Connected Communities

South Asian Musics, Multiculturalism and Communities: A Review of Literature and Key Concepts

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Introduction: Aims and Scope

The United Kingdom is home to numerous and diverse South Asian communities. These are defined by geographic origin (e.g. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the many regions within these areas), religion and other social and historical factors. Within these communities music often plays a key role. A source of personal enjoyment, it is also an activity around which individuals build networks, and a medium through which communities make their culture audible to themselves; a vehicle through which to reach out to other communities; equally a way of turning inward – a symptom of resistance to connection, or an assertion of difference. Music’s function for these communities is thus complex, but salient. For example, Indian classical music or classic Bollywood film songs may be a way of preserving an identification with one’s culture of origin, whilst younger generations may use fusions of popular genres such as hip hop and bhangra to articulate new connections of cultural identity and belonging (or otherwise). Music might reinforce existing socio-cultural delineations, but it is not always rigidly coterminous with them: by its appeal it is able to cut across such boundaries and potentially connect communities. This situation offers rich ground for research and engagement. Much musicking by South Asian individuals, groups and communities goes unnoticed – so how can visibility and

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1 This paper is an output from the scoping study, ‘Musics of South Asia: A Means for Connecting Communities?’, funded under the cross-council Connected Communities research programme led by the AHRC (grant ref. AH/J012149/1). This review may be most effectively read in conjunction with its companion paper, ‘South Asian musics, cultures and communities in Newcastle upon Tyne and the North East of England’ (Clarke with Hodgson 2012). Our co-investigator, Mónica Moreno Figueroa was an invaluable critical friend in the fine-tuning of both papers. Details of these and other outputs from the project can be found at http://research.ncl.ac.uk/icmus/scholarship/musicsofsouthasia/.
audibility be promoted (where this is desired)? Networks, or publics, might be communities in the making – but how is one transformed into the other? Is it indeed the case that communities (South Asian, other minority ethnic and white) could be brought into meaningful contact through music and other arts, and if so, how could this be fostered, beyond the occasional public event? How could both the local and global significance of such cultural forms be communicated and understood beyond their ethnic origins, and how might these shape new imaginings of a society of multiple – and possibly multiply connecting – cultures?

In this review essay, we consider existing bodies of literature germane to these questions – not only for the purpose of academic critical inquiry, but also with a view to potential future collaborative engagement between academe and South Asian (and by extension other minority ethnic) communities. Whilst this is motivated by the particular contingency of existing links between Newcastle University and South Asian communities in the North East of England, our intended scope here is also much broader, and therefore, we hope, generalisable to a wider body of researchers. One of our key questions is this: What would members of an academic institution need to know in order to conduct an engaged, ethnographically informed, collaborative project with (ethnically defined) communities, principally (though not exclusively) in an urban context? We draw on such disciplines and subdisciplines as ethnomusicology, cultural studies, anthropology and sociology; and our investigation navigates critical discursive territories that include multiculturalism and the regulation of diversity (Taylor 1994; Baumann 1999; Back et al. 2002; Parekh 2006; Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010), (super)diversity and transnationalism (Cohen 1997; Gidley 2007; Vertovec 2007) and diaspora studies (Tölölyan 1996; Turino 2000; Werbner 2002; Cohen 2007; Knott and McLoughlin 2010). In certain respects this review represents a preliminary feasibility study for an eventual larger project that would investigate the role of music in South Asian communities regionally, the directions it is taking, how communities could be supported, and whether connections between and among communities are indeed desired. In a companion paper (Clarke with Hodgson 2012), we consider the particular situation of Newcastle upon Tyne

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2 The term ‘musicking’ is one coined by Christopher Small (1998) to emphasise music as something which involves social ‘doing’ rather than as something idealised or ontological.

3 Throughout this paper we use the term ‘South Asian’ as a shorthand for ‘British South Asian’ or people of South Asian heritage – which may (and often does) refer to second- and subsequent-generation groups and individuals born in the UK, or to people now resident in the UK. Some of the theoretical issues surrounding identity are discussed later in this paper.
and the North East – the spaces and places in which South Asian groups live and engage with music (and culture more widely), and the organisations that can and do support them. In associated papers, these issues are explored ethnographically as case studies focused on Bradford (Hodgson, forthcoming) and Newcastle (Clarke 2012).

Our present investigation falls into two main parts. In the first, we reassert the case for multiculturalism. Contra the desire lately voiced by certain politicians and certain areas of the press to have done with such talk, our premise is that multiculturalist discourses still have an essential role to play in social understanding – since society unarguably constitutes a multiplicity of culturally mediated lived experiences. This has an obvious imperative for ventures such as the AHRC’s Connected Communities scheme. If communities are formed culturally (and form cultures), and if ‘all cultures tend to have an ethnic basis’ (Parekh 2006: 154), then analysis of the connection of communities will need sooner or later to examine what is at stake around connections (or disconnections) between multiple cultures and multiple ethnicities. To this end, the second part of our inquiry examines key conceptual issues that are relevant to such a project, including ethnicity, migration and identity, community and nationhood, and the global and the local. Finally, in a self-reflexive conclusion, we consider what investigators need to ask of themselves in making the kinds of ethnographic and sociological engagements envisaged by this project – questions of both methodology and ethics. The tenor of this inquiry is inevitably multidisciplinary, as indicated above; but throughout we draw on the particular insights that the study of music might bring to bear on the situation. The spirit, then, is an inclusive one: we look outwards beyond the boundaries of our own, musicological disciplines, but at the same time invite others to share what music (and other arts) can help people know and do.

**Part One: Affirming Multiculturalism**

**Multiculturalism as a shared concern**

Over the past twenty years, multiculturalism has come under serious criticism and scrutiny from the public, media and politicians. Often at the centre of these debates are South Asian communities, particularly those who are deemed to live in particular, often deprived areas of inner cities. Denoted as self-segregating (see government-commissioned reports by Cantle (2001), West (2005) and Phillips (2005)), these communities and groups have come to symbolise multiculturalism’s alleged failure. In
post-war Britain, early criticisms of government migration policies, levelled along lines of racial xenophobia, gave way to attacks on multicultural policy and are now arguably a combination of the two. Most recently, multiculturalism has been accused of raft of failings – from refusing common values, to encouraging segregation, to harbouring terrorists (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010). Sociologists and anthropologists have criticised the concept for essentialising cultures, transgressing liberal democracy, being apologetic for the subjugation of women and perpetuating patriarchy, and for reifying cultures as singular, homogeneous, unchanging entities (see Modood and Werbner 1997; Grillo 1998; Modood 1998; Baumann 1999; Parekh 2000; Watson 2000; Gilroy 2004; West 2005; and Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010).

Instead, a range of alternative terminology has been advocated to describe the movement of people, how they settle in new surroundings, and how governments regulate diversity. Cosmopolitanism (Turino 2000; Vertovec and Cohen 2002), interculturalism and transculturalism (Emerson 2011; Gundara 2000; Gundara and Jacobs 2000; Modood and Meer 2012) have all been proposed in the wake of multiculturalism’s supposed demise. Whilst these terms are useful – all deal with the way migrant and post-migrant groups forge multiple, often transnational ties across a range of cultural influences – it is our belief that they should continue to be framed under the rubric of multiculturalism. The reasons for this are two-fold. First, because multiculturalism is ultimately about how people live together within a nation-state, any discourse surrounding it should be rendered comprehensible to those it concerns. In this sense, the term multiculturalism still serves a purpose, partly because it is already so firmly embedded in the public’s imagination, but also – and this is our second reason – because it provides a bridge between a public discourse and the sometimes more specialist language of academics.

This is not to say, however, that by advocating multiculturalism we are negating other ways of conceptualising identity, culture and community. On the contrary, we believe that a reinvigorated multiculturalism must take into account some of the advances and insights made by sociologists and anthropologists over the past two decades – in particular the more fluid and nuanced conceptualisations of community and culture that are understood in relation to cosmopolitan and transnational trends and practices among migrant and post-migrant groups. For example, ‘cosmopolitanism’ – which has re-emerged as a means of thinking and writing about transnational identities, allegiances and interests – has offered a new framework for understanding migrant and ‘native’ populations that avoids the pitfalls of Orientalism identified by Said (1978) and,
in a British South Asian context, by Sharma et al. (1996). For Vertovec and Cohen (2002: 4) cosmopolitanism suggests something that

(a) transcends the seemingly exhausted nation-state model; (b) is able to mediate actions and ideals oriented both to the universal and the particular, the global and the local; (c) is culturally anti-essentialist; and (d) is capable of representing variously complex repertoires of allegiance, identity and interest. In these ways, cosmopolitanism seems to offer a mode of managing cultural and political multiplicities.

If this capacity of cosmopolitanism – to manage cultural and political multiplicities – is elided with a public and political understanding of multiculturalism, then there is the potential to move the debate forward and foster a more nuanced and inclusive discussion about diversity within the nation-state. It is this combination of approaches and perspectives that can lead multiculturalism out of the political corner it is in. Multiculturalism as a concept must be able to incorporate the views of those ‘on the ground’ as well as theories and policies projected ‘from above’. This is no easy task, and so we proceed by developing an understanding of both these perspectives – by looking at some of the ways multiculturalism has been understood politically and debated in the public realm. We then consider the anthropology and sociology of multiculturalism, as well as outlining South Asian communities’ place within these discourses.

**Multiculturalism: the public debate**

At the risk of seeming to deploy the term anachronistically, the British Isles have been ‘multicultural’ for millennia. These islands have always been subject to flows of people from other lands, through migration, invasion and, more disturbingly, the slave trade. Asari et al. (2008) suggest that the history of multiculturalism in Britain begins in 1066 at The Battle of Hastings. They argue that the way in which the battle is presented in schools as a defining moment in English history reveals much about the pathology of English identity versus civic nationalism. It was a moment when ‘a foreign force defeated and subjugated a local, indigenous one’ (2008: 8). As Benedict Anderson (2006) has noted, this history of mongrelisation is inextricably intertwined with the history of nationalism, which, by extension, is also part of the more recent history of multiculturalism.4 Back (1996) emphasises this by pointing out that even such

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4 Anderson, in a humorous aside at cultural absolutism, points out that ‘the British Empire has not been ruled by an “English” dynasty since the early eleventh century: since then a motley parade of Normans
quintessentially English institutions as a cup of tea or fish and chips are in themselves products of intercultural influence that are bound up with the history of empire and imperialism. In sum, national identity in the UK is, and has always been, culturally plural.

Multiculturalism as a policy in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, however, can be understood in relation to migrant and post-migrant populations within the national context. One of the first official recognitions at policy level of Britain as a multicultural society came in 1966, when the future Labour Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, announced that the UK government did not believe in ‘a flattening process of uniformity, but cultural diversity, coupled with equal opportunity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance’ (Jenkins 1967: 267). Inherent in this vision, however, was the presupposed duality that equal citizenship exists in both the public realm (education, health, employment etc.) and the private realm (the home, religious institutions etc.).

2001 signalled a re-assessment of multiculturalism by the New Labour government in Britain. Urban disturbances in 1995 and 2001 involving Pakistani Mirpuris in Northern mill towns, including Bradford, prompted the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, to express a denouncement of ‘forced marriages’ and female circumcision, and to argue the need for immigrants to learn English as part of a citizenship test. Blunkett also publicly suggested that South Asian communities should only organise arranged marriages amongst those already living in the UK, rather than transnationally (Back et al. 2002: §2.2). This shift in public debate coupled the rhetoric of ‘recognition of difference’, as Charles Taylor (1994) might have put it, with a desire for a national identity and sense of belonging. Since the turn of the century, the debate has moved towards an assimilationist ideology that emphasises ‘integration’. In other words, the language of assimilation has more recently been eschewed in favour of a neoliberal multiculturalism, where ‘integration’ (or lack thereof) becomes the touchstone of multicultural debates. The implicit message is that ‘they’ (migrant and post-migrant groups) must subscribe to ‘our’ values (Phillips 2006: 37). Hence the current emphasis is ostensibly to value cultural difference whilst also subscribing to a common set of values.

(Plantagenets), Welsh (Tudors), Scots (Stuarts), Dutch (House of Orange) and Germans (Hanoverians) have squatted on the imperial throne’ (2006: 83).

5 The history of migration stretches back beyond the birth of multiculturalism. The point is important because it distinguishes between the physical movement and settlement of people from one place to another, and the way in which we describe these movements and subsequent settlements.
These values are rarely defined, however, as became clear during a conference organised by the Runnymede Trust on the theme *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* (Home Office 2005). During one workshop, a member of the audience (quoted in Grillo 2010: 22–3) quizzed a panel of MPs and academics on the topic of integration:

I would like to know how I can prove that I’m a Muslim and I have integrated into society. Look at me. I wear British clothes. I speak broken English but, still, I speak English and I have got a beard. That gives away my identity. Some people would recognise who I am. Now, people ask me ‘Why don’t you integrate?’ and I say, ‘How do you mean?’ And they can’t answer me back because I go to schools, give talks about how to deal with racist incidents and very often the teachers ask me, ‘Why don’t Muslims integrate?’ I say, ‘What do you mean? I pay tax. I obey the laws of the land.’

This quotation succinctly sums up the present incoherence that surrounds multiculturalism in politics. There is a feeling that migrant groups must ‘opt in’ to the obligations of Britain’s multicultural citizenship, but what those obligations actually are, remains unclear.6

By 2010, the language of ‘us’ and ‘them’ – separating migrant and post-migrant groups (them) from ‘host’ societies (us) – culminated in an almost European-wide denunciation of multiculturalism. David Cameron, Prime Minister of the subsequent British coalition government, declared in 2011 that in Britain ‘we have failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We have even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run counter to our values’ (Cameron 2011). Heads of State across Europe have queued up in support of these views, proclaiming that ‘under the doctrine of state multiculturalism’ different cultures have been encouraged to live separate lives (ibid.), that it is ‘too concerned with the identity of a person arriving and not enough about the identity of the country’ French President Nicolas Sarkozy, *The Daily Telegraph* 2011), and, as a result, ‘society is too watered down’ (Dutch Deputy Prime Minister Maxime Verhagen, *Crethi Plethi* 2011); in other words, multiculturalism has ‘failed and failed utterly’ (German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

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6 In his preface to the 2002 White Paper, *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration and Diversity in Modern Britain*, the then Home Secretary David Blunkett wrote: ‘To enable integration to take place and to value the diversity it brings, we need to be secure within our sense of belonging and identity and therefore to be able to reach out and to embrace those who come to the UK … Having a clear, workable and robust nationality and asylum system is the pre-requisite to building the security and trust that is needed. Without it, we cannot defeat those who would seek to stir up hate, intolerance and prejudice’ (quoted in Back et al. 2002: §2.2).
The Guardian 2010). Significantly, such statements are almost always trenchantly made in the context of Islamic extremism and terrorism.

The anthropology and sociology of multiculturalism – and ethnomusicological perspectives

This section looks at the body of sociological and anthropological literature on multiculturalism, and considers how it might critique some of the political criticisms outlined above. Over the past three decades there has been an enormous amount of sociological and anthropological interest in multiculturalism. Sociologists have attempted to define, divide and deconstruct what multiculturalism ‘is’ in order to develop a theoretically informed picture of diversity in the UK, and how it is politically regulated. Anthropologists, on the other hand, have sought to find out how migrant and post-migrant groups understand their experience of living in multicultural contexts. How do these perspectives differ? What do they have in common? How, indeed, might they complement one another? Additionally, what insights are available from the perspective of music studies and its anthropological mode of inquiry, ethnomusicology?

To begin from a socio-anthropological standpoint, we might note the suggestion by Steven Vertovec that multiculturalism can mean many possibly related, but nevertheless discrete things, including ‘a demographic condition, a set of institutional accommodations, objectives of a political movement or a broad body of state principles’ (2010: 7). Ralph Grillo, on the other hand, sees multiculturalism as best understood as ‘a political project, involving strategies, institutions, discourses, practices, seeking to address a multicultural reality’ (2010: 27). Les Back (1996) negotiates these definitions by talking about physical urban multiculture, as opposed to the concept of multiculturalism. This is an important distinction because it is able to set aside political rhetoric and focus on how people and groups interact. An uncritical understanding of political multiculturalism, Back argues, risks perpetuating ‘simple cultural archetypes that reify ”minority” and ”host” cultures respectively’ (1996: 8).

Other sociologists, meanwhile, have focused on multiculturalism as a concept. Parekh (2000), for example, has argued that multiculturalism should ultimately be about valuing cultural diversity, rather than being simply about the rights of minority cultures. Drawing on Parekh, Tariq Modood, goes further by suggesting that ‘the value of the presence of a variety of cultures in a society cannot be understood as increasing our options, for other cultures are rarely options for us. Rather, their sense of contrast gives
us a deeper understanding of our own culture and makes us reflect and learn about the diversity of humanity’ (2005: 173).

Indeed, this emphasis on valuing cultural diversity is one that Charles Taylor (1994) also seeks to explore and critique in his study of multiculturalism. Taylor highlights two fundamental contradictions inherent in the way multiculturalism was conceived by politicians in the late twentieth century. The first, he argues, lies in a tendency towards treating people in a ‘difference-blind’ fashion, which pushes against the second, a liberal need to recognise and foster particularity. Inherent in this duality are several issues: ‘the reproach the first makes to the second is just that it violates the principal of non-discrimination. The reproach the second makes to the first is that it negates identity by forcing people into a homogeneous mould that is untrue to them’ (1994: 43). Taylor goes on to suggest that in practice it is only the minority cultures in a society who are expected to submit to these formulations, which ultimately serve to render them as ‘alien’. Contra Dworkin’s (1978) claims that a liberal society is one that adopts no particular substantive view about the ends of life (i.e. about what constitutes a ‘good’ life), Taylor states, ‘The society is, rather, united by a strong procedural commitment to treat people with equal respect’ (1994: 56).

Thus, in ‘valuing diversity’, liberal multiculturalism makes some profound ideological assumptions. The power to denote which aspects of culture are valued and which are less valued is never distributed equally among the populace, regardless of how equally it is set out in the constitution. This facet of multiculturalism is what Taylor has called procedural liberal multiculturalism, which is based on the primacy of the individual and the regulative authority of an unbiased judicial system. Procedural multiculturalism is thus limited in its scope, as it can only account for constitutional equality (i.e. all are equal under the eyes of the law). Unanswered in this formulation is the question of assimilation and integration. How do migrant cultures, or cultural practices (such as music), survive in diasporic settings? This question cuts to the core of many of the anxieties surrounding multiculturalism across Europe today.

The way in which state multiculturalism has been developed and understood in the UK has largely been based on a ‘top-down’ model, whereby policy makers, politicians and the media have developed local and state policies in response to increasing diversity and political events (such as the Honeyford affair). However, as with above-cited remonstration from the Runnymede Trust conference, migrant and post-migrant groups often push back at state-led policies by asking critical questions about integration, diversity and nationhood – questions that are based on their experience of living in
multicultural society. It is this perspective, arguably continuously marginalised, that is particularly interesting from an anthropological point of view. Looking forward to a larger project, we are particularly interested in how this kind of ‘bottom-up’ understanding of multiculturalism might contribute to, and potentially reframe, debates about nationalism and ‘Britishness’. Hodgson (2011) has argued elsewhere that any discussion about multiculturalism, nationality, or ‘The Big Society’ in Britain must include the positive values and experiences of those who are currently excluded by anti-multiculturalist discourses.

The patterns of how South Asian migrants settle and develop in the UK and interact with those around them have been scrutinised in various fields of inquiry, from anthropology, sociology and geography, to think-tanks and government reports (see, for example, Shaw 2000; Anwar 1979; Baumann 1996; Lewis 1994; Modood 1997; Werbner 2002; The Runnymede Trust 1980, 2000). Several important works over the past two decades, however, have emerged that have attempted to engage with the politics of multiculturalism by paying particular attention to ground-level experiences of people that challenge such fixed notions of ‘culture’ (e.g. Baumann 1996, 1999; Watson 2000).

It is also our contention that music holds the potential to provide distinctive insights into how migrant and post-migrant groups experience living in a multicultural society. For example, by paying attention to the ways South Asian communities engage with music and music making, one can challenge commonly held assumptions and prejudices, and replace them with a more informed and inclusive picture of multicultural Britain (see, for example, Hodgson, forthcoming; Clarke 2012). Whilst there has been a great deal of attention paid in ethnomusicology to music and migration (Lomax 1959; Allen 1988; Gross et al. 1996; Baily 2005, 2006; Turino 1999; Schade-Poulsen 1999; Toynbee and Dueck 2011), and music and cosmopolitanism (Turino 2000; Stokes 1994, 2004, 2007; Werbner 2008), there has been surprisingly little consideration of how music, and those who practice it, might contribute to understandings of multiculturalism. Two notable exceptions are Lornell and Rasmussen’s Musics of Multicultural America: A Study of Twelve Musical Communities (1997), and Kira Kosnick’s Migrant Media: Turkish Broadcasting and Multicultural Politics in Berlin (2007). Both volumes provide ethnographic insights into how migrant and post-migrant groups use music to understand and traverse their experience of living in multicultural societies.

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7 This literature will be explored in greater detail below.
Increasing levels of migration and technological communication in Europe and elsewhere have led to a growth in anthropological enquiries as to how states regulate and respond to diversity (Goldberg 1994; Bennett 1998; Baumann 1999; Modood 2000; Kosnick 2007; Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010). Musicology is in an ideal position to contribute to these conversations. Recent studies, for example, have shown that, for migrant communities in ‘the West’, music is a crucial way of understanding and negotiating new surroundings whilst retaining ties to a homeland (Baily 2006; Gazzah 2008; Gross et al. 1996; Sharma et al. 1996; Solomon 2005). Bound up within the practices of music and music making are complex and discursive interactions between ‘here’ and ‘there’, ‘now’ and ‘then’. These transnational and historical connections are important not least because they carry deep senses of identity and belonging, but also because they present what is arguably the most fluid, contextual and current picture of what it means to live in an increasingly multicultural society.

**Part Two: Key Concepts and Issues**

The above discussion has indicated a number of recurring themes. These include migration (and its attendant categories of migrant and post-migrant), nationalism, belonging and identity – issues related to, but not necessarily coterminous with, debates around multiculturalism. Furthermore, in order to describe or encapsulate the identity of a person, group or community, terms such as diaspora, ethnicity, cosmopolitanism and transnationalism often come to the fore: What happens to identity through the act of migration? To what extent do migrant and post-migrant groups feel that they belong to a wider polity, or ‘diaspora’? How is ethnicity understood and defined in relation to local, national and transnational contexts, and how does this impact on, even problematise, notions of community? Ethnomusicologists have long looked at music as a way of developing a perspective on some of these questions. In an investigation that looks at connecting communities in urban contexts, how might music provide a means of understanding, forming, and articulating some of these dynamics and complexities? These various concepts and questions are explored below.

**Identity**

By definition, the idea of a South Asian diaspora (see below) denotes people who originated from, or have heritage in, the Indian subcontinent, which is home to 1.4 billion people. Whilst ‘South Asian’ may well be how many people identify themselves, to
describe someone as being ‘Asian’, ‘South Asian’, ‘Pakistani’ or other is an essentialisation of identity – problematic because it suggests these groups of people as a homogenous demographic, constructed on similar beliefs, values and traditions. The sheer numbers and heterogeneity inherent in this broad definition means that, ‘being’ South Asian may be one facet of a myriad of simultaneous identifications. This multiplicity was highlighted succinctly in The Bradford Commission Report of 1996 where one individual commented:

I could view myself as a member of the following communities, depending on the context and in no particular order: Black, Asian, Azad Kashmiri, Mirpuri, Jat, Marilail, Kungriwalay, Pakistani, English, British, Yorkshireman, Bradfordian, from Bradford Moor ... I could use the term ‘community’ in any of these contexts and it would have meaning. Any attempt to define me only as one of these would be meaningless (Bradford Congress 1996: 94).

As this quotation shows, senses of identity are multilayered, complex and historically rooted. This complexity has resulted in a burgeoning of literature on identity in the social sciences (see inter alia Rutherford 1990; Lewis 1994; Werbner 1997; Hall 1990). It is also difficult to articulate a debate about identity without also reifying culturally constructed boundaries of difference that are perceived through colour, religion, caste, or even such a general term as ‘culture’ itself (see Shukla 2001). The terms ‘Asian’ or ‘South Asian’ carry such a diversity of cultural meanings, that they cannot be rooted in any singularity of religion, language or race. Identity must be regarded as a fluid concept, understood and perceived through social constructs. If this fluidity is ignored, the subsequent rigidity can carry pejorative meanings and devalue new and emerging forms of identity.

**Diaspora**

As a concept relevant to musicology, diaspora has been developed notably in the work of Paul Gilroy (1993). Gilroy saw diaspora as a critical means of discussing issues of identity, unity and differentiation for African-Americans. He uses the Atlantic Ocean – ‘The Black Atlantic’ – as a metaphor for the critical bond between a sense of historical tradition that is attached to those of African origin and their contemporary lives in modern America. Diaspora opens up a discourse whereby trans-generational migrants are able to imagine and reify a collective history (one often interlaced with colonial oppression) alongside bonds that continue to connect them genetically, politically and ideologically. This continuity is represented by a teleologically imagined historical
timeline, which links the past to the present and future, or, as Gilroy (1993) deftly puts it, signifies both the historical roots of the community, and the routes they have taken. Music in a diasporic context allows people to conceive, rehearse, and articulate historical continuities (and, importantly, discontinuities) particularly in the representation of race and identity, both of which contribute fundamentally to issues of belonging and ownership (see also Radano and Bohlman 2000: 6).

Often, these bonds are identified along ethnic or religious lines – South Asian, Jewish, African, etc. – but it is also through cultural activities like music that common connections and networks between people are made. Music offers a way to look at diaspora, but also provides a means of critiquing some of its limitations. Subsumed within a ‘South Asian’ diaspora, for example, is a vast range of different cultures, religions and ethnicities that might have little in common beyond a shared sub-continental geography. This can be both misleading and potentially frictional, as communities resist being lumped together. Mirpuris, for example, have musics and customs that express senses of belonging that are quite particular to Mirpuri ethnicity. There is, then, a dialogical relation between the concepts of diaspora and ethnicity, and to understand one it is also worth considering the other in more detail.

**Ethnicity**

As Fredrick Barth (1969: 1) argued four decades ago:

Categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained *despite* changing participation and membership ... One finds that stable, persisting, and often vitally important social relations are maintained across such boundaries, and are frequently based precisely on the dichotomised ethnic statuses. In other words, ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of social interaction and acceptance, but are quite to the contrary often the very foundations on which embracing social systems are built.

Inherent in Barth’s writing is the assertion that, because social boundaries are continuously permeated by people both from within the social group and from without, it is increasingly problematic to distinguish and define a person as belonging to any one unchanging ethnicity.

As a concept, then, ‘ethnicity’ poses a series of questions. By categorising a person’s ethnicity, is an inquirer or commentator also defining and fixing it? Do
ethnicities have ‘essences’? Can there be room for multiple ethnicities that transcend borders – including those of nation-states? Like the people concerned, these questions are complex. On an individual level, ethnicity might be linked to heritage, as a means of connecting the present to the past. Such a connection might traverse international borders, particularly in a migratory context, and so also connect ‘here’ to ‘there’. But, despite such apparent cosmopolitanism, ethnic boundaries can also mark out difference and serve as a means of defining opposition (Tonkin, et al. 1989). Here then, is a complex dynamic between a kind of Barthian pluralism and a more fixed, structuralist oppositional praxis (see Bourdieu 1977).

Music, so the argument goes, negotiates this dynamic in particularly interesting and socially active ways (Stokes 1994), though we may need to look beyond the field of South Asian musics for salient texts. For example, Helena Simonett (2001) looks at this dynamic in her study of Mexican migrant groups along the US-Mexico border. For Simonett, the *banda* music of Mexican migrants in the United States offers a way of understanding how transnational social identities come to generate new meanings in migratory contexts. Banda music combines the ballads of Mexican ranches with North West Mexican brass-band playing, and the kind of polka-style dancing, brought to the region and popularised by European settlers in the nineteenth-century. Simonett notes how this cosmopolitan mix of styles, which flow freely across national borders, contrasts with the relatively constricted movement of people. This dynamic has resulted in *banda* music being understood differently on either side of the border. North of the border in the United States, *banda* has come to symbolise and facilitate cosmopolitan, Mexican-American identity formations. Its popularity in the US, however, has meant that, south of the border, traditional national Mexican musics – such as *mariachi* – are being supplanted by *banda* (cf. Stokes 2004: 63). Thomas Turino (1999) too extends his analysis beyond the nation-state, by showing how panpipe music, which was once ridiculed as ‘peasant’ music in Peru, has, through its success among Peruvian migrants in Europe, been re-appropriated as symbolic of national identity. Elsewhere, in Paris, Algerian *rai* music has undergone transformations within the migrant context – transformations that Gross et al. (1996) and Schade-Poulsen (1999) have shown to feed back into the Algerian music scene. As these brief examples show, music can provide

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8 This re-writing of national history might be usefully framed under what Philip V. Bohlman (2003) describes as a moment of ‘historiographical disjuncture’, in which searches for origins are sought out and appropriated as a means to represent the nation-state.
potentially vivid insights into how transnational and ‘global’ movements and styles gain purchase and influence within the nation-state.

**Problematising ‘community’**

The complexities inherent in defining ethnicity percolate into other areas of analysis. Of particular concern here are notions of communities in urban contexts, and categories of ‘migrant’ and ‘host’ within the nation-state. Communities are often pointed to as a ready-made way of identifying and, crucially, representing a group of people. Indeed, the very title of the AHRC-led ‘Connecting Communities’ initiative would seem to be predicated on the idea that there are existing, discrete and independent groups of people – communities – that are in a position to connect, or disconnect. One of the problems with the idea of community in theory is that communities are constantly evolving in practice. A range of criteria may define these communities. In a related AHRC scoping study (which includes an extensive exploration of recent literature scrutinising concepts of community), Graham Crow and Alice Mah invoke Willmott’s (1986) ‘classic distinction between communities of place, interest and identity’ (Crow and Mah 2011: 3). Religious and/or ethnic communities are often prominent in public debate, but cultural communities may also take form. Newcastle University may be one community; a local, geographical area, such as Newcastle’s West End, may be another. In other words, the term ‘community’ often refers to a commonality around which publics are formed. These commonalities might also be based on shared experiences, heritages, languages, sports, musics, or any other number of activities or interests.

The difficulty on the part of an analyst or politician, then, is one of representation. If both ‘community’ and ‘ethnicity’ are in continuous flux, trying to pin someone to a community, or, conversely, a community to a someone, becomes increasingly problematic. For the purposes of this project, then, context becomes centrally important. Rather than place ‘the South Asian community’ centre stage, our interest lies in how various people of South Asian heritage build publics and networks around music. How do these publics map onto urban, rural and virtual spaces? How do musical activities facilitate the forming of these publics and organise space and place? Gerd Baumann’s ethnographic study of London’s Southhall district provides a particularly relevant case study. His 1996 monograph, *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London*, is based on accounts of the lives of people from different ethnic backgrounds living in the same area. By expanding his study across a geographical area, rather than focusing on a single *a priori* ethnic group, Baumann was able to incorporate
a range of discourses and ethnicities that, in their different ways, revealed a plurality of identities and belongings that cut across cultures and communities (1996: 10). Through this ethnographic account of lived-in cosmopolitanism, Baumann was able explicitly to demonstrate the limits of such terms as ‘community’, and, in doing so, identified a gap between a theoretical, or political, multiculturalism and the more nuanced Barthian experiences of peoples’ everyday lives. In re-evaluating the idea of ‘community’, then, he acknowledges the multiplicity of cultural factors, including music, that inform peoples’ construction of identity and belonging. By paying close attention to these different cultural threads, Baumann espouses a heterogeneous approach to the study of identity construction and is, in that sense, entirely non-essentialist.

**Music and the experience of migration**

For South Asian communities in Britain, music serves a variety of needs. Often these are social needs that are intimately bound up with issues at the core of the multiculturalism debate: belonging, ‘Britishness’, integration, education, heritage. Neat and dichotomous categories of ‘migrant’ and ‘host’ also come into question here, because senses of belonging and identity can be discursive, and meanings generated through cultural forms, like music, can articulate identities that may be at once local and transnational, without the physical act of migration. For young South Asians, for example, this renders the notion of ‘migration’ and ‘migrant’ problematic, because, in a literal sense, they haven’t really migrated anywhere.

For young South Asians music may serve as a way to understand and challenge their experience of living and growing up in the UK, as ‘post-migrants’. For example, rap music is often important to young British South Asians because it opens up a space in which they can unravel and contest the various pressures and expectations that are placed on them – by religious authorities, their parents, school, and society more broadly (see Hodgson, forthcoming). For their parents, attending performances of Indian classical music or participating in amateur music-making around Bollywood song or romantic genres such as *ghazal* may be important because it establishes and reaffirms ties and senses of belonging with ‘home’ or heritage (see Clarke 2012). These ties cut across the lines of nation-states and so call into question what it means to ‘be’ British in the early twenty-first century.

This kind of focus – on the role of music in the lives of migrant people(s) – has a long history in ethnomusicology. As part of their argument that ‘music offers a possible insight into migrants’ own interpretations of their migrations and visions of their society’,
Baily and Collyer (2006: 15) refer to Alan Lomax, for whom the role of music in migratory contexts is to ‘give the listener a feeling of security, for it symbolises the place where he was born, his earliest childhood satisfactions, his religious experience, his pleasure in community doings, his courtship and his work – any or all of these personality shaping experiences’ (Lomax 1959: 929).

This resonates with Baily’s (2006) assertion that music provides a window into migratory experience. Baily argues that there needs to be a greater understanding of how ‘migrants view their own migration, their host society and the place they have left, as well as how they are viewed by the host society’ (2006: 167). But in what way does music provide a relevant insight into how migrants experience both the act of migration and the places they migrate to? Or, as Turino (2008: 4) asks, ‘what is special about art and artistic practices for creating and maintaining social identities?’ Can these ideas also relate to generations who were born and raised in a so-called ‘host’ nation? Music is a potentially a rich seam of enquiry in this kind of analysis because it can both allay and aggravate these tensions and anxieties.

In the introduction to their edited volume, Migrating Music (2011), Jason Toynbee and Byron Dueck set out some of the political, economic and social processes that shape experiences of music and music making among migrant groups, as well as the multi-directional flows of ideas, styles, power and capital between ‘indigenous’ and migrating peoples. In particular, they highlight the political economy and history of migrating music, broadly encapsulated under theories of globalisation. Here, the rise of culture industries and new means of communication technologies facilitate the movement and mediation of musics across national borders. Toynbee and Dueck stress that, whilst such movements are not necessarily a recent phenomenon (Pickering 1990; Gronow and Saunio 1998: 75–8), recent technologies – television, radio, MP3s and the internet – represent a ‘steepening of the curve, in a much longer trend in the carrying capacity of mass media’ (Toynbee and Dueck 2011: 4), thus allowing music to migrate more quickly, easily and widely. Inherent in these movements are moments of encounter, between people and between musics. This formulation forces self-awareness of a possible replay of an earlier colonial dynamic. Indeed Taussig suggests that music takes on increased significance here because power dynamics between coloniser and colonised, or migrant and ‘host’, are played out and contested: ‘the making and existence of the

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9 Turino goes on to argue that, as ‘social formations based on subjectively recognised and objectively articulated cultural similarities, diasporas depend on expressive cultural practices for their very existence’ (2008: 4).
artifact [or, it might be added, music] that portrays something gives one power over that which is portrayed’ (1993: 13). Drawing on this, Toynbee and Dueck suggest that, in musical terms, it is not only the colonised people who imitate and appropriate from the colonisers, but also the colonisers who copy their indigenous others.

The ethnomusicological accounts by Toynbee and Dueck and others described above often pivot between these categories of coloniser/colonised and migrant/host. Whilst they highlight some of the complex, multi-directional relationships between these categories – through and by music – by positing them as discrete entities, the authors also serve to reinforce them. Of concern here, particularly with the case of South Asian groups, must be whether or not so-called ‘migrants’ understand themselves in these terms. Emerging generations of Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis etc. may oppose being labelled as migrants by the sheer fact they were born in the UK.

Indeed, whilst many of the studies above have emphasised the strong connection between migrants and music, there has been a tendency to focus on first-generation migrants.\textsuperscript{10} For post-migrant groups, or later generations, the experience of living in a multicultural context will be different from that of their parents, and so music will hold a different and varying significance for them. Where second- and third-generation South Asians have received attention, their relationship with music has often been framed by academics in terms of their somehow ‘finding a voice’ through music (Banerji 1988; Sharma, et al. 1996; Kim 2011). Other analyses of, for example, young Pakistanis and music in Bradford have problematically focused on statistical data, drawn from questionnaires and surveys (Din and Cullingford 2004).

These kinds of study are problematic because they show a regression to a type of positivistic approach to migrant cultures practiced in the 1970s. The notion of ‘duality’, in terms of both identity and music, is one that fell from favour in the 1990s, with scholars instead adopting terms such as \textit{syncretism}, \textit{creolisation}, \textit{bricolage}, \textit{cultural translation} and \textit{hybridity} (Vertovec and Cohen 1999) to describe a range of cultural phenomena and processes that shaped what Hall (1988) termed ‘new ethnicities’. The idea of South Asian migrant youth being ‘between two cultures’ (Watson 1977), or that their sense of identity was mediated by duality (Banerji 1988), was swept aside with the recognition that facets of culture, identity and religion are selected, often self-consciously, from

\textsuperscript{10} Whilst Reyes (1999) produces a complex multi-sited ethnography of Vietnamese migrant experience, in general, there has been much less engagement with emerging generations, or with ‘post-migrant’ experience. A notable exception has been recent research on young Muslims and rap music in Europe; see Sharma et al. (1996); Kim (2011).
multiple heritages (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010), and that these new ethnicities were contextual, transitional and always subject to change and evolution (Stokes 1994). In many accounts, however, broad categories of ‘Asian’, ‘South Asian’ and ‘British Asian’ have been used to describe what is not only a diverse array of ethnicities, but also religions and generations. By doing this, the particular problems of individual communities have been largely overlooked; and even the notion of ‘community’ risks making a reification – an assumption of a naturally bounded group defined by stable conditions of identity and belonging. There is, then, a physical, conceptual and categorical tension here, between generations, identities, the local and the global.

Music, place and ideas of the local

Through emphasis on the ‘global hierarchies of value’ (Herzfeld 2005: 2–3), Richard Wolf (2009) argues that the significance and importance of local level music practice for people or groups is often lost. Wolf holds up the renowned qawwali singer, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, as an example of an artist who has come to symbolise Pakistan, both within South Asia and beyond. In the ‘world music’ marketplace, Nusrat has become the example par excellence for Sufi music performance. Indeed, in many respects, Nusrat has come to symbolise ‘Pakistani-ness’ – a kind of ‘assumed shared aesthetic’, which Wolf and his contributors argue is based on not only musical style but also mannerisms and appearance. Wolf suggests that much is left out through this kind of ‘global’ or national perspective.

Whilst it is important to shift the focus away from the ‘global’ and back to the local, it remains necessary to take into account wider, transnational connections and ideas, and their significance for local level music and musical activity. Whilst Wolf’s volume is a welcome intervention in the study of local, ground-level South Asian musics, it is still, perhaps necessarily, limited in scope. Like so much literature on South Asian music before it, it is concerned primarily with music that is traditional, classical and hereditary; and with dance, poetry, religious recitation and ritual. The glaring omission here is popular music.

The argument for studying popular music – and to give it equal weighting alongside so-called classical and traditional musics, broadly defined – has long since been won in Western musicology (see Middleton 1990; Clarke 2007). It does not take a huge leap to include forms of popular music in an ethnomusicological theoretical framework, such as Wolf’s. Popular styles that draw on a range of cross-cultural practices can also, after all, ‘be the music of a particular place’. Indeed, many of Wolf’s
theories of the local are extremely relevant to popular musics. The way in which forms of South Asian popular music (such as bhangra, bhangra-rap, and hip-hop) derive, embed and sustain meanings from their local surroundings is substantiated to a large degree by transnational flows between the UK and South Asia and beyond. But the point is that these transnational flows of ideas – be they musical, social or cultural – come to constitute different meanings for younger generations than they do for their parents. This may seem like an obvious abstraction, but, in both cases, it is the ‘elsewhere’ that makes the difference ‘here’. These connections, transnational as they may be, are a way in which younger people understand and come to terms with the local (see, for example, Hodgson, forthcoming; Gazzah 2008; Simonett 2001).

A trenchant example of these generational and transnational flows would be the case of bhangra. By the start of the 1980s, this genre was beginning to emerge in the UK as a form of music that combined Punjabi folk music with electronic sampling and instrumentation. For the British media around this time, the emergence of the ‘Bhangra Beat’ signalled ‘both an exciting example of musical fusion and the unexpected cultural expression of an “Asian” identity in Britain’ (Banerji and Baumann 1990: 137). Banerji and Baumann went further, arguing that, ‘what many commentators recognise as [bhangra’s] most exciting potential, that of a fusion of hitherto disparate styles, moreover, can be seen as the oldest virtue of Punjabi culture, rooted in a region characterized by immense cultural diversity and intense cross-fertilization for most of its history’ (ibid.). After the 1980s, the bhangra genre developed into a more politically aware form of music, with an increasing range of influences, particularly reggae and rap. By the early twenty-first century, the early style of bhangra had largely disappeared, except for occasional reunion gigs by its early protagonists such as Heera and Alaap at festivals such as the Bradford Mela.

Speaking of the social context in which bhangra flourished, Banerji and Baumann (1990: 138) suggested that ‘South Asian communities in Britain have remained invisible, and their music inaudible, for a surprisingly long time’. They argued that the emergence of bhangra also marked the emergence of South Asian communities from obscurity. Commentators in the early 1990s placed much emphasis on this idea of South Asian communities ‘emerging’ from invisibility (see also Lewis 1994). Sociologists and anthropologists sought to find out why they were obscure, what was causing their emergence, and why their music was not crossing over into the mainstream. Indeed, Banerji and Baumann postulated that ‘the term most widely invoked in this connection is “cross-over”. For production and distribution, cross-over holds out the promise of
recognition of Bhangra as part of British youth culture, as much a chord of multicultural medley as Reggae has become’ (1990: 143). However, two decades later we must ask whether these questions still necessary or even relevant. It is certainly hard to argue that South Asian youth is invisible today – the sheer weight of media, political and academic attention on Pakistani Muslims ensures that. But whereas its visibility is no longer in question, there is still little known, outside the community, about its members’ musics and everyday practices.

**Conclusion: Issues for Investigators**

Having argued a case for not jettisoning the project of multiculturalism, and having outlined a conceptual framework that would be valuable for any inquiry into the experience of migrant and post-migrant communities in the UK (and especially one with a musical orientation), we conclude by examining literature that places investigators themselves under the lens. Given the post-colonialist (or, depending how one looks at it, post-imperialist) situation of the parties involved in this particular inquiry (and its projected follow-up studies), and given the acknowledged entanglement of anthropology and ethnomusicology with the history of colonialism, such self-reflexivity amounts to an ethical imperative – but one that nonetheless has many vicissitudes.

An especially provocative critique can be found in Sharma, Hutnyk and Sharma’s edited volume, *Dis-Orienting Rhythms: The Politics of New Asian Dance Music* (1996). From the outset, the editors polemicise the broad study of ‘South Asian’ diasporic music culture in Britain, stating that they wish to ‘break out of the Orientalist tradition of simply making knowable these [South Asian] cultural productions for an ever-eager academic audience and other agencies of control’ (1996: 2). This aggressive setting-out of stalls sets the tone for much of the volume. Sharma et al. are implying not simply that previous scholarship falls short to the point of being imperialist and racist, but also that, unless a new direction is taken, all future scholarship in the ‘old’ style will also be invalid. Gerd Baumann’s writings on *bhangra*, outlined above, are the main object of their critique. Sanjay Sharma, in particular, accuses Baumann of being ‘another one of those modern “ethnically sensitive” white ethnographers still directing the anthro-colonial gaze on Black folks’ cultures’ (1996: 34). His argument suggests that Baumann, as an anthro-colonial outsider, essentialises Asian youth culture and ‘negates’ other possible narratives of syncretic identity formulations. This ‘flattens out differences and
contestations across class, caste, ethnicity and gender’ (1996: 36). Whilst blaming Baumann for ‘sustaining a neo-Orientalist understanding of anterior Asian youth cultural formations’, Sharma also confusingly absolves him of this crime by saying that, after all, it’s not his fault; that the Otherness of bhangra is culturally inaccessible to white ethnographers. Their own book, on the other hand, allegedly ‘signifies a new space and recognition being claimed for and by emergent Asian academics and cultural critics operating both inside and outside British universities’ (1996: 10).

Orientalism is seen by Sharma et al. as the hegemonic discourse of the imperial West, embodied in the academic writings of scholars such as Baumann and Back. It is a one-way discourse written in and out of the West about what is thought of the Orient. Yet their own assertion seems to stem from what Werbner (2008: 23) describes as the ‘distinctly sceptical, un-cosmopolitan assumption that just because one happens to come from a certain society, one is incapable of understanding other societies, empathising with their members’ predicaments and joy, learning their languages, poetry, myth making and story telling, appreciating their material culture, the challenges of their environment, their mundane everyday lives’.

The intervention by Sharma et al. also questions the broader interrogation of ethnography and fieldwork within academia and its epistemological status as a ‘social science’. The ‘crisis of representation’, identified in the writings of Clifford and Marcus (1986), did indeed have implications for ethnographic fieldwork; for example, Talal Asad (1973) and William Willis (1974) both highlighted the possible neo-colonial and imperialist discourses inherent in the ways ethnographers ‘represent’ those they engage with. In the introduction of his book, *New Ethnicities and Urban Culture*, Les Back, one of Sharma’s accused, takes into account the critique that ethnography is not ‘the privileged arbiter of “what is really happening on the streets” … Rather it means embracing a contingent and modest epistemology that attempts to achieve rigorous forms of reporting alongside a reflexive consciousness of the codes, textual moves and rhetoric integral to the process of writing ethnography’ (1996: 5). Back argues that, in order to avoid the dangers of reifying cultural practices through meta-theory, as is Sharma et al.’s wont, it is first necessary to examine how identities, prejudices and marginalisation manifest themselves and evolve on a day-to-day basis within a broader multicultural framework. That is not to say that any resulting thesis is in any way all-encompassing. Indeed, as James Clifford has stated:

*Even the best ethnographic texts – serious true fictions – are systems, or economies, of truth. Power and history work through them, in ways their authors*
cannot fully control. Ethnographic truths are thus inherently partial – committed and incomplete (Clifford and Marcus 1986: 7).

The point is not to speak on behalf of everyone, or to speak definitively about an issue or topic. Rather, it should be to present an account of the lives of people that is informed by them, and, only once this has been done, can one make, subjectively mediated reflections on what those accounts may mean for broader society. In line with this, Barz and Cooley (2008: 4) argue that that there should be a move away from ‘representation’ per se, toward ‘experience’, a term they believe ‘encapsulates the essence of fieldwork’.

Sharma et al. contend that, despite such observations, previous scholarship written by white academics about South Asian cultural practices is, by definition, essentialist, racialising, patronising and ideologically motivated. Yet it is important to distinguish the particular academic space that Sharma et al. wish to redefine. They seek to develop a ‘theoretically informed political analysis of the cultural politics of the underground emergence of South Asian dance music and culture’ (1996: 8); and arguably this is quite different from the way in which Baumann and Back approach their analyses of South Asian music and culture. Rather than being based on a theoretically informed political analysis, Baumann constructs an ethnographically informed account of identity and ‘community’, based on his prolonged stay in London’s Southall district.

A future project in Newcastle would, like Baumann’s and Back’s, aim to be an ethnographically informed account of South Asian groups and their discourses and practices of music. But because our and Baumann’s and Back’s approaches are different from those Sharma et al., this is not to say that they exist in discrete realms of academia, or that important points and approaches from either cannot be taken into account. In the end, it may be necessary to deny oneself the luxury of a final position. Such resistance to settling on one side or other of such debates is commensurable with the need for constant flexibility in negotiations with groups who may hold different positions and imaginings of identity – there may be no single place from which such positions can be represented or resolved (see also Žižek 1994: 26). Ambivalence may indeed be the appropriate affective corollary of inquiries like these; and success may well depend on how far the institutions, communities and individuals involved are open to developing existing flexibilities and (where these are lacking) interrogating longstanding attachments.
References

[For a full list of sources consulted in connection with this scoping study, and of material for further reading see the reading list ('Library') at http://www.citeulike.org/group/16625.]


REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND KEY CONCEPTS


The Connected Communities

Connected Communities is a cross-Council Programme being led by the AHRC in partnership with the EPSRC, ESRC, MRC and NERC and a range of external partners. The current vision for the Programme is:

“to mobilise the potential for increasingly inter-connected, culturally diverse, communities to enhance participation, prosperity, sustainability, health & well-being by better connecting research, stakeholders and communities.”

Further details about the Programme can be found on the AHRC’s Connected Communities web pages at:

www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/connectedcommunities.aspx