TACKLING SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN PUBLIC LIGHTING

A REPORT BY THE CONFIGURING LIGHT/ STAGING THE SOCIAL RESEARCH PROGRAMME

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This report is based on research findings of the Configuring Light/ Staging the Social research programme (CL) based at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), as well as on discussions of the Configuring Light expert working group. Consisting of high-profile experts and stakeholders in the fields of design, planning and policy-making, this group was established by CL to develop a new agenda for tackling social inequalities in public lighting. Members of the working group are listed at the end of this document.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public lighting plays a prominent role in reflecting and reproducing inequalities, particularly in the public realm and in the context of housing in London. There is a fundamental division between the technical and aesthetic framing of urban spaces through lighting: while some places benefit from lighting that is consciously deployed to enhance value through place-making and to emphasise heritage, identity and aesthetics, social housing estates are characterised by substantial over-illumination, in which lighting is a purely engineering solution to technical problems of order, safety and policing. The problem of social inequality in public lighting is that the right to socially successful and engaging urban places gets lost in this unequal split. This has a significant cost impact on national and local budgets: around 30 per cent of a local authority's energy bill is for street lighting alone (Green Investment Report 2014). By contrast, huge opportunities for equitable public spaces are available through new light technologies and innovative design processes grounded in social research.

Public lighting can address issues of urban inequality. It can be used to focus value, care and creativity on public spaces, estates and future mixed-use housing. It can help build social inclusion and civic life across urban spaces, working to produce light as a socio-technical infrastructure that is cost- effective socially sustainable, and creates spaces that are engaging, accessible and comfortable for the diverse citizens who share them. This report provides practitioner- and policy-targeted recommendations for tackling social inequalities in public lighting. It identifies the institutional and intellectual challenges that we need to meet in order for lighting to play a part in place-making that will tackle rather than reinforce social and spatial inequalities, in London and beyond.

TACKLING LIGHT INEQUALITIES – RECOMMENDATIONS

Light is a strategic aspect of place-making that can add value to all public spaces.
To tackle social inequalities in lighting, all urban spaces should be equally approached as 'places'. Lighting can play a key role here: it has a significant impact on how people perceive, use and value a space as a whole. Because light adds value in manifold ways, it needs to be fully recognised as a strategic part of place-making in urban policy and planning. Even the narrower technical, security and financial concerns are best met through lighting implementations premised on all stakeholders' need for socially meaningful, practically enabling, aesthetically engaging and openly accessible spaces.

Equitable public lighting requires richer understandings of the social diversity of stakeholders.
Public space involves complex and often conflicting interactions of diverse stakeholders sharing the same streets and squares. In this context, lighting can only be equitable if its design is based on knowledgeable engagement with 'the public' as the full diversity of stakeholders of a space, including institutions who maintain a space and users who might be marginalised or excluded. It also includes the potentially conflicting understandings of the 'public' nature and functions of a space.

Lighting design works best against spatial inequality if based on site-specific social evidence.
While consultation and user-oriented design approaches are essential, they need to sit within a wider social research perspective. The social evidence gained here can help achieve equal inclusion of all stakeholder concerns in the lighting design process. This approach can also be enhanced through including lighting mock-ups as engagement activities, which helps stakeholders to develop a 'language of light' and to articulate their relationship with their space. The value and importance of this more inclusive and transparent design approach needs to be recognised as a standard budget item in new schemes.

Equitable public lighting strategies need to be flexible and responsive.
Today, more than ever, both lighting systems and the fabric of urban life are in constant flux. Inequitable public spaces are often marked by lighting infrastructure which no longer fits into its socio-spatial context, or taps into the full potential of cheaper and more responsive new lighting technologies. Therefore, public lighting agencies need to acknowledge environments and systems as evolving over time and take on long-term ownership of lighting aspects to ensure sustainable change.

To enhance urban equity, public lighting needs robust practical support and organisational accountability.
Public lighting design has largely been undervalued within housing and urban design and starved of financial, technical and organisational support. To address this, new institutional mechanisms need to recognise lighting as the responsibility of housing and planning organisations so that a successful business case for better public lighting can be made. All relevant experts need to be included, from design to implementation and maintenance. Furthermore, post-implementation research is crucial for real progress in providing social and technical knowledges as 'evidence' for new design interventions.

INTRODUCTION

This report provides practitioner- and policy-targeted recommendations for tackling social inequalities in public lighting. It identifies the institutional and intellectual challenges that we need to meet in order for lighting to play a part in place-making that will tackle, rather than reinforce, social and spatial inequalities in London and beyond.

Public lighting is a barometer of developing socio-spatial inequalities in the urban context and allows rich insight into how urban inequalities are lived out and responded to. At the same time, the design of public lighting can play a significant role in either challenging or reproducing inequalities. While this is the case for many cities, not only in the UK but globally, London serves as a particularly powerful case study. Today, London is undergoing multiple socio-spatial crises that magnify and reproduce urban inequalities: housing supply increasingly lags behind demand and adequate housing, whether rented or bought, is beyond the financial reach of young people, low-income workers, professionals in essential services and creatives. The concept of social housing is contested by new forms of tenure, the right to buy and new commercial development programmes that challenge older architectural and planning models. At the same time, urban space in London is increasingly reconfigured by a pincer movement of austerity on the one hand and large-scale developments and gentrification on the other.

Lighting plays a prominent role in determining what kinds of inequalities are reproduced, particularly in the public realm and in the context of housing. London's social housing estates can be immediately recognised by their lighting: overly bright and cold light from tall masts, calibrated for maximum visibility and minimal atmosphere and implemented to allow for better CCTV surveillance and the prevention of anti-social behaviour and crime. This kind of lighting marks these spaces out as intrinsically problematic, as threatening and risky. It also configures them as less-valued spaces for less-valued people, to be dealt with functionally and at the

expense of massive light pollution and cost in energy and maintenance. In fact, darkness has become a luxury good in London: only in more affluent neighbourhoods, heritage- or tourism-oriented areas and high-priced 'designerly' developments does lighting become part of carefully curated and aesthetically pleasurable nightscapes.

This shows how lighting can both reflect and reproduce fundamental inequalities via the 'framing' of different urban places and populations, and how their material environment is actually designed and constructed: there is a fundamental division between technical and aesthetic ways of framing urban spaces. Lighting is either deployed to enhance social value through place-making (emphasising heritage, identity and aesthetics) or as low-cost engineering solution to technical problems of order, safety and policing. The point is not that all urban spaces and their stakeholders need, or want, highly aestheticised lighting schemes. The problem of social inequality in public lighting, on the contrary, is how the right to socially successful and engaging urban places can be lost in this unequal split between different ways of approaching their lighting design.

Tackling social inequalities in public lighting means placing equal value, within planning, design and maintenance, on the needs of all stakeholders in order to create public spaces that are socially meaningful, practically enabling, aesthetically engaging and openly accessible.

To develop an actionable agenda for tackling social inequalities in public lighting, this report draws on a series of expert roundtable meetings hosted by the LSE-based Configuring Light programme. Funded by LSE HEIF5 funding, these meetings discussed three London-based housing case studies (all of them owned by one of London's biggest and oldest housing providers, Peabody) around three themes:

Roundtable I:
Whitecross Estate, Islington
'Social Research in Lighting Design':
How can social research contribute
rich data to public lighting design?

Roundtable II:
Thamesmead Estate, Greenwich/Bexley
'Making Connections': How can public lighting
help to connect marginalised urban spaces
to urban life?

Roundtable III:
St John's Hill Development, Wandsworth
'Complex Publics':
With the provision of new forms of affordable
housing in the future, how can public lighting
reinforce a sense of publicness and value
of new urban spaces for all stakeholders?

The expert group discussed these three case studies in order to devise actionable strategies for enhancing the role of lighting in housing planning and development.

LIGHTING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Why Light is Important for Equitable Public Space

Light is central to how people experience and use city spaces and to how urban systems operate. Through light, we carve out spaces for social life. Light impacts on the public space in the crucial hours after dusk, enabling or problematising social activity, economic and commercial development, security, safety and public order, access, participation and identification with urban public life.

Moreover, lighting has a significant cost impact: it accounts for nearly 20 per cent of global energy consumption for buildings alone (IEA Energy Technology Perspectives 2015) and the annual UK spend on energy for street lighting is £300m, rising in line with escalating energy prices (Green Investment Report 2014). On a local level, this means that around 30 per cent of a local authority's energy bill is just for street lighting (Green Investment Report 2014). At the same time, very small changes in lighting practices, design and technology have had an equal impact: UK electricity consumption for lighting decreased by 21 per cent per year between 2009 and 2012, following the phasing out of conventional light bulbs (Energy Consumption in the UK Report 2015).

Despite significant opportunities, major challenges for more equitable approaches to public lighting remain. Light is too often very far down the list of urgent urban priorities. As a result, it is dealt with in narrow technical and cost terms, rather than in relation to the real diversity, value and implications of lighting urban spaces. Moreover, as infrastructure, lighting is generally, and ironically, invisible to many stakeholders. Stakeholders' and policy-makers' understanding of light and its properties and impacts is underdeveloped, and people largely lack language of light. Despite the profound importance of light and lighting for urban life and governance, urban planning and development mechanisms fail to include lighting design. This not only results in less effective infrastructure and less sustainable cities, but also in less equitable public lighting.

More precisely, there are five core links between lighting and social inequalities:

VALUE: PLACE VS PROBLEM

Urban inequalities are reflected and reproduced via the different values that inform public space lighting. Most fundamentally, lighting can be part of place-making in the fullest sense, valuing people's environments as curated places that should be socially meaningful, aesthetically engaging, practically enabling and openly accessible. By the same token, spaces can be designed as problems rather than places, with a focus on low-cost technical solutions to narrowly defined 'social issues' of safety, security and regulation.

CONNECTIVITY:
OPENNESS VS SEPARATION

Socio-spatial equity is a matter of inclusion and connection: public spaces and people are equal when they are part of their wider urban environment, rather than marginalised or segregated. Lighting is critical for urban navigation and wayfinding, but also for visually and symbolically linking or separating spaces. For example, there is a lack of connectivity and mobility in relation to social housing. Here, the lighting contributes to estates appearing as separate entities that are impermeable and therefore feel 'less public', or even dangerous.

DIVERSITY:
SOCIAL COMPLEXITY VS DESIGN

Much of contemporary urban lighting is concerned with reducing urban complexity and diversity. Instead of reflecting and developing the socio-cultural diversity of a place, lighting 'designs it away' and replaces urban vibrancy with impersonal branding and design uniformity. Equitable lighting needs to be based on knowledge of the diverse uses and understandings of a space, on responding to this diversity creatively and on asking whose social and spatial 'stories' the lighting should tell. Design can be a more transparent process that acknowledges social complexity.

EXPERTISE: PROFESSIONAL VS LAY KNOWLEDGE

The lack of a shared language of light produces an imbalance between professional and lay expertise. Lighting and other design professionals are able to envision the outcome of particular design interventions, but often have only a sketchy sense of stakeholder needs. By contrast, residents and other stakeholders are experts in their own place, but not in light and design. Equitable design processes need to be characterised by 'democratising' the dialogues between different kinds of expertise, often in practical ways: for example, visual methods and light demonstrations that help people envisage design outcomes.

(INE-)QUALITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE: CARE VS COST

Infrastructure is never just a matter of providing technical systems. Bad lighting in housing estates, whether it is broken lights or extremely high levels of illumination, speaks volumes about how stakeholders are understood by the authorities and organisations responsible for caring for them and their place. The differences in infrastructure provision for public lighting mark inequalities in care, value and resource. Particularly in housing, public lighting is often reduced to a matter of achieving technical standards at the lowest cost. But while cost will always remain a crucial concern, it is important to define public lighting in terms of 'care' rather than pure function, if we are to design more equitable lighting.

Light presents itself as an opportunity to address issues of urban inequality. It can be used to focus value, care and creativity on public spaces, estates and future mixed-use housing. It can help build social inclusion and civic life across urban spaces, working to produce light as socio-technical infrastructure that is cost-effective, socially sustainable, and creates spaces that are engaging, accessible and comfortable for the diverse citizens who share them.

ROUNDTABLE I: SOCIAL RESEARCH IN DESIGN

Whitecross Estate, Islington

The first Configuring Light Roundtable (hosted on 12 February 2016, at the London School of Economics and Political Science) discussed the Whitecross Estate in Islington, London, to focus on the potential role of social research in design. It explored how stakeholders in housing development and management can build up social knowledges and social rationale for evidence-based lighting design interventions that address inequalities and recognise the importance of lighting.

CASE STUDY SUMMARY: THE WHITECROSS ESTATE

Whitecross

The Whitecross Estate is located in the London Borough of Islington and was built for the urban working poor in the 1880s. Today, the estate also encompasses a range of post-war redevelopments, which were built on the other side of Whitecross Street, dividing the estate into two areas. The estate is home to about 1,200 people, with some families living on the estate for generations. Located between the Barbican and bustling Old Street, the estate stands in the midst of heavy gentrification. Whitecross Street, which 'cuts' the estate into an 'old' and a 'new' part, is home to a daily food market, which serves the workers in the City (more than locals) at lunchtime. The estate has very active residents and a community centre, which is heavily used for various community activities.

The lighting on the Whitecross estate is functional and bright. There is currently no lighting strategy in place for the estate and new lights tend to be installed in reaction to residents complaining about a 'lack of safety'. Most of the public lighting, especially newer lamps, is installed very high up in order to flood light the public spaces on the estate. This stark lighting not only consumes enormous amounts of energy and causes light pollution in people's flats, but also leads to very high contrast ratios: stepping out of the floodlight feels like stepping into complete darkness, even when the space 'outside' the floodlight is not actually that dark. Moreover, it does not respond to actual social activities. For example, some of the blocks are brightly lit through bulkhead lighting but because of the position of the lamps, residents are nonetheless unable to see their locks when opening their front doors.

Social Research in Design

Any kind of lighting intervention impacts upon people and their way of life and therefore is not just a design, but also a social intervention. Ideally, decision-makers develop a detailed understandings of the spaces in which they intervene — not only in terms of the built environment, but also of what these spaces mean to the people who use them. Social research can help make these social understandings

explicit so that the needs, understandings and practices of the social groups or communities can be integrated into any kind of design intervention. It aims to produce rich and detailed social knowledge of how a space works, and to systematically articulate the concerns of stakeholders who may not be accurately represented in consultation processes. Social research in design can complement and build upon consultation processes, but it is different in two important ways. First, it seeks out a wide range of stakeholders, some of whom may not ordinarily attend a consultation. Second, it aims for more detailed knowledge of the use of public spaces by encouraging a 'broad conversation' about user practices and values. Therefore, making social research strategies central to new lighting schemes can help develop more equitable public lighting.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS ROUNDTABLE I: SOCIAL RESEARCH IN DESIGN

1   **Reactive lighting contributes to social inequalities in lighting**
Current social housing lighting is reactive rather than strategic: in addition to 'infrastructural' lighting (e.g. for balconies and walkways), lights are installed in reaction to complaints and to the perceived potential for anti-social behaviour or crime. Hence, social housing lighting tends to be a patchwork of solutions dictated by outside pressures, reacting to immediate or 'burning issues', but without a cohesive strategy or rationale. In order to tackle social inequalities, social housing lighting needs to be understood as a strategic tool that takes into account the underlying social fabric of a place.

2   **Acknowledging site-specificity is key for a strategic approach to social housing lighting**
A strategic approach to public lighting is not necessarily aimed at uniform and highly standardised lighting. This is particularly important for new housing developments, which will all be mixed-use developments and therefore involve very diverse people and activities. The leading question in this context should be: what is the most appropriate lighting for any given site, considering its socio-economic as well as spatial context and different kinds of constraints (e.g. issues around risk and liability or energy provision)? Uniformity does not make places more equitable. Therefore, social inequalities in lighting could best be addressed through site-specific design with a richer social knowledge base drawing on social research in design.

3   **The reputation of an estate affects the perception of its lighting**
The reputation of an estate can heavily influence how it is perceived by residents and visitors and this extends to questions around lighting and ambiance. In particular, the fear of crime, as opposed to 'actual' crime, dominates discussion of lighting among social housing residents and stakeholders. Improving an estate and its lighting, then, involves not only architectural and infrastructural settings, but also the reputation and identity of the place and how it is communicated to different publics.

4   **Practical considerations are at the core of putting new lighting approaches in place**

Strategies for tackling social inequalities in lighting need to work practically. First, most institutions already produce substantial amounts of social knowledge of their estates through their normal activities and departments (e.g. maintenance or neighbourhood management). The challenge is to harvest these knowledges and make them actionable for design and planning. Second, responsibility for lighting has to be made visible as an important aspect of estate management and development and as a cross-departmental concern. Different teams need to be integrated into discussions of public lighting on housing estates. Third, new lighting technologies and materials allow for lighting fixtures to be very robust without compromising aesthetic quality. Social housing lighting can benefit from innovative new fixtures that are aesthetic features rather than purely technical objects (such as bulkheads).

5   **Pre- and post-implementation research can help create a good business case**

Achieving more equitable public lighting on housing estates will require building better and more evidence-based business cases that demonstrate the wider social and spatial value of good lighting, its potential impact on security, cost, social vibrancy, access and diversity, and the real costs of lighting options over time in a rapidly changing technology context. Social research can be vital in deepening and broadening the evidence and therefore the business case, addressing the need to, first, capture the current situation (identifying site-specific problems and opportunities for design); second, outline potential benefits from lighting design interventions for diverse stakeholders; and third, assess success via post-implementation research (which is exceptionally rare in lighting design). Addressing social inequalities in public lighting requires qualitative research to be integrated into business cases in order to identify the value or benefit of new lighting interventions over time and diverse populations.

ROUNDTABLE II: MAKING CONNECTIONS

Thamesmead Estate, Greenwich/Bexley

The second Configuring Light Roundtable (hosted on 10 March 2016 at the London School of Economics and Political Science) discussed the Thamesmead Estate in Bexley/Greenwich to explore the ways in which social research and lighting can help in connecting the social spaces of an estate. It asked: how can the design of public space facilitate movement and mobility, and connect different spaces within an estate and between the estate and the surrounding borough and city? In what ways can lighting link into people's diverse movements and rhythms? And how can public lighting help shape the identity, atmosphere and sense of place?

CASE STUDY SUMMARY: THE THAMESMEAD ESTATE

Thamesmead

Thamesmead is a district in South East London, shared between the Boroughs of Greenwich and Bexley and situated on former marshland between Woolwich and Erith. It is characterised by the massive Thamesmead Estate, which famously featured in Stanley Kubrick's film 'A Clockwork Orange'. Thamesmead has around 40,000 residents in 16,000 homes and is the same size as Central London. Thamesmead is very green: it has an average of 185 sqm green space/person and 7km of waterways, as well as five lakes. From 2018 onwards, Thamesmead will be connected to Crossrail, which will significantly reduce travel time to and from Central London and Thamesmead.

The Thamesmead Estate was last owned by three different housing associations — Gallions, Trust Thamesmead and Tilfen Land, who are now all part of the Peabody Group – which means that all of the estate is within one organisation again. Peabody owns around 7,000 of the 40,000 homes, of which 41% are social rented and 37% are owner-occupied, which is below local, regional and national levels. While Thamesmead was originally conceived as one town, Peabody's investigations have identified three distinct neighbourhoods that residents feel part of: Plumstead, Abbey Wood and Thamesmead Town Centre.

Thamesmead was conceived by the Greater London Council (GLC) in the 1960s to relieve London of its housing shortage. It was supposed to be the 'new town in town' or the 'town of the 21st century'. Thamesmead's architecture and design was about articulating futuristic urban living. But it was also, even then, about crime prevention. The leading GLC architect Robert Rigg designed lakes and canals in order to lower levels of crime and vandalism among the young, an idea originating from Sweden. A local resident who has lived on the estate since its construction said that, in its early days, buses would arrive at Thamesmead with people coming to see the estate as a vision of London's new urban future. Thamesmead became the first residential estate in the country to be controlled entirely by a private company governed by a resident-

elected body. Today, the public discourse of Thamesmead's future is constructed around two main themes: large-scale regeneration, with Peabody investing £225 million pounds into regeneration efforts, and connectivity, with the new Crossrail connection into London.

The roundtable discussion mapped out Thamesmead as a social space, which has a very young demographic, but it is constantly changing. Thamesmead was described further as a green and quiet space with peak flows of activity and clearly articulated community pride.

Making Connections

Online and on-site research at Thamesmead identified ten themes (some of which are illustrated below using residents' quotes) that are important for thinking about 'making connections' in and through public lighting in Thamesmead:

Community 'People greet each other on the streets'
Pride 'I love it here'
Change 'It is a changing thing'
Identity 'I have no iconic building I can relate to'
Reputation 'Despite the reputation it's not a bad place to live'
Green Space 'I have got a park with a lake over there and over there'
Scales Contrast in scales (e.g. big housing blocks and public spaces vs. small alleyways)
Play Safe places for children to play
Light Darkness and human scale lighting
Care The new Thamesmead is about demonstrating care.

Despite being well-connected through bike paths, the road layout divides the estate. An oversupply of routes, public space and pathways disaggregates people using the space, which contributes to its feeling of being empty and quiet. In terms of urban design, lighting and crime prevention, the distinction between 'illegitimate' vs. 'legitimate' users of public space was raised in the discussion, highlighting that, highlighting that the misuse of public space should not be facilitated through redesign. This comment translated into considerations of lighting and connectivity, in that it spelled out a difference between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' or 'formal' and 'informal' users. Whereas locals are able to easily navigate in Thamesmead, it is difficult for outsiders (e.g. the police) as the space is not easily legible.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS ROUNDTABLE II: MAKING CONNECTIONS

1   **Inequalities in public lighting are expressed in design language and professional procedures**

Inequalities in public lighting are manifested in design language and professional practices, and not just in the ways spaces are actually lit. More valued places and their lighting (e.g. tourist attractions, heritage sites and affluent residential areas) tend to be professionally addressed through a language of aesthetic concerns, a vocabulary that includes spatial terms such as 'magical', 'inviting', 'engaging' and 'pleasurable', all linked to a language of 'place-making' and 'atmosphere'. To address these values, lighting design procedures may include careful testing with mock-ups and explorations of new technical possibilities. Less prominent or 'valued' places, such as housing estates, however, tend to be talked about in terms of functionality and infrastructure provision at minimised cost, or in terms of changing or improving behaviour. Addressing the issue of equality in public lighting, therefore, requires addressing inequalities in the professional language and practices of lighting design.

2   **Lighting needs need to be understood through the local modes of mobility and connectivity**

There is a clear need for a more detailed and ethnographically grounded understanding of the social space of an estate. Identifying connectivity problems and improving mobility on an estate through lighting needs to start from how people's existing movement patterns link into their understandings of public lighting.

3   **Lighting strategies need to produce evolving and responsive systems**

Lighting designs need to be planned as evolving systems rather than fixed structures, because both lighting technologies and social life keep changing. Hence, it is counterproductive to conceive of lighting systems as one-off implementations, which can permanently and reliably configure a space and 'fix' social problems. On the contrary, strategic approaches to public lighting on housing estates need to acknowledge the fluid character of lighting. Conversely, new lighting and lighting control technologies do hold out a promise of more responsive and adaptable systems.

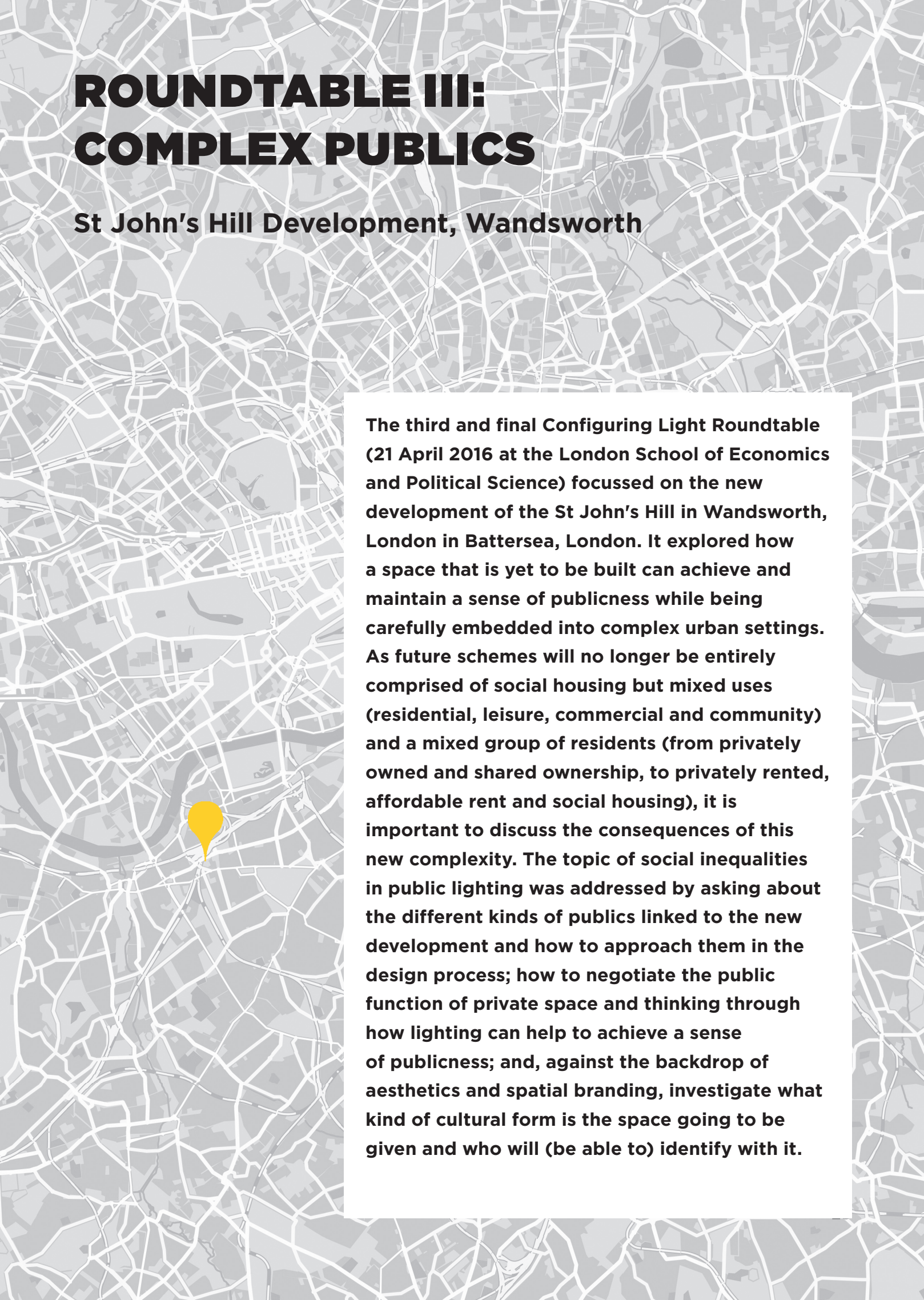**4   The qualities and value of darkness need to be central to equitable lighting design**

In lighting design, there is a need to consider darkness as much as light. The quality of darkness needs to be of equal concern, to the extent that it is helpful to think about darkness not as a by-product of light, but as an integral element of design. This also requires thinking about darkness beyond common issues such as bio-diversity, cost and light pollution; darkness can be understood and used as a broader design tool. Attention to the qualities of darkness can facilitate more sophisticated design for social housing, by creating the contrasts necessary for engaging and atmospheric lighting.

5   Developing equitable lighting means to develop a shared 'language of light'

Light is a 'relational' material. We perceive and experience light through its interaction with surfaces, materials, people and events. Therefore, ideally, lighting design is not about uniform standards but rather about collaborative place-making. In order to build on this and achieve a more democratic engagement with stakeholders, it is paramount to invest in developing a shared 'language of light'. Here, lighting mock-ups and the experience of light and material can help develop this language and expertise of light. This kind of engagement and inclusion not only democratises the design process, it also fosters ownership of a new scheme and can help with place-making, as well as preventing vandalism.

ROUNDTABLE III: COMPLEX PUBLICS

St John's Hill Development, Wandsworth

The third and final Configuring Light Roundtable (21 April 2016 at the London School of Economics and Political Science) focussed on the new development of the St John's Hill in Wandsworth, London in Battersea, London. It explored how a space that is yet to be built can achieve and maintain a sense of publicness while being carefully embedded into complex urban settings. As future schemes will no longer be entirely comprised of social housing but mixed uses (residential, leisure, commercial and community) and a mixed group of residents (from privately owned and shared ownership, to privately rented, affordable rent and social housing), it is important to discuss the consequences of this new complexity. The topic of social inequalities in public lighting was addressed by asking about the different kinds of publics linked to the new development and how to approach them in the design process; how to negotiate the public function of private space and thinking through how lighting can help to achieve a sense of publicness; and, against the backdrop of aesthetics and spatial branding, investigate what kind of cultural form is the space going to be given and who will (be able to) identify with it.

CASE STUDY SUMMARY:
THE ST JOHN'S HILL DEVELOPMENT

St John's Hill

The St John's Hill case study was chosen to focus on the most common way in which issues on light and inequality arise in London.. We are dealing with increasingly complex building developments that challenge the relationships between the public and private and between housing and the city, the way in which the social mix of the city in the home and on the street is imagined. Lighting as a barometer and as an intervention is involved in imagining increasingly complex publics and their inhabiting of reconfigured public spaces.

The St John's Hill development is a Peabody project that will redevelop the 'Peabody Estate' in St John's Hill in the Borough of Wandsworth. It is located next to Clapham Junction, in Battersea. Peabody obtained planning consent in 2012 and the new development will see the old estate demolished to increase density from 351 to 528 new homes, which will comprise 221 rented homes, 58 shared ownership homes, 249 private sale homes, a community 'hub', commercial units and a new public square. It will be built in three phases: the first two blocks have already been completed in early 2016, the next phase will be finished in 2018 and the whole development will be completed by 2020. Overall, the new scheme includes 13,200 square metres of open space and a new public route from Clapham Junction station to Wandsworth Common.

Constructed in 1936, the 'Peabody Estate' was conceived and built during the inter-war economic depression. Therefore, allotments were put in at the heart of the estate, and to save money, residents shared a bath in the scullery. Peabody modernised the estate in the 1960s and 1970s by providing individual bathrooms for each flat and installing lifts in the blocks. During this time, two of the blocks were converted into sheltered accommodation. Since Peabody obtained ownership of the site in 1935, the layout of the site has remained largely unchanged: facing inwards with green space at the heart of the estate, communal life primarily took place 'inside'. Today, the estate is surrounded by a wall and is hard to navigate through as an 'outsider'. With the first two blocks complete (both of which

contain rented and privately owned homes), the estate and surrounding area are currently in a state of fundamental change. While the old estate is being vacated for demolition, previous estate residents have moved into the new blocks, together with a growing and more affluent 'new' community, which consists primarily of young professionals. Most of the offer at St John's Hill Street explicitly caters for this incoming group, with many shops selling furniture, floors, tiles, decoration services and so on.

The demographic make-up of Northcote Ward, which includes the St John's Hill development, has two main aspects. First, it is a racially homogenous area. The 2011 Census data indicates that while 40.2% of Greater London's population is classified as 'non-white', Northcote Ward has only 14.9% non-white residents. Second, Wandsworth, and specifically Northcote Ward, residents are socio-economically well-positioned. In Northcote Ward, almost 67% of the residents occupy higher or lower managerial or administrative professional positions. This is significantly higher than Wandsworth (51.1%) and Greater London (36.3%). Equally, unemployment rates are very low in Wandsworth (5.4%) and Northcote Ward (2.7%), compared with Greater London (8.3%). Property prices in the SW11 postcode have increased by 2.6% in the past 12 months and by 36.0% in the past five years. This is a less dramatic increase than, for example, in the E8 postcode, where property prices have increased by 5.7% in the last year and by almost 50% in last five years (source property data: Zoopla.co.uk).

Regeneration and fundamental change appear as the two dominating themes in discussions around St John's Hill's new development and its larger socio-spatial context. On-site research has identified five further themes, which are crucial for thinking through 'complex publics' in relation to lighting in St John's Hill:

New Public Space and Thoroughfares – While the old estate was inward-facing and walled, the new development is characterised by accessibility and connectivity. By physically opening up the site, the development aims not only to provide new public spaces, but also to create access ways to Clapham Junction station and the high street. This begs the question of how to navigate public and private space and create a space that is permeable and 'public', but also retains a sense of privateness and intimacy.

Mixed-Use Spaces and 'Diverse' Community – The new development looks to create a mixed community with different socio-economic backgrounds, as well as a mixed-use space consisting of residential units, shops and restaurants and office spaces. The new public spaces in the estate will serve as 'common ground' for these different uses and users, as well as for those who come in from the outside. We therefore need to promote a broad understanding of 'the public' within and beyond the design process, in order to create a space that works for everyone.

Night-time Economy and Hyper-Connectivity – The high street offering in St John's Hill is not only characterised by high-end retail shops, but also by an extensive night-time economy with restaurants, bars and clubs. This means that St John's Hill is a leisure destination for a particular demographic and that there will be peaks of activity at certain times; i.e. the high street offerings are linked to who comes in and when and how they more through the space.

Aesthetics and Branding – While the old estate did not even have an official name but was just called 'Peabody Estate', the new development not only has a name, St John's Hill, but also is a brand. This brand serves to sell the apartments through advertising a particular lifestyle for a particular target group. In the context of creating 'public space', we then need to ask what kind of cultural form is the new space going to be given and who will (be able to) identify with it?

Light – Lighting can, and does, play a fundamental role in the configuration of 'publicness' in a private space. It can help achieve a sense of publicness but can equally mark a space as private. Therefore, the new lighting in the development provides a significant opportunity for creating a 'public space' that is public during the night and day. New lighting should 'feel neutral' and not be 'branded' and should mark out thoroughfares and public spaces as accessible. Ideally, it should also represent the socio-cultural diversity of its environment.

KEY TAKE AWAYS ROUNDTABLE III: COMPLEX PUBLICS

Light plays a fundamental role in configuring public space
Different lighting design case studies presented at the roundtable demonstrated that light is key for public space design. It affects every user of social spaces and can draw boundaries by clearly marking the 'privateness' or 'publicness' of a nocturnal space. By the same token, it can enhance activity and explicitly link into new ways of life, such as growing night-time economies and children's play after dusk. In this context, the discussion revealed that new lighting technologies can help in remaining flexible and responsive to the way in which 'publicness' is negotiated in a particular space. However, in order to strategically integrate these crucial aspects into public space design, lighting needs to be emphasised as a key concern at the briefing stage and to be included into the budget as a cost item.

Discussions around equitable public lighting need to evaluate notions of 'privateness'
The configuration of public space necessarily involves an ongoing negotiation between public and private space, and lighting plays a key role here. Therefore, lighting that aims to create more equitable nocturnal spaces must be based on an understanding of 'privateness' that is not solely defined in terms of property ownership. Public spaces are also constituted by the 'private' practices of their various stakeholders (e.g. having a private conversation in a public space, eating, or resting) and lighting needs to respond to both. Therefore, we need to complicate the debate on public space by thinking about who has access to privacy.

Light heightens inequalities when deployed as defensive architecture
Public space lighting can be explicitly or implicitly linked to policing and enforcement and therefore can be deployed as 'defensive architecture'. For example, implementing bright illumination prevents rough sleeping and therefore 'designs out' homeless people. This instrumental use of light underlines the material aspects of light. It also brings about the most unequal form of lighting: illumination for exclusion. To address this, the discussion suggested a change in practice to promote site-specific lighting that takes into account

more vulnerable groups as stakeholders, such as the homeless. Here, a change in language is equally important. Instead of employing a public space terminology that evolves around 'defence', public space lighting would be understood in relation to who inhabits the space, under what conditions and in what ways.

To promote the benefits of careful lighting design, focus needs to shift from cost to value
The implementation of more careful lighting is currently challenged by an emphasis on cost rather than value. There is a credibility gap, not in terms of how design is developed and with what intentions, but how it is subsequently priced as part of profit-driven developments. This particularly manifests in how service charges for housing tenants are calculated and justified. In order to make the case for better and more inclusive lighting that can enhance a sense of place across all stakeholders, it is important to shift emphasis from cost and affordability to different kinds of values. For example, good lighting can significantly improve the value of a space by improving public life. The success of a new lighting scheme thus needs to be measured, not just in terms of affordability, but in terms of what people value about it. Here, it is important to help the development of a shared 'language of light' through light mock-ups in order to demonstrate value.

There is an urgent need to share knowledge and best practice in public space and lighting design
Promoting good design principles in social housing design is challenged by a changing regulatory landscape where increasing pressure is put onto local authorities with decreasing financial resources to enforce design standards. Equally, social housing clients need to become more skilled in order to deliver quality design without regulation. To tackle inequalities in lighting, it is paramount to broadly educate about the long-term benefit of quality design and to share best practice in collaborative forums.

CONFIGURING LIGHT WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

The Configuring Light/Staging the Social team would like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to all the working group members and speakers for dedicating their time to contribute to the three exceptionally interesting and productive roundtable meetings that have formed the basis for this report. The high level of collegial engagement and cross-disciplinary collaboration was outstanding and will serve as a foundation for further discussion and follow-up projects that will help make our urban spaces better and more equitable – by day and night.

In alphabetical order, the Configuring Light Working Group members are:

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THE CONFIGURING LIGHT PROGRAMME

Configuring Light/Staging the Social is an interdisciplinary research programme based in the Sociology Department at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). It explores the role that lighting plays in our everyday life to help build a better social knowledge basis for lighting design interventions. It was founded in 2012 by the sociologists Dr Joanne Entwistle (King's College London), Dr Don Slater and Mona Sloane (both LSE) and is supported by the LSE and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Past and current collaborators of Configuring Light include Ove Arup, Derby City Council, Speirs+Major, Lend Lease, the Wellcome Collection and the London Science Museum.

All Configuring Light projects explore how lighting is configured into social life: as infrastructure, as technology, as ambiance or as a particular kind of material that we make and shape through our everyday practices and professional expertise. Configuring Light is committed to developing an empirically grounded social understanding that can work with engineering, psychology and architecture but contributes something distinctive: the 'social' refers to the various social groups that use a space and through which individuals relate to the spaces that designers design. Since individual identity is shaped through membership of these groups, for example families, genders, ethnicities, communities (local, urban, national) but also subcultures and other groups, so is the understanding and use of light. Looking at light as important 'stuff' within social life allows us to explore how professional practitioners – from lighting designers to architects, planners and regulators – 'work' this material into the urban fabric.

Configuring Light/Staging the Social is located in the higher education sector and aims to foster and explore innovative and interdisciplinary practitioner-academic collaborations. As a programme, Configuring Light runs a range of projects and activities that range from research to education and knowledge exchange and impact. For example, since early 2014, it has been hosting an ESRC-funded seminar series that brings together academics and practitioners concerned with contemporary lighting issues. A particular research focus within the programme is a concern with public lighting in the urban realm: previous research projects looked at public lighting in, for example, Derby (UK), Cartagena (Colombia) and Muscat (Oman).

www.configuringlight.org

TEAM

Mona Sloane

Mona Sloane is sociologist based at the London School of Economics and co-founder of the Configuring Light/Staging the Social research programme. She has developed and spearheaded the Configuring Light Roundtables project. As LSE PhD scholarship holder, Mona works and publishes on the sociology of spatial design, material culture, aesthetics and economic sociology. Within Configuring Light, she researches and publishes on the social dimension of light in the urban context and specialises on developing and running Knowledge Exchange and Impact (KEI) activities and new practitioner-academic collaborations. Mona holds an MSc in Sociology from the LSE and a BA in Communication and Cultural Management from Zeppeling University.

Erin Scheopner

Erin Scheopner is a historian and supports Configuring Light as administrative assistant. In this role, Erin assists with coordinating the series of roundtable events focused on social inequalities in public lighting. In her time outside LSE, Erin is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at Goldsmiths College, University of London. Her research focusses on Anglo-Irish relations in the inter-war years.

Dr Don Slater

Dr Don Slater is a co-founder of Configuring Light/Staging the Social and Associate Professor (Reader) in Sociology at the LSE. His current research builds on an extensive research and publishing record in the sociology of material culture and economic life, new media and digital culture and visual culture. Major publications include: *New Media, Development and Globalization: Making Connections in the Global South* (Polity 2013); *The Technological Economy* (2005, with Andrew Barry); *Market Society* (2001 with Fran Tonkiss); *The Internet: An Ethnographic Approach* (2000, with Daniel Miller); *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (1997).

Dr Joanne Entwistle

Dr Joanne Entwistle is a co-founder of Configuring Light/Staging the Social and Senior Lecturer in Sociology at King's College London. She has published extensively on the sociology of fashion, dress and the body and aesthetic markets and economies. Major publications include: *Fashioning Models: Image, Text, Industry*, co-edited with Elizabeth Wissinger (Berg, forthcoming); The *Aesthetic Economy: markets and value in clothing and modelling* (Berg, 2009); *Body Dressing*, co-edited with Elizabeth Wilson (Berg, 2001); *The Fashioned Body: fashion, dress and modern social theory* (Polity, 2000).

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