

The place of social integration in policy making and practice at the Greater London Authority 2016-2019

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Abstract

The Greater London Authority's Social Integration Strategy (2016) 'All of Us' sets out a new approach to integration policy within London, focussing on shared responsibility placed in a framework of equalities, participation and relationships. Whilst being distinctive in its framing of social inclusion, the policy is also reflective of the evolution of integration policy since the inception of the GLA in 2000.

This paper considers the evolution of the All of Us strategy, in tandem with the creation of London's first Deputy Mayor for Social Integration. It considers the extent to which London's distinctiveness of approach marks it out from the approach of other cities and the ways in which its framing of integration marks both a shift in approach and the evolution of the GLA's policy making and practice in this area. The paper looks at the ways in which the GLA's approach contributes to place based leadership on inclusion and the ways that different narrative framings of the agenda can shape policy and practice.

Introduction

In keeping with other UK cities, London's role in integration can be characterised by what the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration described in 2017 as a 'tangled division of responsibility for integration policy between central government departments and agencies [which] has been compounded by the lack of an agreed view as to the role of local government in this policy area.' Whilst the local turn in migration studies identified by Caponio and Borkert (2010), has also been apparent in UK cities, in particular in the context of devolution to English cities post 2010, the UK system remains highly centralized and this has perhaps impeded the development of specific integration policies common to some other European cities. The issue of integration has also been seen as a low salience issue in UK local authorities, with the lack of clearly defined responsibilities as identified by the APPG, compounded by the lack of a UK wide strategy on integration or a clear mechanism for local government to engage on the issue.

That being said, London in general, as by far the largest UK city and one which has significantly higher levels of migration than any other UK city (38% of the population are foreign born, significantly higher than the next highest region with 14% according to the Migration Observatory in 2018), and the Greater London Authority (GLA,) in particular, has taken a role in the development of policy and practice related to social integration and migration since its inception. Its approach in some ways mirrors the experience of UK cities in its low salience and lack of clear role, whilst being distinctive thanks to the unique role of London – both in its demographics and governance.

This paper aims to explore the dynamics at play in the development of policy and practice post 2016 – in particular in the formulation of policy under the auspices of the first Deputy Mayor for Social Integration and the concurrent development of the Social Integration policy ‘All of Us.’ The paper briefly recaps social integration policy at the GLA since its inception in 2000 before exploring the post 2016 policy framework – with a particular focus on how the GLA has chosen to frame social integration, the ways in which this marks a distinctive break from previous administrations as well as areas of continuity. Finally, it discusses the opportunities and challenges in the framing of policy problems and the ways in which the GLA may seek to develop this approach in the future.

Placing Integration in context: The GLA from 2000 - 2016

Established in 2000, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the role of London Mayor is the oldest of the so-called ‘Metro Mayors’ characterising the start of a trend towards increased devolution to the English regions and cities. However, as

identified by Sandford (2018) its responsibilities and competencies are unique in UK local government. Sitting above 33 constituent London boroughs who retain wide ranging responsibilities in relation to service delivery, Sandford identifies major competencies for the GLA related to 'transport, followed by housing, policing, economic development and regeneration.' However, the Mayoralty also holds a general power of competence (derived from the Localism Act 2011,) and cross cutting themes derived from the 1999 GLA act in relation to 'leading London's Equality agenda.' (GLA 2005) and developing a number of prescribed strategies. Each London Mayor has set its own policy agenda and priorities, including in relation to discretionary policy areas. One mechanism for this has been through the appointment of a number of Deputy Mayors focussed on particular policy areas – of which the first social integration Mayor was appointed in 2016. The GLA also convenes the Strategic Migration Partnership for London with the mandate of acting as 'a cross-sector partnership to maintain strategic overview of the state of migration in London. The LSMP...[helps to]...inform the Home Office and the Mayor of London of key issues and trends in immigration operations, immigration policy and integration affecting London's economic growth and future planning.'

It is therefore fair to say that whilst integration and migration is not necessarily identified as a core competency of the GLA, it has existed as a part of the mandate from the inception of the role and has developed in parallel to (though not always mirroring) national trends in relation to integration and inclusion.

Under the mayoralty of Ken Livingstone (2000-2008) the GLA's work in this area mirrored the dominant Equalities agenda of New Labour and as identified by Worley

(2005.) A Deputy Mayor was appointed for Policing and Equalities (this linking of Community Safety and Community Cohesion being a consistent structural theme in UK local government) to implement the Mayor's Equalities Vision, which stated that the GLA 'will be an equalities champion and leader in: Promoting equality.

Challenging and eradicating discrimination, Providing responsive and accessible services for Londoners and Ensuring the GLA's workforce reflects the diverse population of London.' This was complemented by an Equalities Commission of officers and stakeholders which had both an oversight role of the strategy alongside helping to develop opportunities to 'enhance' strategies and policies (GLA 2005.)

These strategies certainly engaged with questions of both migration policy (in particular relating to legal advice for asylum seekers and refugees and women whose immigration status puts them at risk of domestic violence) and integration – though this was either targeted to asylum seekers and refugees or through the broader equalities prism – rather than a migration or integration specific focus.

The Mayoralty of Boris Johnson (2008-2016) initially focussed on refugees for its social integration framework in the publication of the London Enriched strategy in 2009. However, whilst identifying that, 'Some of these same challenges confront other international migrants who live and work in London' – the strategy is clear in its focus on refugee integration marking a shift in approach from the broader equalities agenda of Livingstone, to a more targeted approach – albeit one which specifically engaged with theory and practice related specifically to integration. The strategy itself defines integration as 'a two way process requiring positive engagement by both refugees and the settled community. Integration takes in all aspects of life: economic, social, cultural, civic and political' and positions it as in keeping with the

national government policy on integration. The London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP) and Migration, Refugee Advisory Panel (MRAP) are identified as the key bodies in the first case 'bring together strategic regional bodies to plan and coordinate delivery' and in the second, to 'reflect community perspectives.'

Gidley and Jayaweera (2010) note an intention to broaden out this perspective following its first year of implementation, noting other significant groups of migrants which may be included in this broadening out (European nationals, family migration, international students and labour migration) and the potential similarities and differences of approach which would be required to embed these other groups into the ethos of London Enriched. This is then reflected in the update to the strategy in 2010 which widened its scope to include both refugees and migrants more generally identifying 7 core policy areas for the strategy – English Language, Housing, Employment, Skills and Enterprise, Health, Community Safety, Children and Young People and Community Development and Participation.

Social Integration at the GLA post 2016

The election of Mayor Sadiq Khan in 2016 marked both continuity and change in the evolution of the role of the GLA in integration policy and practice and its priorities and vision. Perhaps most strikingly, as part of a manifesto pledge, Khan appointed the first dedicated Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, building on the recommendation of Katwala et al (2016) to draw inspiration from US models of 'Offices for Immigrant Affairs' to appoint an Office for Citizenship and Integration. The report sets out a vision whereby a new Deputy Mayor would 'serve as a public champion of the integration agenda,' mainstreaming integration throughout the work of the GLA working in close partnership with the LSMP to promote 'a programme of integration

and citizenship that encourages democratic participation and contact between citizens and communities in London – encouraging and championing new Londoners.’

This vision can be somewhat seen in the subsequent design of the GLA’s role in integration under Mayor Khan, which can be described as being made up of the following constituent parts:

- Mayoral leadership and communications including the ‘London is Open’ campaign
- Appointment of a dedicated Deputy Mayor for social integration and subsequent development of a Social Integration Strategy and Equalities strategy
- Service delivery including through the ‘Citizenship and Integration Initiative’, LSMP and MRAP

Mayoral Leadership and strategic communications

Before considering the role of the Deputy Mayor and strategic policy making of the GLA, it is important first to consider the role of the Mayor in integration at the London wide level. The election of Sadiq Khan was described by the BBC in 2016 as a ‘symbolic victory at several levels’ with Khan becoming, ‘one of the first Muslim mayors in Europe at a time when European capitals have been tested by crises of terrorism and the plight of refugees. [Khan] takes office after a campaign marred by religious and racial tension which may presage problems ahead but could also represent a genuine opportunity.’ Khan himself in his acceptance speech described ‘hope over fear and unity over division.’ When his election in May 2016 was followed less than a month later by the vote to leave the European Union, Khan responded in

Summer 2016 by launching the 'London is Open' campaign, described by London and Partners, the GLA agency that supported its development as, 'a major campaign launched by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, in 2016, to show that London is united and open for business. It shows the world that London remains entrepreneurial, international and full of creativity and possibility, while reassuring the more than one million foreign nationals who live in London that they will always be welcome, and that any form of discrimination will not be tolerated.' As de Graauw and Bloemraad (2018) identify in the US context, one commonality of local leadership on inclusion is in 'making the case' – often through an economic perspective, that 'immigrants are of current and future economic importance to cities, metropolitan areas, and states' alongside encouraging civic engagement and integration.' The campaign was matched with an area of advocacy by the Mayor for the reciprocal rights of EU citizens in London with Khan stating in his first statement post referendum, 'I want to send a particular message to the almost one million Europeans living in London, who make a huge contribution to our city - working hard, paying taxes and contributing to our civic and cultural life. You are welcome here.'

Through these campaigns we can see important leadership functions of the mayoralty, some of which can be seen as symbolic (and embodied in some ways through Khan himself and the way that this is interpreted) but also through the strategic communications decisions made early in the Mayoral term to brand London as an 'open' city. Hambleton's (2018) conceptualisation of place based leadership on inclusion clearly shows the importance of political leadership to this process – even where the link between the top line messages developed by the leadership and the 'golden thread' linking them through to the strategy and practice described can be

somewhat fuzzy, this clearly provides an important lead and context for the development of the GLA's strategy on inclusion and sets the policy framing in which it operates.

'All of Us' – The Mayors Social Integration Strategy

As described above, the commitment to social integration was highlighted through the appointment of the first dedicated Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, social mobility and community engagement.

The vision for this role is codified in two documents, a social integration strategy entitled 'All of Us' (2018b) and 'Inclusive London' (2018a) the Mayor's equalities strategy. As outlined in the discussion of previous Mayoral strategies, this latter document in some ways sees a continuation of the earlier focus on Equalities. The accompanying report from the GLA (2018c) describes how the strategy supports the GLA to meet its duties under the Equalities Act (2010) and demonstrates an approach which focusses on the statutory protected characteristics as defined in the act, rather than specifically on migration or the integration of broader migrant communities as highlighted in the later iteration of London Enriched.

Similarly, the Social Integration strategy is notable in its elaboration of a definition of social integration and in setting out 4 key components to the GLA's work on social integration:

- Relationships – promoting shared experiences
- Participation – supporting Londoners to be active citizens
- Equality – tackling barriers and inequalities

- Evidence – improving London’s evidence base to measure, evaluate and share findings on the state of social integration.

In the GLA model, the first three of these intersect to form a triangle whereby, ‘all of these [factors] shape the extent and quality of interactions and connections between Londoners from different backgrounds, reinforcing each other.’

Within this model, ‘All of Us’ contains three notable critiques of existing policy on social integration as it functions within the UK at local and national level, setting out the ways in which this policy aims to address these shortcomings through its new definition of social integration. Firstly, that theories of social integration focus too much on the quantity of social contact, to the detriment of the quality, stating that, ‘a truly socially integrated society is not just about interactions. It is about people building meaningful relationships, whether as friends, colleagues or fellow citizens.’ Secondly, the strategy highlights that an overly narrow focus on race and ethnicity ‘places too much emphasis on integration between people of different nationalities and ethnicities, and fails to examine other important aspects of social division such as age, social class, employment status, sexuality, gender and disability.’ Thirdly, the strategy neatly contains within its title the idea that social integration is a shared responsibility, stating that without this, it can create the impression that ‘social integration is merely about the actions of specific ethnic or faith communities, whereas social integration is valuable to all of us in many different ways.’

In this way, ‘All of Us’ sets out both a distinctive approach and one which forms part of a continuity agenda. The strategy continues with the long standing equalities approach (and indeed wishes to broaden out its equalities based approach to include

a wider range beyond solely the statutory protected characteristics.) However, it highlights a tension in this approach, in stating the overreliance on race and ethnicity leading to integration only being seen through this prism. Its solution is both in widening out the definition of social integration and also, mirroring the longstanding trends in both academic research (eg Spencer and Charsely 2016) and policy (eg the Social Integration Commission 2014,) attempts to ensure a two way process of shared responsibility whereby all communities are involved in the process of integration and not only singular communities.

However, this approach perhaps leads to a weakened focus on migration and migrants within the strategy. In contrast to the US models on which Katwala et al (2016) modelled their recommendations, the role of the Deputy Mayor and of the strategy are definitively not predominantly focussed on migrant communities (even where this is placed in a context of acknowledging the need to engage both migrant and longer standing communities within integration practice.) This is not to say that the strategy does not contain references to targeted work with migrants, including initiatives discussed below, but rather that in the broadening out of its social integration, it 'frames' the policy problem (Bacchi 2000) it is aiming to tackle away from the questions of migration (including those highlighting the positive contribution of migrants as might have been expected in the context of the business focussed messaging of the London is Open campaign) and sets its own frame based on equality, participation and contact between all kinds of social groups.

Service delivery including the 'Citizenship and Integration Initiative'

If London's Social Integration strategy in some ways moves the framing away from migrant integration and onto a broader positioning, it is important to highlight a number of ways in which initiatives targeting this policy area have developed in parallel to (as well as part of) the strategy process. These include:

- Convening the LSMP and MRAP and advocacy on national policy issues (such as advocating against the 'Right to Rent' measure)
- Enabling the path to citizenship through the Citizenship and Integration Initiative (CII)
- Developing an online hub of resources to support EEA nationals
- Coordinating the Community Sponsorship contribution to the Syrian resettlement programme

In particular the CII and LSMP provide contrasts in approaches to service delivery by the GLA on integration and migration.

The CII is a pooled fund to support work on citizenship and integration in London. It is supported both by the GLA (through investment in its Social Integration team) and by a number of independent charitable trusts with aims to raise and distribute £1million from 2017-2022.

As well as marking a partnership between philanthropy and local government (unusual in the UK context where there is often a reluctance for philanthropy to cover what are known or perceived to be state functions), the initiative also marks a partnership between the voluntary sector, civil society and City Hall. To date the programme has provided secondments into the GLA from civil society to focus on a

number of strategic priorities – in particular civic engagement, young Londoners access to rights and projects focussing on social contact and identity.

As identified in a learning report (Trust for London 2018,) the programme's stated aims of advancing the policy agenda, direct service delivery and testing new models of delivery and cooperation highlight the ways in which this is an experimental model looking to use the GLA's role as a leader to both facilitate and advocate for change. The learning report highlights how the CII has been used as a platform to develop advocacy positions (in particular on citizen's rights) and has developed this both through partnership working to deliver programmes, but also using this as a basis to advocate for policy change (such as the scrapping of citizenship fees for young Londoners.) In this initiative the GLA seems to be leaning much closer to the vision outlined by Katwala et al (2016) in using the role of the Deputy Mayor to advocate for policy priorities such as 'actively promoting citizenship.' De Graauw similarly (2015) in examining US Offices of Immigrant Affairs identifies leadership and convening as the core functions for these offices (beyond service delivery) and we can see how the shape of the CII might contribute to both of these functions – in particular through using policy initiatives to generate evidence and authority to advocate on policy issues.

By contrast, the roles of LSMP and MRAP are conceptualised quite differently by the GLA. The social integration strategy describes LSMP as funded through a Home Office grant to bring 'together different organisations to look at migration issues and how they impact on London and its migrant communities' and describes MRAP's function as advising 'on the issues and challenges facing refugee and migrant

communities in London.’ The conception of both of these roles within the strategy is predominantly passive. Where CII aims to proactively shape GLA policy and advocacy of national government through building of strategic partnerships, LSMP and MRAP are conceptualised by the strategy predominantly through the convening function of the authority – bringing together partners and stakeholders and facilitating a space for consultation and interaction - but without the sense of policy ownership or agenda development.

As identified by the GLA themselves, this may be linked to the centralised and top down nature of the funding of LSMP by the Home Office – depriving it of a distinctive sense of agency at the local level¹. However, other SMPs, have carved out a more distinctive identity and a wider agenda. For example, Migration Yorkshire complements its convening role with aiming to provide strategic leadership, providing data and research evidence and running targeted projects. It is not that the GLA does not necessarily perform some or all of these functions, but instead that the SMP has not emerged as a forum through which these functions are channelled and remains a somewhat peripheral part of the GLA infrastructure on integration and inclusion.

Discussion

Scholten and Penninx (2016) in their examination of the governance of migration and integration identify that, ‘various successive mayors of the Greater London Authority were particularly proactive on migrant integration.’ However, as demonstrated above,

¹ Whilst this was true when the strategy was published in 2018, recent recruitment has expanded the team beyond this remit, perhaps providing additional policy space as outlined here.

whilst it is true to say that ‘hyperdiverse cities like...London embrace diversity as part of the city’s identity and as a positive anchoring point for local policies, sometimes in spite of their respective national models’ it has not always been the case that London has prioritised integration policy making and practice at the GLA level, even when the everyday reality of integration processes may be functioning well outside of the policy processes. This is partially due to the unique governance structure of London whereby the 33 constituent boroughs retain many competencies which intersect with integration (public health, social services, housing allocations, community safety and, although to a much diminished extent, education) and so the picture of the governance of integration is much more complex and multi level than the perception of the central Mayoral figure may present.

However, successive administrations have also taken distinctive approaches to framing the policy problem that they wish to address – sometimes broadly in keeping with national government policy (such as Livingstone’s adherence to the New Labour Equalities agenda) and sometimes acting in a seemingly more decoupled way (Khan’s advocacy on European citizen’s rights and on pathways to citizenship for young Londoners in contrast to the position of the May government at national level.) The leadership and symbolic function provided by the Mayor, alongside public communications campaign have focussed on this distinctive approach and create the impression of a City Hall taking an advocacy and communications based approach.

At the same time, the All of Us strategy both sits in synergy with some aspects of national policy making on integration, whilst simultaneously critiquing it. The strategy moves away from an overtly migration based focus to a broader definition of social

integration encompassing other factors such as intergenerational integration. In doing so it makes some policy gains – in particular in promoting the sense of shared responsibility present in much of the academic literature and policy making but often absent in practice. The title ‘All of Us’ neatly frames social integration as the two way street identified in literature and crucially avoids placing responsibility solely on a single migrant group to ‘integrate’ attempting to move away from the normative ideological conceptions often embedded within the term ‘integration’ (as set out in 2018 by Schinkel in critiquing the very use of the term.) The strategy’s definition of integration as focussing on the quality of contact rather than solely quantity (in its relationships theme) allows for a wider conception of integration as place shaping and asset based (as set out in the Lyons report in 2007 setting out a vision for local government beyond service delivery,) rather than solely focussed on overcoming the barriers to inclusion through a more deficit orientated model.

However, this wider framing of inclusion also serves to somewhat side line the role of migration in social integration in a way which may seem surprising given the significant role it plays within the demographic make up of the city. The more limited role of the LSMP perhaps serves to highlight how these policy choices translate through into service delivery which does not focus so keenly on migration and its impacts as a policy priority across the board. Whilst it is certainly true to say that the GLA has advocated a number of clear policy stances on a number of issues (EU reciprocal rights, pathways to Citizenship through the CII, and the setting out of a Mayoral position on migration in 2017) the primary focus of the social integration strategy aims to take a broader focus and so perhaps makes it more difficult for the GLA to make explicit the ways in which the policy asks of central government for the

migration system intersect with the social integration strategy as well as making it more challenging to focus on the temporal frame of 'newcomers' to the city as a way of managing the dynamics of churn which characterise a city like London. Through its CII initiative, the GLA has identified an innovative way of convening both in the traditional sense of bringing together civil society partners – but also acting in a co-productive way both through seconding into the organisation and through combining funding pots with independent philanthropy. However, as Trust for London's learning report identifies there have been challenges in establishing this model through the 'usual sign off processes of the GLA' with some initiatives taking longer to establish themselves. The learning report finds that the CII was able to feed in policy suggestions to the social integration strategy, but it is striking the ways in which the CII initiatives focus in a much more targeted way on migration and citizenship issues (pathways to citizenship for young Londoners, immigration advice, Citizenship ceremonies and voter registration for newly recognised Londoners) suggesting a gap between the wider ambition of the strategy and the more targeted migrant focus of the CII. In setting out a model of inclusive, place based leadership Hambleton (2018) identifies five overlapping realms from which leaders draw legitimacy; political, managerial, community, business and trade union. In the example of the GLA we can clearly see the development of increased political leadership (through the role of Mayor Khan and the dedicated Deputy Mayor) and the managerial development of strategy, alongside attempts at increased community leadership through the CII. Hambleton describes the crossovers between these realms as the zones of innovation and it is these areas in which it remains to be seen the extent to which the GLA can join up its different areas of activity.

Conclusion

The GLA's role in social integration has been one of both distinctiveness (both between different mayoral terms and in highlighting London's position amongst UK cities) and continual evolution. In keeping with London's unique role in the UK both in terms of its governance and demographics it has set out its own distinctive stall in its framing and understanding of social integration through the 'All of Us' strategy. However, the strategy and approach contain strong imprints of the history of work on social integration from 2000 onwards – both within the different Mayoral administrations and in the ways in which the approach mirrors or is distinctive from prevailing trends at the national level.

The 'All of Us' strategy highlights a central tension within integration policy making and practice at the UK local government level, in particular at the local level, where the majority of integration processes occur but which does not have a clear sense of its role and where the issue has traditionally been of relatively low salience. In wishing to carve out a role the strategy defines social integration broadly – both evolving the Equalities approach common to UK local government prior to 2010 whilst widening it out to encompass other social divides. In doing so, it encompasses some core tenets of research findings on integration – namely that need to acknowledge integration as a shared responsibility and to link this to the conception of local government as a 'place shaper' who works to provide the leadership and convening capacity to effect real change. However, at the same time, in this broader conception, there is a risk that such strategy loses a focus on one of the more politically challenging, but highly salient, topic of migration and so lessens the ability of local government both to provide policy advocacy and leadership as well as to deliver on its strategy. The GLA's approach to social integration contrasts Mayoral

leadership and strategic communications (including the London is Open campaign) focussed on policy advocacy specifically focussing on migration and newcomers and placing this in the context of the London story, with a strategic approach to social integration which somewhat blurs this focus. In doing so it highlights the challenges for the GLA, but also the opportunities which exist for London to further evolve through linking its distinctive approach to social contact, participation and shared responsibility with a place based leadership approach bringing together strategic communications to tell the London story, policy advocacy on migration and political leadership to further the London agenda.

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