities shape, construct and constrain senses of belonging, arguing that identities are negotiated and contested and showing how they are fluid, multiple, contradictory and in flux. In particular, the paper demonstrates how aspects of identities, affiliations, ambivalences or antagonisms are manifested in particular contexts of socialising. It traces feelings and experiences of belonging (and unbelonging) and explores how the processes of social identification are played out and performed.

In exploring diversity, identity and belonging in women's spaces of sociality, the paper draws on in-depth interviews conducted as part of a major project funded by the Economic and Social Research Councilⁱⁱ. The aims of the project are to:

- explore commonalities and differences in the ways in which women construct their gendered and sexualised, racialised and ethnicised, identities within spaces of sociality in post-colonial London;
- examine the ways in which women perform social identifications in private and public spaces of sociality in London; and
- develop theoretical understandings of post-colonial intersected identities in urban spaces of sociality in London.

Participant interviewsⁱⁱⁱ took place with 42 'white' and 'South Asian', 'straight' and 'queer' women living in London, who met in informal social spaces such as knitting groups, book clubs, social groups and community centres. Names are coded throughout^{iv}, and ethnicities and sexualities (where stated) are self-identified.

This paper asks how 'identity' can be understood through relationships between individuals, groups and community/ies and explores how (and if) a sense of identity, belonging and community can be developed within a major global and post-colonial city. In doing so it locates the interview data within theoretical frameworks derived from feminism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism. The prefix 'post' can be used to indicate a process of ongoing transformation or change (see eg Venn, 2006), central to theorisations not just of post-structuralism and post-colonialism, but also to feminism (see eg Brooks, 1997, for discussion of post-feminism). However, 'post' can also suggest something which supercedes, or at least comes afterwards. In this paper I use 'feminism' rather than 'post-feminism' as a political statement to counteract popular views of a post-feminist world where feminism is outdated and no longer necessary for political (or structural or ideological) change. Whilst it is difficult today to talk of feminism rather than feminisms, feminist approaches have been particularly helpful in exploring the nuanced intersections of gender with race and ethnicity, social class, sexuality and other diverse aspects of identity (see eg Brah and Phoenix, 2004). This paper, and the research on which it is based, develops its analysis and theorisations from feminist, post-structuralist and post-colonial perspectives through the multiple voices of academics, theorists and the interviewees.

Diversity, identity and belonging in post-colonial London

London is perhaps the post-colonial city (and global city) *par excellence*. Its population and trading relations reflect centuries' old colonial ties as well as new forms of economic domination and negotiations. It is described as 'hyper-diverse' ... (Its) 8 million plus inhabitants speak over 300 languages and there are at least 50 ethnic/national communities with over 10,000 members (Cox and Narayan, 2008).

In considering the post-colonial, Couze Venn suggests that:

The post-colonial can be understood as a virtual space, that is, a space of possibility and emergence. It is thus also potential becoming: it opens towards a future that will not repeat existing forms of sociality and oppressive power relations (Venn, 2006: 190).

Nevertheless, the post-colonial belongs to the virtual and discursive spaces and collective memories of the colonizers as well as the colonised. As McLintock (1995) argues, "imperialism ... is not something that happened elsewhere – a disagreeable fact of history external to Western identity (McLintock, 1995: 5). Colonialism and imperialism both construct 'difference' and therefore identity (Brah, 2007) although this is not always recognised nor problematised. One of the interviewees, KQKG8, demonstrates some of these complexities:

London [...] it's an amazing, it's just an amazing city. A city with such hard history to swallow and such a mix [...]. You forget that the city you live in is also this city that has had and still has this incredible kind of global significance in all sorts of ways. I have a really palpable sense of that and a really palpable sense of the history and that this is this city that's been kind of growing since Viking invasions, **mmm**, really, and exclusively through migration. This is a city of migrants and a city that kind of oppressed large sections of the world and a city that you know just so amazing and I really, the sense of history I think and that connection to history that's sometimes quite

painful is a really big part of what makes me feel English and certainly what makes me feel comfortable in London (KQKG8, White British, lesbian, 30s).

However, whilst KQKG8 recognises the 'hard history', a history of oppression and pain, she still feels 'comfortable in London'. London's (and England's) colonial past is also what makes it 'great' for KQKG8, who seems to identify with the colonizers ('we're who showed up'):

But I do, like because London, London is, is quintessentially English in the sense that we're who showed up. There's something great about that (KQKG8, White British, lesbian, 30s).

London is a major city of complex spaces – of past, present and future possibilities; of the local, national and global; of stories and histories and collective memories; of gendered, sexualised and racialised identities. It is a post-structural world nevertheless made up of structures derived from social, historical, economic, political, ideological and cultural conditions and power relations. It is through such conditions and relations that identities evolve. Stuart Hall (2000) conceptualises identity as a continual process of becoming through identifications – through discursive spaces including those of colonialism and post-colonialism and empire:

Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies. Moreover, they emerge within the play of specific modulations of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion Above all ... identities are constructed through, not outside, difference (Hall, 2000:17)

As this research shows, groups and individuals of unequal power and unequal access to resources and to dominant ways of being try to find liveable spaces, including spaces of sociality.

Narrating ourselves

Our sense of self varies according to our histories, to shared experiences, and to identifications, and the meanings we attach to them. Mohanty (1992) has described a politics of location which is developed through the inter-relationship of social, cultural, political, historical and economic processes with personal biographies and collective stories or histories. In this section I shall be exploring ways in which individual and collective identity/ies are performed.

According to Ricoeur (1991) our narrative identity is made up of our subjective identity in relation to both history and fiction. He describes the 'storied self', demonstrating how our identity becomes entangled in the stories we tell of ourselves and are told by others. Feminist theorisations of auto/biography also disrupt conventional taxonomies of biography and autobiography, disputing divisions of self/other, public/private, and immediacy/memory. 'The auto/biographical I' (Stanley 1992) signals ways in which knowledge is constructed through multiple layers of meaning. Constructs of self are negotiated around complexities of insider/outsider and belonging/unbelonging.

For example, AWG6 describes ways in which she negotiates her identity, which she understands as performance:

Well, I did struggle with it for sometime because I have my nice tomboy identity, which I really like and the thought of having to put on a salwaar kameez or a sari, frankly. But actually now I just treat it like drag. (AWG6, British Asian Indian, 20s).

SSG2 made conscious decisions about performing identity linked to post-colonial histories and past and present stories:

I wore a really nice shalwaar kameeze when I got an invitation to go to the Queens garden party. And I took mum [...] And she wore a sari, and err, and I wore shalwaar kameeze, but I think for them it was to make a point.

Which was?

I don't know. I think I wanted to be at the Queen's garden party not in a suit or a dress...or a hat! But in my in my traditional sort of Asian gear because **umm** I didn't see any issue with that (SSG2, British Mauritian, lesbian, 40s).

This was an affirming experience for SSG2, a way to take control and renegotiate or perform her identity in meaningful ways. AWG6 is both insider, invited to the Queen's garden party, and an outsider who has been afraid to walk out in non-English dress. With her identity in part constructed through unbelongings, she has found new ways to belong:

... it wasn't a big deal in the end 'cause there were loads of people there who also thought well I'm going to be dressed like this. And so we did that and it was great. And I only [went to] Buck Palace because I wanted mum to go I didn't really care **umm** but but it was fine. So so I think I have worn Indian clothes I don't think I don't I have I didn't see any Asians there I felt quite proud about it because back in the old days when we were growing up you'd be quite frightened to walk out in traditional gear. You never knew what would happen (SSG2, British Mauritian, lesbian, 40s).

All identity is performed (see Butler 1997) and performers may change, develop, omit, expand the stories they tell. In addition, performance is not always voluntary, and Skeggs (2004) warns of the dangers of 'forced telling'. This is particularly pertinent when considering analysis of the interview data. For example, BC02 states:

Yes I feel, I feel a minority. I do feel **um** that I am part of a minority and I am aware of that **uh hum um** I think it's a struggle to have an identity because it's, it's a mixture of things. It's a privilege living in London because I don't think that struggle's as evident, certainly living in a ghetto kind of area like Finchley it's **um** you know there's, I don't know what you want to say, Jewish er you know in sort of Roland Barthes terms of signs everywhere **uh hum** so it doesn't feel, it's quite funny because it doesn't feel like you're a minority when you're in Finchley **uh hum** but you obviously are **uh hum uh hum. Um** I think I'm proud of my Jewish identity but I can't quite tell you what that means ... (BC02, British Jewish, 40s).

BC02 begins her response through her emotions ('... I feel, I feel ... I do feel'). However, she finds it difficult to narrate herself. Looking for the 'signs' that elsewhere she finds 'everywhere', she 'can't quite tell' the interviewer what she means, searching for words with which the interviewer might identify ('I don't know what you want to say'). She thinks she is 'proud of (her) Jewish identity', but is not quite certain whether or not that is a reasonable thing to say ('I can't quite tell you').

BC02 is one of the few respondents who problematises 'whiteness'. She feels part of a minority, struggling with an identity which is both white and minoritised. Nevertheless, there are places ('Finchley', an area of London with a visible Jewish community) where 'difference' disappears. Talking to an interviewer from a visible minority ethnic group, she may feel forced to identify a hierarchy of racism:

No I don't think there's discrimination (against Jews) but I mean even today in the news there was a thing about anti-semitism, about shops in Golders Green that have been vandalised just now **uh hum** and restaurants, the windows have been smashed in **oh right** and they think it's anti-semitic and I think that the Jews do tend to exaggerate **uh hum um** anti-semitic feeling in this country [...]. I do think it's slightly exaggerated but, it's definitely there you know? **Uh hum** but I don't think you know we can compare anti-semitism. So me being Jewish because I'm white, most people you know don't know. Most people have no idea in England **uh hum** what Jews are or who they are or whatever ... (BC02, British Jewish, 40s).

Powerfully describing racist acts of anti-semitism, knowing that anti-semitism is 'definitely there', BC02 declares (feels forced to declare?) 'I don't think there's discrimination'. 'They' might think it is anti-semitic, but she thinks it is 'exaggerated'. She is concerned to stress that anti-semitic racism should not be compared with other forms, because, being 'white, most people you know don't know'. Unless forced to tell, 'difference' can be hidden, and choices can (sometimes) be made as to how to narrate one's multiple selves.

However, identity is not just performed, but also received, and there is no control over how we will be read, by whom, and with what results:

I remember driving up to this huge town hall [...] for a wedding, **umm** surrounded in the car, obviously by women in saris, and somebody shouted at us walking past saying 'fucking Pakis' and all this and just being really obnoxious. (SSG2, British Mauritian, lesbian, 40s).

Just like last weekend I was walking from the corner shop to my house which is all of about 5 minutes, at 11 o'clock in the morning [...] this guy comes up behind me and starts yelling at me going 'fucking lesbians you know you should never have been born' and all of this sort of stuff (KQKG13, White New Zealand Pākehā, lesbian, 30s).

Within 5 minutes of just walking down the street (with Black partner) someone had wound down their window and shouted, 'fucking nigger' (KQKG8, White lesbian, 30s).

A colonial history bred in patriarchal structures brings with it various forms of racism which continue to get played out through the dominant and masculinised discourse of 'fucking'. The 'problematic of identity' (Brah, 2007: 136) continues to determine ways in which subjectivities and identities emerge and are submerged. Post-structuralism sheds light on the multiple, contradictory and shifting sense of self that unsettles hegemonic versions of the individual as a coherent, rational and decontextualised self (Burke and Jackson, 2007: 111). In this section I have shown how our sense of who we are is continually becoming through both self and others. In the next section I continue to draw on the interview data to move from the ways in which we narrate our selves through the multiplicity of diverse identities which are 'us', to consider ways in which we negotiate and understand ourselves through the social spaces of community/ies.

Spaces of the imagination

In this section I move from narrated stories to imagined communities, asking about the imagined community or communities in which these women live and how these imaginings are played out in spaces of sociality. Imagined communities have been described as the images of affinity between community members that members of a community hold in their mind (Anderson 2006), whether or not that affinity exists. This was evident in many of the descriptions that the women gave of the social spaces they enjoy within their local communities where, as KQKG8 shows, communities of difference, through 'multiple ... identifiers' and 'affiliations', are positive places of sociality:

It's a very strong feeling of community, even though it's made up of many people with many different community affiliations you know. Just as there are many Muslims I'm also lesbian so I've got an affiliation to that community d'y'know what I mean? So we're all kind of made up of you know multiple kind of identifiers in terms of our community affiliation, but nonetheless we form a kind of local community that's very kind of positive basically (KQKG8, White British lesbian, 30s).

For NLKG2, too, culturally diverse communities are enjoyable:

Yeah I really I love living in London for the cultural diversity. Y'know I find it, y'know I find it very enjoyable. Even if you're not constantly meeting people from different backgrounds, just sort of knowing that people are there, sort of shaping the cultural experience, I enjoy (NLKG2, White British, 20s).

These views are confirmed by two-thirds of London's population (MORI 2006), who say that multiculturalism makes Britain a better place to live, with 75% supporting the right of all persons to dress in accordance with their religious beliefs, and 82% believing that everybody in London should be free to live their lives how they like. However, for some of the interviewees, as for many Londoners, multiculturalism is understood through difference as exotic, and through cultures of consumption, rather than through 'meeting people from different backgrounds':

I like the fact that there are all these different languages that I hear when I walk down the street **uh hum**. That's what I love about London [...] and it's not just one you know it's not a kind of um monocultural thing **yes** it's really mixed I mean you know **uh hum uh hum** from the Israeli bagel **um** shop to the Albanian shop down the road and then I hear lots of Polish. I live above a deli which is owned by Indians but which have Polish workers as well ... (AWG2, British Asian, 50s).

I like the fact that (London's) very diverse y'know we've got lots of kind of different communities kind of living close together. I really like that.

Do you mean cultural?

Different ethnicities and difficult cultures [...] so I like that. I like the fact that I can get more different types of feta cheese and haloumi in my local shop than in Sainsbury's (KQKG4, White British Jewish, 30s).

However, although taken by many as a given 'good', the multi-ethnic and diverse cultures of London are not always perceived as spaces of sociality:

Well there's a lot of **um** different ethnic groups and I think, I'm not sure but I get the impression that a lot of them are quite recently arrived. So maybe that's why they tend to stay within their own communities a lot. So there's quite a lot of different religious groups. There's lots of different churches **um**, mostly African-Caribbean. There's quite a lot of African people there from different groups I think and there's quite a lot of Afghans as well. **Um** so it's quite a you know, quite a sort of strong mix of cultures, but it feels like they're also most of them kind of quite you know, defending their territory in a way (KQKG5, White European, Queer, 40s).

Sometimes it is best to keep 'multiculturalism' in its place:

Well I'm all for (multiculturalism) really, I mean pretty cheesy but **um**, but I love the fact that it's a diverse place, that it's so multicultural and that **um** you know the area where we live you walk up the high street ... and it's all written in different languages and different kinds of foods and you know clothing from different countries and things – I love that, that it feels so far and so near at the same time **um** ... (CLKG14, White American, Jewish, 30s).

Multiculturalism works at a safe and respectable distance – 'so far and so near at the same time'. CLKG14 goes on to say:

You know I like that you can get pretty much any kind of food that you want here. You can **um**, you know all of our friends are so international, **um** both of us just by virtue of having travelled a lot and **um** it is, it's really corny the 'we are one' sort of thing but it's true at the same time ... (CLKG14, White American, Jewish, 30s).

Nevertheless, although the 'oneness' of us may exist in our imagined communities, the dominance of 'multiculturalism' can negatively impact on gender and sexuality through, for example, understanding multiculturalism and its impact through the voices of male community leaders (Beckett and Macey 2001), or through normalising hegemonic ways of being, including normalised heterosexuality (see Kalra, 2005; Mohanty, 2003; Spivak, 1996). KQKG13 describes how she has had to hunt out pockets of space for her communities of sociality:

Stokey is nice because you can walk down the street and you're bound to see some other lesbians which is always really nice in an affirmation sort of sense and also in a safety sort of sense. (KQKG13, White New Zealand Pākehā, lesbian, 30s).

Despite the imagined communities of sociality, without these safe spaces of affirmation it is not always possible for minoritised groups and individuals to recognise themselves, and marginalised groups such as Black and minority ethnic women can become invisibilised (see Mirzi, 2003). There comes a realisation that when we look into the mirror of our community/ies we can find only half the world reflected back, or no recognisable world at all. Adrienne Rich describes it thus:

when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing. Yet you know you exist and others like you, that this is a game with mirrors (Rich, 1986, p199).

Some of the interviewees have looked into the mirror images of their social spaces and experienced that psychic disequilibrium, looking at and through non-reflective and opaque glass. AWG1 has struggled to recognise herself in her community, searching for her own spaces of sociality:

The area I live in didn't have any people from our community, I was never able to find any ... There was no-one from my community who I could meet ... Where it's all ... Europeans with their 'hello hi' formalities, they're hardly like people in our countries ... (AWG1, British Asian, 61).

'Our countries' are not here, and the people are not like 'us'. AWG1 eventually found her social space at a community centre for Asian women. In her discussion she appears to identify with her interviewer, referring to 'we Asians', possibly making it easier for AWG1 to narrate herself:

I enjoy a lot at communities centres that we Asians have, where we have our celebrations, such as this community centre, or sometimes we go to other women's centres. I feel very relaxed and free, because it's our own people, and it's a carefree environment (AWG1, British Asian, 61).

I will go on to explore spaces of sociality, including women-only spaces, in more depth in the next section.

Spaces of sociality

Our sense of self is tied to our interactions with others through the everyday practices in which we locate ourselves (Venn, 2006:17), identifying everyday practices of social activity. Spaces of sociality can identify the public as well as the private possibilities that can be created. And people in everyday interactions need to recognise themselves as particular selves that can both remain constant over time, and yet also change. As Stuart Hall has shown, identity is not in the past to be found but in the future to be constructed (Hall, 2001: 37). In considering social spaces, I turn to spaces where what is most important is those aspects of our identities which we have in common with others, where we find identities, common understandings, traditions that are shared and traditions that are still to be made.

In finding her spaces of sociality AWG1 prioritises at least two aspects of her identity, her 'Asianness' and her gender. There may also be other aspects of identity, including religion, which make her feel 'relaxed and free' amongst 'our people'. Whilst AWG1 affirms her ethnicised and gendered identity, her sexualised identity is neither disclosed nor discussed, confirming how heterosexuality continues to be both normalised and seen as 'respectable' (Skeggs, 1997).

In this section I turn to interviews with women who attend a social group for lesbian and bisexual Asian and Middle Eastern women in London. All of the women socialise in London's gay scene at times, but also sometimes seek not just gay or queer spaces, but explicitly lesbian or women-only spaces. As AWG6 explains, in London 'there's actually quite a lot of gay places, but they're more aimed at men'.

Like AWG1, SSG1 searches out women-only spaces:

I love Southopia. I would go there any night just to chill out. It's a beautiful venue. Its women orientated, you could sit there all night and read a book, and no one would hassle you (SSG1, Asian British, bi-sexual, 30s).

SSG4 looks for places not just where she will not be hassled, but where she will feel safe and where she has a sense of belonging:

Okay, so part of my socialising choices are also to do with being in an environment that I create for myself. I'm in a white majority culture which is straight. Everyday, like work and stuff. So, when I socialise I tend to choose things that are not white majority culture. So you won't really see me down the comedy club for a stand-up night with lots of drunken white blokes with beer bellies. Not me, not my thing. (SSG4, East African Asian, lesbian 30s)

In creating her social spaces, she looks for 'a bit more queer', which is more important to her than to seek out Asian spaces:

How about, do you ever hang out in places that are Asian, not necessarily just women, but mixed? Like would you go to any Asian bars or anything?

No, not that I know of. I don't know of any. I mean I know there've been trendy phases of trendy bars and stuff but, not necessarily 'cause I get the Asian stuff, I get all the cultural stuff from family and congregation. So I don't need more Asian. What I would like is to bump it up with a bit more queer (SSG4, East African Asian, lesbian 30s).

For other women, queer space can be appropriated as a political act:

It's interesting because queer (knitting club) happens in a straight bar but there's so many of us that it's like we create our own queer space within, and that's a political act as well, kind of creating that safe queer space within, **mmm**, the kind of wider straight space (KQKG4, White British Jewish, lesbian, 30s).

Queer space is a central part of KQKG4's social space:

Um, it's important that, yes, is the answer! I wouldn't say that I would only be willing to socialise in queer space. But if I go out to a bar or a pub, and it's not the least queer friendly, I probably will feel a little bit uncomfortable. My partner is always shy about showing affection in public anyway. She won't do that in straight space, and then that makes me feel more uncomfortable anyway, **mmm um**. There just is a kind of easiness (KQKG4, White British Jewish, lesbian, 30s).

Foucault (1977) has demonstrated how the power of normalising discourse can create an illusion of normality against which we judge claims to truth, which constructs people as both subjects and objects of power and knowledge. It is the constitution of knowledge claims as 'truth' that is linked to systems of power: those who have the power - institutionally as well as individually - to determine and legitimise 'truth' also have the power to determine dominant discourses (Jackson 2004). Foucault notes that the normalising judgement has become one of the central elements of our society, although here he normalises male ways of being, showing women as 'Other' or not visible in his writing. He says:

The judges of normality are everywhere ... it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects it to his body, his gestures, his behaviour, his aptitudes, his achievements (Foucault 1977: 304)

However, there is always the possibility of resistance. As Avtar Brah argues:

Conscious agency and unconscious subjective forces are enmeshed in everyday rituals such as those surrounding ... social activity. These rituals provide the site on which a sense of belonging, a sense of 'identity', may be forged in the process of articulating its difference from other people's way of doing things (Brah, 2007:143).

These interviewees have demonstrated that it is possible to find ways to resist the power of normalisation through chosen and constructed spaces of sociality which, far from the imagined communities of multicultural London, are real and confirm their multi- and otherwise marginalised identities.

Conclusions

Social spaces offer both a material and a discursive context. Spaces of sociality in neighbourhood and community have been seen as valued by the women in this research, primarily for their cultural or ethnic diversity, although for some what was valued was a sense of the exotic and the cultures of consumption such diversity may bring. Whilst some interviewees (KQKG8 for example) experienced a sense of belonging to neighbourhoods through their multiple identities, for others, such as AWG1, their prioritised identities led to exclusions and feelings of unbelonging.

Riceour (1991) describes three moments – having-been, making-present, and coming-towards. Memories of what has been can both sustain and disrupt a sense of self, although the creation of new memories can be a political act of coming-towards. I began the paper by arguing that post-colonialism, through having-been and making-present, can show the potential for becoming. Whilst the supposed multiculturalism of London does open up many possibilities for social spaces of community, a sense of belonging that moves beyond the imagined develops in the spaces of sociality created around prioritised identities that are other marginalised in the post-colonial city. As the interviewees have shown, 'becoming' is complex and messy, and identities in post-colonial London are intersected, fluid and transitional, mobilized through different emphases and negotiations. The interviewees have shown how, in their varied and sometimes ambivalent ways, they are negotiating and making comfortable the multiple aspects of their identities, using spaces of sociality to make new collective memories, and develop meaningful and intimate affiliations and bonds.

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ⁱⁱ ESRC RES-148-25-0022 Intersecting identities: Women's spaces of sociality in post-colonial London

ⁱⁱⁱ Interviewers spent some time as participant observers within the social groups prior to conducting interviews.

^{iv} AWG = Asian Women's Group
BC = Book club
BC2 = Book club 2
BC3 = Book club 3
CLKG = Central London knitting group
KQKG = Klick Queer knitting group
NLKG = North London knitting group
SSG = Social support group