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Domesticating the 'troubled family': Racialised sexuality and the postcolonial governance of family life in the UK

Abstract

This article examines how the UK's Troubled Families Programme (TFP) works as a strategy of domestication which produces and delimits certain forms of 'family life'. Drawing upon critical geographies of home and empire, the article explores how the TFP works to manage the troubled family as part of a longer history of regulating unruly households in the name of national health and civilisation. Viewing the TFP as part of the production of heteronormative order, highlights how the policy remobilises and reconfigures older forms of colonial rule which work to demarcate between civility/savagery, the developable/undevelopable. In examining the postcolonial dimension of neoliberal social policy, the article stresses how the TFP relies on racializing and sexualised logics of socio-biological control borrowed from imperial eugenics. Reading the TFP in this way contributes to our understanding of neoliberal rule. That the troubled family can be either domesticated or destroyed (through benefit sanctions and eviction) equally reveals the extent to which domesticity works as a key site for the production of both 'worthy' and 'surplus' life.

Keywords

The Troubled Families Programme, domesticity, postcolonial, biopolitics, British citizenship, heteronormativity

Introduction

In 2012 the British government began introducing the Troubled Families Programme (TFP), a policy that explicitly sought to 'transform' the lives of Britain's most disadvantaged families through the collaboration of multiple social agencies. Rationalised through a fear that certain households presented a fiscal burden on the welfare state and acted as a catalyst for wider social disorder (Cameron 2011b), the programme offered both punitive and supportive interventions into the domestic space of the 'troubled family' (Crossely 2013). Though the work of local government, housing officials, social work professionals – among them new 'family intervention workers' - the programme aimed to restore appropriate forms of familial intimacy. This promised to create pathways towards 'responsible' citizenship (Levitas 2012) but specifically through producing appropriate domesticity – childcare, household governance, affective behaviour. Reflecting wider

patterns in contemporary (Anglo) liberal welfare, it also held the latent promise that those refusing the 'help' of social authorities would be subject to disciplinary measures, and benefit sanctions (Nixon 2008). To the then Prime Minister David Cameron (2011b), this necessary restoration of domesticity also signalled a new form of intimate welfarism:

When the front door opens and the (family) worker goes in, they will see the family as a whole and get a plan of action together, agreed with the family. This will often be basic, practical things -like getting the kids to school on time, properly fed - that are the building blocks of an orderly home and a responsible life.

It is the slippage between family, home and liberal order that Cameron's imaginary relies upon that inspires this article. The TFP has previously been analysed as an example of British parliamentary parties' (both right and centre-left) recent nostalgia for a moral-economy of 'family values' (Levitas 2012). Or linked to an increasingly coercive approach to welfare where poverty is highly moralized and reduced to 'lifestyle choices' (Montgomerie and Tepe-Belfrage 2016). Such a matrix of morality and responsabilisation is most pronounced in the figure of the 'failed' or 'bad' mother (Jensen 2012) who is both rhetorical foil and pedagogical subject of the neoliberal welfare state (Crossley 2016; Waquant 2009). Instead, in this article I argue that the TFP reflects a wider governmental anxiety which has emerged in the UK and relates to a (post)colonial configuration of domesticity, intimacy and family life. Whilst gendered and classed this configuration is also highly racialised and sexualised (Allen and Taylor 2012). The TFP promises a (re)domestication of the troubled family by actively producing heteronormative domesticity where it is found to be 'absent' - such as through the 'practical' labour of feeding, clothing and routinizing children. As Cameron stresses, domestication is justified for both the good of the target family but more importantly the maintenance of the 'civilised' nation of which proper family is treated as the key 'building block' (See Yuval Davies 1993). It is thus important to understand what historical practices are being remobilised in the TFP and how the 'private' space of the 'troubled family' is managed in relation to the national home.

In exploring the central rationale of domestication underpinning the TFP, I argue that we need to situate the programmes emergence in a (post)colonial history of attempts to manage unruly and failed domesticity in the name of civilizing heteronormative order. Rather than stressing the contemporaneity of the policy, reading the TFP through a longer genealogy of domesticity and domestication reveals the striking persistence of civilising logics within neoliberal British social policy, which equally shape *who* should be intervened upon and *how* (Lewis 2000). By reading the TFP through critical geographies of home (Brickell 2012; Grewal 1996; Massey 1992) and intimacy (Oswin 2010; Legg 2014; Stoler 2000), I stress how the TFP relies on racialising and sexualised logics of socio-biological control which were central to colonial rule. The TFP can be viewed as an example of what Patricia Owens (2015) calls ‘social-civilizational’ work; the ‘troubled family’ becomes the very site through which civilised order is both undone and regenerated through extensive disciplinary and pedagogical intervention. Reading the TFP in this way contributes to our understanding of the forms of life which are fostered and those which are abandoned under neoliberal rule. That the ‘troubled family’ can be either domesticated (pacified and tamed) or violently destroyed (through coercive benefit sanctions and eviction) equally reveals the extent to which domesticity works as a key site for the production of ‘surplus’ life (McIntyre and Nast 2011, 1466).

Domesticity and Empire

The TFP may seem distant from the politics of empire, premised as it is on reforming families with out of work parents, high levels of child truancy and antisocial behavior (Butler 2014, 416). However, in order to scrutinize the function of the TFP, the assumptions it relies upon and the practices it makes possible, it is important ask what historical figurations of domesticity are reinterpreted in the policy? Furthermore, what is mobilized to make certain families ‘troubling’? The TFP promises to transform Britain’s

most 'troubled families'. It does so by explicitly extending the remit and focus of existing 'family intervention' strategies and by providing every targeted 'troubled family' with a family support worker who is charged with both supporting the family to 'improve' themselves and holding them to 'account' (a point I will elaborate upon later). To key thinkers behind the policy such as the Director General of the TFP (or 'Troubled Family Tsar') Louise Casey (2013), the TFP provides an opportunity to not only tackle the 'effects' of poverty but the *cultural* causes that underpin disadvantage - and the social disorder and state costs this creates. Such a rationale connects to a broader discourse of welfarism in the UK, which has intensified under the politics of austerity (Allen and Taylor 2012; Jensen 2012; Stanley 2016), where poverty and inequality is often attributed to the presence of an 'underclass' and an 'undeserving poor'. In this imaginary, the 'underclass' are a subpopulation whose lifestyles are anathema to social norms but whose marginalization (unemployment, poverty, homelessness, 'welfare dependency') is pathologised and represented as self-generating and behavioral (Tyler 2013). The configuration of the 'troubled family' specifically draws upon the existing cultural economy of the 'underclass' and does so by working upon the hypervisibility of sexualised, gendered and racialised depictions, for instance, single mothered households, teenage pregnancies, hyper fertility, absent fathers. But equally, the TFP also relies upon a more precise logic that the causes of poverty and social disorder can be both attributed to the failure of heteronormative domesticity and also potentially corrected through its restoration/transformation (something family support workers are essentially tasked with producing).

It is because of the specific appeal to the restoration of heteronormative domesticity in the TFP that it becomes important to recognise how multiple histories overlap and made the programme and its strategies of intervention possible. Thanks to a large body of critical literature we have far greater appreciation of genealogies of domesticity, home and family. In particular how gendered notions of domesticity constitute liberal mythologies of

public/private (McKeon 1998), and how home functions as a symbolic register for cultural narratives of familiarity, belonging and (inter)national order (Kaplan 1998; Rafael 1995; Yuval Davis 1993). Colonial historiographers (Lowe 2015; Stoler 2000; McClintock 1995; Howell 2000) have equally illustrated how domesticity emerged in the 18th/19th century as central organizing principle of bourgeois family, nation and empire. This reached a height in the late 19th century where, as Anne McClintock (1995) argues, the Victorian ‘cult of domesticity’ provided a series of spatial practices around which colonial distinctions of race, class, sex and gender emerged. Frequently used as markers of ‘civility’ and ‘savagery’, colonial rule was replete with figurations of ‘undomesticated’ people in need of *domestication*: the colonised, non-Europeans, the Irish, Jews, prostitutes, domestic workers, street people, vagabonds, the ‘feeble-minded’, homosexuals (McClintock 1995, 53). We thus need to remain attuned to how contemporary ideals of domesticity and the will to domesticate (i.e. provide and impose domestic order in its absence) are also rooted in colonial epistemologies (Shilliam 2014). It is important to ask how the practices and knowledge(s) central to the TFP share familiarities with previous ways of domesticating incarnations of the unruly, underdeveloped and backwards – in both the British mainland and colonial contexts? And how such practices and imaginaries are reinvested in contemporary strategies of family intervention?

In addressing these questions the article contributes to an increasing body of critical scholarship on domesticity and home which has been inspired by a ‘turn’ in political geography, international relations and colonial historiography towards analyses of intimacy (Peterson 2017; Stoler 2000), sexuality (Weber 2015; Oswin 2010; Bell & Valentine 1995) and postcolonial government (Legg 2014; Venn 2009; Owens 2015). Working in dialogue with this literature, the article aims to draw on these developments by examining how domesticity/domestication functions as a particular governmental assemblage which promises development and order but does so by distinguishing between worthy/unworthy

life. This is driven by a constellation of heteronormativity which also demarcates between licit and illicit forms of heterosexuality and (in)appropriate forms of family life.

Earlier feminist and queer scholarship tended to examine how heteropatriarchy made home a place of exploitation for women (Martin and Mohantry, 1991) and ambivalence and discomfort for 'queer' subjects (Johnston and Valentine, 1995; Fortier 2001). Increasingly, queer theory has treated the family home as regulatory site of heteronormativity. Specifically, how heteronormative domesticity fuses together and privileges certain practices of intimacy, familial reproduction, sexual behaviour, productivity, which are often situated in the temporal-life course of 'birth, marriage, reproduction, death' (Wilkinson 2014, 2458; Ramdas 2012; Bricknell 2012). To Jasbir Puar (2007) heteronormativity can only be made sense of through appeals to race, gender, sexuality and class and it is here that familial domesticity operations at a specific intersection of power relations which produce potentially violent inclusion-exclusions. This is precisely because heteronormative domesticity sets a forth a series of intimate relations, identifications, behaviors and rituals which codify an imaginary of 'worthy' life (Povinelli 2006). Significantly for this article, heteronormativity mobilises distinctions between the good/perverse homosexuals (Weber 2015) but also produces other nonnormative, 'deviant' heterosexuals – single mothers, mixed-race couples, migrant families, workless households (Wilkinson 2014) - whose moral and social 'worth' is also brought into question.

Given Foucault's own comments on the centrality of the household (oikos) and family to the historical emergence of biopolitics (Foucault 1998; 2004), it is perhaps unsurprising that studies of governmentality have equally focused on how domesticity has played a central role in liberal rule (Rose 1990; Donzelot 1989; Moore 2013), security (Walters 2004; Darling 2010) and even warfare (Owens 2015; Mitropoulos 2009). Whilst governmental approaches inform/are informed by critical geographies of heteronormativity (Oswin and Olund 2010; Legg 2014; Martin 2012), the emphasis is often on how the

household becomes imbricated in the government of modern nation states. For instance, Walters (2004) concept of domopolitics considers how liberal states are run as a ‘domos’, where migrants and other ‘internal enemies’ are often violently excluded from the ‘homely nation’ (Darling 2011). Patricia Owens (2015) further argues that the modern state is fundamentally an extension of household management (oikonomia). To Owens this means recognising how ‘social regulation(s) are best understood in terms of household governance in which the life process of population are managed and domesticated’ (Owens 2015 175-176).

The reading of domesticity offered in this article, aims to bring the governmental analysis of domesticity in closer dialogue with postcolonial queer scholarship and studies of biopolitics which stress the co-constitution of race and sexuality (Stoler 1995; Oswin 2014; Repo 2013). Whilst studies of household place an emphasis on productivity and economic governance, I emphasise the need to see domestication as particular form of liberal rule which is tied to the regulatory function of family - as both a socio-biological and intimate site. Domestication relies on the will to discover and tame those who appear to ‘trouble’ domestic order. This impulse is central to modern biopolitical states and the fostering of both the life *and* death (Prozorov 2013). Domestication is treated an inclusive form of power as it relies on the cultural premise that domestic order is equated with civility, so imposing domestic life over the ‘savage’ and ‘backwards’ is rendered developmental – it is the promise of ‘progress’ (Kaplan 1998). But as Foucault’s (2004) comments on the function of racism in biopolitics show us, central to the operation of fostering and promoting life is the remainder to life, the abject, which must be destroyed for life to prosper (Repo 2013). Domestication thus also necessitates the management of those who will always remain untamable/undevelopable/undomesticatable, who in the name of ‘civilised life’ can be subject to disciplinary mechanisms, left to die or even be killed (Dillon and Reid, 2009, 51). Importantly, this impulse towards life/death needs to be understood as tied to the racialised,

gendered, classed and sexualised politics of the heteronormative home and family – a point which is often left underdeveloped in analysis of domopolitics and oikonomia (see Darling 2011; Walters 2004; Owens 2015). Understood in a lineage of natalist politics, eugenics and colonial-racist thought, the home (rather than the household) is the social and biological site for the preservation of national-imperial-racial ‘health’ and fitness. It is where legitimate bourgeois reproduction, both procreative sex and the raising of children, is expected to take place. As Oswin (2014, 9) argues, this ‘anchors a heteronormative logic that differentiates heterosexuality into licit and illicit iterations as race, class, gender *and* sexual norms come together in the name of ‘progress’ and ‘development.’ The biopolitical logic to foster the populations extends into racialized (imperial) nationalism and promotes an ‘evolutionary’ temporality where children, as future citizens, become viewed as social and biological inheritance and sites for the reproduction of future social (dis)order and (under)development (Shapiro 2000; Weber 2015).

In this racialized and sexualised form, the family is the site through which toxic, threatening and surplus forms of life need to be restrained and halted. Domestication is thus attuned to socio-biological claims about the dangers and benefits both of heterosexual reproduction and the physical and moral environment it takes place in (also see Crowley and Kitchin 2008). It must invest in both producing and monitoring normative domestic space, as well leaving potential for violent interventions into forms of intimacy, and the potential to destroy those who remain undomesticated. Reading the TFP as a form of domestication thus allows us to appreciate what is at stake in interventions into the ‘family home’.

(Post)colonial social policy. What I also go onto stress in my reading of domesticity is how demarcations between worthy/surplus ‘family life’ under contemporary rule are made possible through particular colonial histories. This contributes to a wider examination of the coloniality of neoliberalism (Agathangelou and Ling 2004; Ong 2006). By focusing on

the colonial legacy of one social policy, I hope to respond to Oswin's suggestion that even nuanced accounts of race and gender (such as Smith 1994; Tyler 2013) 'tend to position colonialism as a backdrop rather than a still active element in postcolonial place making' (Oswin 2010, 129). This article thus emphasises the persistence of coloniality in shaping norms and practices of domesticity and aims to show how modes of colonial thinking, techniques and strategies of rule are reinvested in methods of social control today.

To set out this analysis, I first turn to the emergence of the TFP, and set out its main rationale and function. This stresses how it operates as a form of 'family intervention' work and an intimate approach to the management of social disorder. I then turn to a brief history of colonial domesticity to reveal what is being remobilised in the TFP. I do this by tracing a network of pedagogical and disciplinary practices of domestication which spanned both British colonies and the metropole (targeting colonised peoples, 'feeble-minded', poor women). The last section resituates the TFP within this history and explores the (dis)continuity of knowledge and practice which mark out the TFP as a particular assemblage of (post)colonial domestication and socio-biological control.

The Troubled Families Programme

The discourse of the 'troubled family' emerged out of social work research in the early 2000's and reflects a wider concern regarding the 'multiple disadvantages' and 'vulnerability' of certain families (Morris 2013). The focus on the 'troubled family' forms part of a broader push towards targeted family interventions begun under New Labour (Nixon 2008). 'Family support interventions' coalesced around the principle that anti-social behaviour, especially in young adults and children could be managed through intensive support – often focussing on the teaching of 'parenting skills' (Parr 2011, 41). In this context the 'troubled family' is understood as both a specific burden on the welfare state but also a social danger. As Montgomerie and Tepe-Belfrage (2016) argue, the TFP emerged in

2011 as a flagship policy of the Conservative Party - although introduced under a coalition government - which aimed to tackle 'Broken Britain'; one particular rendering of the 'underclass'. The policy was emboldened by a heteronormative reading of the urban 'riots' that swept through England in the August of 2011. In the aftermath of these civil disturbances - which began with a protests over the shooting of Mark Duggan, an unarmed Black man in Tottenham, North London by police and later involved further protests as well as looting and unrest (across many English cities) - senior Conservative politicians presented the root causes of the 'riots' as the immorality and absence of social norms of an urban 'underclass'. This social breakdown was rendered attributable to the failure of proper familial domesticity which this group was imagined to exhibit (against an always unstated figuration of properly white, bourgeois, sensibilities and practices). The absence of patriarchal family structures, discipline, morals was specifically cast as the *cause* of the violence. As Cameron argued in response to the social unrest (2011a):

I don't doubt that many of the rioters out last week have no father at home. Perhaps they come from a one of the neighborhoods where it's standard for children to have a mum and not a dad... where its normal for young men to grow up without a role model, looking to the streets for their father figures, filled with anger and rage....If we want to have any hope of mending our broken society, family and parenting is where we've got to start.

The way in which these absences of parenting and domesticity were framed in Cameron's speech ('one of those neighborhoods'; 'the streets'; 'anger and rage') work through sexualised, gendered, classed and racialised frames: of useless single mothers unable to control 'ferrel' children, absentee fathers from certain 'neighbourhoods', the 'laws of the street' and a predominance of gang culture. In this context Allen and Taylor (2012) reveal how the riots more generally were framed by an imaginary of Black masculinity and 'gangster culture' which was said to saturate the 'underclass'. In a now infamous set of remarks the historian David Starkey (BBC 2011) argued that the riots presented 'white male youths' appropriation of 'black rap culture', replete with its latent misogyny and violence.

Just as Cameron's remarks slipped across registers of race, class and gender, racialized gangster culture was presented as leaking into other marginalised groups. Here even the white 'underclass' were presented as 'not quite white' or presented as a 'dirty whiteness' (Allen and Taylor 2012), which as I will go onto discuss, acted as a contaminate to a vision of white heteronormative domesticity. Significantly for the TFP, not only was British society presented as 'broken' and threatened by the absence of proper domesticity, but the renewal of family values held the hope of its imagined resurrection and the combatting of racialized, gender and sexualized threats.

Crossely (2016) argues that the precise nature of the TFP was cemented well before the 'English riots' but this reading of social (dis)order provided a catalyst for its implementation after October 2011. As previously mentioned, the programme was targeted at 'Britain's most troubled families' which, when based upon a criteria of 'multiple disadvantages' was calculated as approximately 120,000 families in 2011 (although this estimate grew to 500,000 by 2014) (Crossely 2016). As well as moralizing thrust, the policy also tied into the governing logic of austerity which committed the 2010 Coalition government to an unprecedented reduction in state spending. As the stated objective of the scheme, the promise is to both 'turn the family around' but also reduce their 'burden on the welfare state' which is advertised as (a generous) £30 million (Stanley 2016). A 'troubled family' is categorized by key indicators which relate to household governance, work, childcare and antisocial behavior. There are seven key criteria, five of which relate to sustainability and productivity of the family, specifically whether: members of the family are in work, average household income, ability to afford basic food, educational achievement, number of benefit claimants. However, a family is only labeled as 'troubled' and thus subjected to intervention based on the behavior of the families children, 'who may be involved in anti-social behavior, youth crime and truanting' (Montgomerie and Tepe-Belfrage 2016). Only by meeting the expectation of both economic and behavioral indicators

are families forcibly signed up to the TFP. As a 'payment by results' scheme local councils are offered £2,000 for every family targeted by the scheme and a £4,000 when a family is categorized as 'improving'.

On the surface the TFP may appear more concerned with managing the economic 'burden' of 'troubled families' as a failure of neoliberal entrepreneurship and productivity, and less concerned with figurations postcolonial domesticity as this article suggests. However, what is so striking about the TFP is the impulse to domesticate. The TFP enhances existing techniques of 'family support interventions' practiced by social workers, schools and local authorities such as parenting orders, contracts and educational schemes (Parr 2011). The problem and *solution* of the 'troubled family' (and the social disorder they reproduce) is fixated on the intimate relations of the family home. Rather than a problem of unemployment, inequality, poor housing stock etc., this is presented as a problem of internal governance, organization and discipline – the absence of patriarchal order and sympathetic motherhood (Jensen 2010). Significantly, the TFP does not only attribute disadvantage to a wider cultural problem of 'idleness or 'fecklessness' (Allen and Taylor 2012) but one precisely located within the specific formation of the family. As Cameron (2011) alluded to in his Troubled Family Speech the inclusion of a family in the scheme is based upon 'mending' the family but precisely through restoring the micro-practices and rituals of domesticity: 'Transforming the lives of 'troubled families' is premised on 'practical things -like getting the kids to school on time, properly fed.' In this sense, the TFP is not merely mobilised by an appeal to 'good parenting' but precisely a restoration of heteronormativity. In Cameron's reading the embodied anger and rage of riotous 'young men' was specifically grounded in the absence of father figures. As I briefly mentioned earlier, this equally responds to wider moralizing discourse of the 'underclass' where family breakdown, single mother households and teenage pregnancy often are viewed as 'causing' social disadvantage (see Allen and Smith 2008). What is also significant is how the role of family support workers in the

scheme is focused on restoring appropriate intimacy and domesticity - through producing proper arrangements of domestic labour and relations of care. Casey (2013) again spelled out the detailed vision of this regulation of intimacy central to the TFP:

If the parents had difficulty getting the children up and ready for school the worker would go to the home first thing in the morning to help get the children up, together with the parents, and ready for school. If the parents weren't providing proper meals, the worker might go shopping with the parents to buy food and then together help them to prepare a meal. This helps to model behavior and to show there is a better way to change some of the things the family want to change.

What is important here is the stress on the need to reconfigure the 'troubled family' around specific norms of domesticity which are rendered commonsensical and natural. Such norms are proposed as so foundational that they will always be aspirations that the family already 'want to change' (i.e. emulation of the autonomous nuclear family). This form of pedagogical regulation is not only state imposed but also reproduces and *naturalises* a historical ideal of bourgeois domesticity (whilst silencing such a history). Arguably, the micro-practices of routinizing children and parents, the formation of scheduling, practices of cleaning, separation of duties, are precisely attempts to instill domestic rituals and spatial practices of the family home as a unit of heteronormative civility – the 'model of (family) behavior'. This rationale for domestication precisely reconfigures a longer anxiety about the both opportunity and threat to nationhood and civilization found in the space of the familial home – as a reproductive and socializing site. This works through an inscription of historical norms of domesticity as white, bourgeois and modern but equally threatened by the remnants of the 'savage', 'backwardness', 'undomesticated'. In doing so, the family intervention worker arguably parallels a branch of 'social civilizational work' which Owens (2015) views as central to the workings of British Imperialism and the domestication of threatening others. In light of this, Cameron's focus on the TFP as transformative for society bears an uncanny resemblance to the imperial reformist George Newman who in 1907

suggested that the continued strength of the British Empire depended 'not upon dominions and territory alone, but upon men, not upon markets alone, but upon homes' (Davin 1978, 31). Turning to how domesticity was situated within imperial rule will illustrate what is reinvested in the TFP, how the programme bears the trace of colonial knowledge(s) and practice(s) and how this relates to the promise of transformation *and* violent eradication central to family intervention strategies.

Reading the TFP through the longer history of colonialism and imperial welfare allows us to see the racialized and sexualised logics central to its operation. Whilst the TFP doesn't explicitly target people based upon claims of 'ethnicity' (which has led some commentators to ignore the racializing aspects of the scheme) there are three reasons why I argue it should be read in this way: 1) The policy relies on a codification of 'whiteness' (as heteronormative domesticity) which the 'troubled family' is expressively understood to fail. The 'troubled family' is the fertile embodiment of the 'underclass' which is seeped with sexualised threats to white bourgeois life (a point well illustrated in commentators of the London 'riots'); 2) The push to domesticate the 'troubled family' bears familiarity with imperial practices which domesticated other 'unruly households' because they threatened the racially defined order of British civilisation, 3) Furthermore, the TFP is racialising because it inherits the legacy of imperial eugenics and the treatment of poverty and social disadvantage through the lens of racial biology. In line with a legacy of imperial racialising thought, the anxiety to domesticate the 'troubled family' relies on a socio-biological logic of reproduction where threats to the body politic must be managed or eradicated. Such a treatment of racialization is not to diminish the power of an analysis of race, but instead to show the persistence and reinvestment of race and the colonial/modern history which it is born out of and indebted to. The racialized sexuality (Howell 2000) of empire was never only concerned with distant colonial subjects but also those 'internal enemies' of 'the heterogeneous population that comprised the category of Europeans themselves' (Stoler

1995, 96). As I sketch out below it is important to recognise how familiar ‘internal enemies’ persist as subjects of domestication in liberal states today.

Colonial domesticity

Stoler’s (2000) work on the colonial management of intimacy illustrates the centrality of domesticity to the governance of European empires. In the context of the British Empire intimate relations between European and colonised subjects were increasingly regulated as a threat to racial health in the late 19th century (particularly with the onset of social Darwinian ideas of race and ‘miscegenation’). Practices of bourgeois domesticity and ‘homemaking’ acted as cultural and social markers to divide Europeans from native populations (Collingwood 1991) but equally proto welfare/paternalistic projects also offered ‘domestication’ to colonised subjects as a form of necessary ‘development’ (Owens 2015).

The 1888 guide *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* provides a powerful insight into how domesticity was used both as a marker of civility/savagery in colonial rule. The desired push for domesticity in the ‘inhospitable’ environment of the Raj is described as central to the maintenance of British colonial rule: ‘*Here (in India), as there (in England), the end and object is not merely personal comfort, but the formation of a home, that unit of civilization where father and children, master and servant, employer and employed, can learn their several duties*’ (cited in George 1994, 114 my additions). The parallel between the gendered and raced order of the home and the governance of India was how paternalist authority was justified but it also shaped interventionist government (Grewal 1996, 44). As George (1994, 114) illustrates, for English reformists, ‘the only way of changing this sorry state of affairs in the Indian home is to work on the Indian woman’. Central to reformist projects was introducing western practices of home-making to the colonised. Projects like the Female Medical Aid Fund (started by Lady Dufferin in 1885) offered healthcare to Indian women but only

through interventions into intimate areas of their households (Lal 1994). After 1915 L.P Mair (1944, 49) charts how church missions in Northern Rhodesia, Nigeria and Uganda all intensified the organisation of 'Marriage Training Schools' where girls were taught to 'master all the work of a European household', training in 'cooking, sewing, hygiene and child welfare'.

According to Owens (2015), such acts of domestication not only solidified the racial, sexualised and gendered dynamics of British authority but were central to how disciplinary violence was distributed. Whilst reformers sought the transformation of local populations, those who refused 'development' were managed through violent domestication. Owens details how campaigns of pacification and counter-insurgency frequently focussed on destroying the homes of local populations (burning villages, evictions and forced land removal) and equally rehousing (re-domesticating) these risky subjects in purpose built dwellings, labour camps and military installations (such as the first concentration camps of the Boer war) (Owens 2015). Thus home-making in empire was configured around a dual promise of developing and violently taming 'undomesticated' subjects because: 'Indian household can no more be governed peacefully, without dignity and prestige, than an Indian Empire' (George 1994, 108).

This process of dual domestication was paralleled in the metropole. The fear over inter-racial proximity and the failed domesticity of native households was reflected in elite anxiety over the proximity of the poor, 'feeble-minded' and 'aliens' who, it was believed, needed to be both transformed and tamed. To prominent eugenicists such as Francis Galton threats to racial health appeared in multiple forms of 'degeneracy' – interclass sex, the reproduction of the 'feeble-minded', the disabled, criminals and the mad. Significantly, paternalist reformers often depicted the undomesticated of the metropole through tropes of colonial 'savagery'. To William Booth (1890) London's poor were akin to the 'baboon', 'ferret-eyed', 'cannibalistic' pygmies of the African Forest, living in conditions of 'decay and

growth', 'fever and dysentery' (11). The 'whiteness' of the poor, 'feble-minded', vagabonds, disabled was problematised through both an incapacity for domesticity but also their proximity and familiarity with racialized others. Such slippage would become a key feature of contemporary family intervention strategies such as the TFP.

Family and welfare: The rise of the 'problem family' in social Work

Whilst mainstream historiography tends to relegate the influence of racial science and eugenics on UK social policy to the early 20th century (Welshman 1999), this misreads how targets of social work such as the 'problem family' have persistently been cast as both biological and social problems. Even in the 1950s, the Eugenics Society was explicitly arguing that 'problem families' were created by: "self-perpetuating sequences" caused by "maternal deprivation," which then "(reproduced) themselves throughout successive generations in a manner...(that somewhat simulated) a genetically determined process (Blacker 1952, 28). 'Problem families' of the British 'underclass' and 'migrant' communities were configured as incubators of social disorder, this reproduced, albeit in a more subtle form, racial sciences' fixation on family genealogy and racial fitness (Rafter 1988). Such anxiety was replicated in practices of social control, as techniques of incarceration and segregation were frequently used by social authorities to domestic such problems. The 1913 Mental Deficiency Act (Bland and Hall 2010, 221) for instance, led to the mass incarceration and institutionalization of working class women who were seen as highly sexualized, immoral and thus 'unsuitable mothers' (also see Moore 2013; Crawley and Kitchin 2008). Just as with Marriage Schools in colonies, welfare authorities equally focused on instilling the skills and subjectivity of 'motherhood' on to such risky women. As Davin (1978, 22) argues, this focus on teaching mothercraft reimagined the paternalistic impulse of Eugenic reformers:

By instruction leading to the improvement of the individual we shall aid in preserving women for their supreme purpose, the procreation and preservation of the race, and at the same time promote that race to a better standard, mentally and physically.

Whilst postwar genetics may have challenged the scientific base of eugenics, the anxiety over inheritance and degeneracy arguably lingered in the will to ‘transform’ risky women and problem families in the name of social order. What remained in the impulse to govern intimacy, in the disciplinary and pedagogical measures to intervene and domesticate certain groups, is a socio-biological (eugenics) *logic* – *i.e.* that social problems are transferred to children through inappropriate forms of domesticity.

What we see in this brief historical sketch is how colonial practices of domestication fixated on introducing western home-making as form of both progress and subjection to multiple untamed groups. Domesticity was made knowable through a heteronormative stratum of both civility and whiteness (idealised in the unit of the European bourgeois family). The national-imperial home needed both protecting and promoting and this necessitated the discovery of those untamed and perverse subjects that threatened it – both internal and external enemies alike. Equally, anxiety over colonised subjects sexuality was always reinvested and reimagined in the policing of internal degenerate groups in the metropole (such as problem families), just as techniques of domestication were borrowed from the colony/metropole and vice versa. Domesticity, intimacy and racialized sexuality were fused together in the imperial-nationalist push towards domestication which worked along a register of reform, betterment and also eradication.

Returning to the ‘troubled family’

The TFP arguably remains indebted to the historical figuration of the failed ‘problem family’ and colonial forms of domestication outlined above. In doing so draws it upon the previous boundaries erected between civility/savagery. Situating the programme in a longer colonial history helps reveal what it remobilised and reinvested in contemporary modes of family intervention. The TFP shares the impulse to domesticate which imposes a certain ‘model of family behaviour’ to civilise and tame unruly and undesirable subjects. This is both a

remobilisation and a reimagining of domesticity which is framed through the particular needs of neoliberal order but equally retains the colonial trace of previous forms of domestication, the logic of racialized sexuality and the focus on reproduction. In this next section, I focus back on three aspects of the TFP which reveal different logics of colonial domestication: 1) How the role of family intervention workers aim to ‘transform’ the intimacy of the ‘troubled family’ in name of civilised liberal subjectivity: parenthood, consumption, appropriate intimacy. 2) The focus on reproduction in the TFP, which remains fixated on the possibility of transference and the ‘inheritance’ of children; 3) the relationship between pedagogy and discipline in the scheme. Whilst the ‘troubled family’ is viewed as a social and economic failure (sustainable, self-governing, autonomous), there remains a shared logic of imperial eugenics; the fear of reproduction and the ‘passing on’ of certain social problems in the TFP (worklessness, drug abuse, crime, antisocial behaviour). This is more closely tied to the function of ‘home’ as a site of white, bourgeois procreation and socialisation. Reading the programme through this impulse to domesticate helps us see the violent underpinnings and the configuration of ‘worthy’/‘surplus’ life that it arguably constitutes.

Neoliberal (post)colonial order

The focus in the TFP is on both configuring the ‘troubled family’ as a reproductive and productive space. As Casey suggests, the role of family support worker is to support the family to produce relations of proper family governance – this is viewed in terms of the disciplinary structure of parenting but also the maintenance of an economic unit. This re-appropriates the techniques of home-making and mothercraft of previous forms of colonial rule. The task of instilling and teaching the ‘troubled family’ structures of discipline, routinisation, separation of tasks, household timetables, shopping lists, are viewed as necessary for the production of organised individuals who are fit for the domestic and public

life. For children this rearrangement of domesticity is to curb anti-social behaviour but also to configure them towards the market competition of both school and future work. For adults, the transformation of domesticity promises helping them to become 'better' parents, (envisaged through the role of both disciplinary father and empathetic mother but also as a heterosexual couple in an appropriate caring relationship). Alongside, the transformation of intimacies this is connected to supporting parents return to work (in its absence) and help with managing household finances. In doing this, the TFP promises intervention to reconfigure the domestic arrangements of the family in tune with work, consumption, household austerity (also see Jensen 2012) but equally instilling appropriate gender relations, emotional ties and sensibilities. This further fuses responsibility for depravation into the moral and social site of the family home. Whilst previous strategies of domestication focussed on how the unruly families threatened national-imperial productivity, the TFP intensifies this rationale by offering domestication as a way of reshaping both the everyday practices but also *desires* of the 'troubled family'. As Casey (2013) argues, the family is supported to achieve the very things that they want to 'achieve anyhow' - the rituals of 'normal' family life, work and parenthood. Without this they are being 'let down' by the state (Casey 2013). Such transformation central to this intimate management actively 'moulds new 'structures of feelings' new habits of heart and mind' (Stoler 2006, 3).

It is here that most studies of the troubled families see the function of the policy – its impulse to produce good subjects of neoliberal morality, austerity and workfare (Crossely 2016; Montgomerie and Tepe-Belfrage 2016). However, focusing on the logic of neoliberal productivity through homemaking and mothercraft only tells us one part of the story; it is equally important to examine how the TFP focuses on the problems of inheritance or transference and retains a disciplinary function.

The impulse of the TFP, which Casey (2013) spells out, is the need for the state 'to get *into* the actual family, *into* the front room'. This focus on *into* is significant because the

TFP is set up as an intervention into the possibility of disadvantage being ‘transmitted across generations’ (Casey 2013). In following this logic, the policy actively resuscitates a ‘cycle of depravation theory’ (Crossely 2015 272). This is arguably akin to the social-biological knowledge of imperial eugenics which fixated on inheritance. The focus on transmission was clarified in Cameron’s justification of the scheme, when he promised that transforming families would halt ‘intergenerational’ dysfunctionality (Cameron 2011b). The need to domesticate the ‘troubled family’ is precisely born out of the familiar fear of illicit reproduction we see in past configurations of colonial rule. To Cameron the social disorder of the ‘troubled family’ - ‘Drug Addiction. Alcohol Abuse. Crime’ - represented a ‘culture of disruption and irresponsibility that cascades through generation’ (Cameron 2011b). To speak of a ‘cascade’ renders the problem one of the uncontrollable, naturalised, movement across generations, born out the highly fertile possibility of breeding and transferring traits of immorality, irresponsibility, criminality on to children. This logic of inter-generational transference is again found in a key report on *Early Interventions* co-written by the one-time Department for Work and Pension Secretary Iain Duncan Smith (2010-2015), which directly fed into the TFP. The report calls for the intensification of state intervention into the homes of disadvantaged families for risk of complete ‘social breakdown’ (Smith and Allen 2008, 29). In this vision: ‘Dysfunctional families become the *incubators* for the generational transfer of mental and physical ill-health, chaotic lifestyles that inhabit children to lead fulfilled lives’ (Smith and Allen 2008, 29). Whilst this discourse superficially fixates on ‘culture’, the transfer of culture is precisely located in the incubating, fertile bodies and intimate relations of the ‘troubled family’. Such a register draws from the same knowledge of family reproduction which haunted colonial authorities’ fear of inter-racial miscegenation, and eugenic concerns over ‘problem families’. This focus on generational transference configures the family as a sexualised threat to the nation because of the capacity for procreation and the intimate socialisation of children within the home. Arguably, because

these threats are transferred both biologically and socially this *racialises* the ‘troubled family’. It remobilises the historical knowledge of imperial eugenics and its linear racialized notion of nationhood and time, in which the poor, the colonised, the native are rendered as a biological category of both existing and future disorder. The impulse to either domesticate or discipline the ‘troubled family’ is precisely because of the imminent risk of reproduction that these unruly subjects embody and carry. It is illicit heterosexuality of this ‘underclass’ that is so dangerous to the body politic here. The TFP not only responsabilises the family but views it as a site of problematic ‘transference’ (through biology and socialisation) which *demand*s a transformation of domesticity to develop/civilise or contain these disordered subjects. The TFP thus functions akin to the forms of socio-biological control we see under Empire.

In light of these connections to older forms of rule, it is important to consider how the TFP relies on both pedagogical and disciplinary techniques. Whilst other readings of the TFP have focused on how the programme works as a symbolic frame for neoliberal strategies of ‘statecraft’ (Crossely 2015) and the transformation of subjectivities (Jensen 2012), I argue that what is at stake in the TFP is far more embodied. The promise of transforming the ‘troubled family’ is always premised on enforcement and coercion. It is important to return to my earlier comments regarding how domestication promises and organises both life and death here. What lingers in the rational of the TFP is that some ‘troubled families’ cannot be contained or transformed and that their existing social problems will continue to be reproduced inside the body politic. The push for the colonial imposition of western domestic modernity on the ‘backward’, resistant and unruly is thus reinvested here and with familiar violent consequences. Whilst violence was always central to the organization of colonial domestication, the disciplinary dimensions of the TFP lays this bare. The TFP is advertised as a voluntary scheme (reflecting the liberal fetish of ‘choice’) but this is in all but in name. Firstly, troubled families are ‘discovered’, labelled and

then targeted by local authorities (who are paid to find such families), this is not based on the agency of targeted adults or children themselves. Secondly, families are actively punished for not adhering to the scheme. 'Troubled families' can have benefits revoked if they fail to sign up or comply with scheme. This can mean loss of access to basic subsistence, to housing benefit or even the risk of being forcibly evicted from social housing and made 'intentionally homeless' (Levitas 2012) (a category which ends the local governments responsibility to provide a family with a house). This sanctioning - borrowed as it is from the criminal justice system (see Waquant 2009) - was key to Parent Control Orders introduced by New Labour which meant that parents could be fined and held legally accountable for their children's behaviors (Parr 2008). However, this sanctioning is ramped up in the TFP. Failing to attend parenting classes, resisting the 'help' of family support workers, children persistently truanting from school, not trying hard enough, can lead to the revoking of vital benefits which are central for survival. This has a dual function which I argue reveals to us the second racializing logic which underpins the TFP.

Through the disciplinary arm of the TFP we begin to understand how the scheme works to not only wrestle with 'unruly' and 'backwards' subjects and bring them onto the path of liberal progress but also separates the 'underdeveloped' from the 'undevelopable' (Weber 2015). Just as imperial order was manufactured through the control over the survival or denial of family structures (the native household, the interracial couple, the inappropriate working-class or mentally deficient mother) the TFP distinguishes between family life that can be intervened upon and reformed and that which can/must be destroyed. Those who are unable to develop, re-domesticate, or refuse to sign up to the scheme, are cast as surplus to the working of orderly, productive and familial life. In the disciplinary function of revoking benefits the very survival of life systems (shelter, nutrition, security, warmth) are denied as the 'troubled family' is pushed towards a form of social death.

Povinelli sees the function of the (post)colonial state as directed towards the ‘eclipse of forms of life and of worth that do not hang...on the more or less fragile branches of a family tree’ (Povinelli 2002: 234 and 216). The TFP creates the conditions for distinguishing forms of family life that can be eliminated through the removal of basic subsistence. The social death of benefit sanctions imposed on the ‘undevelopable’ ‘troubled family’ may mean terminal insecurity, the splitting up of family members, the removal of children, homelessness, hunger, malnutrition, just as much as it can mean the destruction of different *ways* of life (Gordon 2016; also see Turner 2016). The loss of benefits can also mean biological death - for instance, between 2011-2014 approximately 2,300 people died having been subject to benefit sanctions and withdrawal by UK welfare authorities (BBC 2015). Through this distinction between those subjects who are ‘underdeveloped’/‘undevelopable’ the ‘troubled family’ is racialized as a form of (potentially) ‘surplus life’. As with Foucault’s comments on the presence of race to break between life/death, domestication functions here as an organisation and hierarchy of social death; as a processes through which ‘persons could reasonably be disregarded and treated as waste’ (McIntyre and Nast 2014, 1468). The ‘troubled family’ emerges as threat to the reproduction of the good life of the (civilised) population and an affront to the norms of white, bourgeois domesticity thus the need for intervention. But they can also (through refusal and non-compliance) become treated as surplus to this function – they become stagnate, abject, disposable (Tyler 2013; Evans and Giroux 2015). As with previous incarnations of the uncivilised and threatening, the illicit sexuality of troubled family renders such perversity outside of the evolutionary time line of (post)colonial social order. In this way, whilst the TFP is concerned with the renewal of British society through the domestication of the troubled family, this is *always* premised on the possibility of the denial of the life systems of the family itself.

Conclusion

Reading the TFP through a longer (post)colonial history helps recognise what is remobilised and reconfigured in its operation, and the colonial trace that arguably shapes both the knowledge of the ‘troubled family’ but also the solutions to it. By engaging with a literature on domesticity, sexuality and intimacy I have explored the emergence and function of the TFP as a practice of fostering heteronormative and civilised order. By exploring the different historical figurations, practices and knowledges which are remobilised in the TFP I argue that it is part of wider forms of domestication which push to develop the unruly and backwards through both the promise of transformation and eradication. This process of domestication works around strategies of pedagogy and the liberal promise of progress, just as much as it relies on the power to categorise those who refuse or cannot be tamed and transformed. Domesticity can be read as both a fixation on the intimate relations, desires, spatial practices, rituals of the familial home, just as it remains a form of government fixated on the life systems of the population and its reproduction. The family home is a diagram of civilising, a model of habitation, conjugality, behaviours, through which a multitude of subjects are stratified. The norms of sanctity, health, family intimacy are mobilised as pillars of national togetherness against those perverse degenerates who threaten national progress.

Exploring the TFP as part of a (post)colonial anxiety regarding domesticity/domestication also means recognising that whilst highly gendered and classed, the TFP is also highly raced and sexualised. Whilst not fixating on the ‘perversity of homosexuality’, the TFP works through codes of heteronormativity because it is fixated on both an ideal of familial domesticity as productive and reproductive and the discovery and management of illicit heterosexuality. The TFP remobilises past figurations of civilised/backwards in its central justification to intervene in the family because domesticity is used as coda for white bourgeois procreative life. The ‘troubled family’ is made knowable by economic categories of household subsistence and configurations of the ‘underclass’ but

primary focus on inappropriate domesticity renders the family as a perverse threat and a contamination to the properly white national/home. In this way it is tied to a stratum of racialized populations (the colonial subject, the underclass, the migrant family). Reading this programme through the history of socio-biological racism, we are able to see how the 'troubled family' is racialized through a fixation on the inappropriate sexuality and intimate relations found in the 'troubled family' home. The 'troubled family' fails heteronormative ideals of appropriate gendered governance and intimacy (often as a single mother without patriarchal discipline) but anxiety is focussed on reproduction and the intimate socialisation of behaviours and traits which threaten the linear progress of the civilised nation. The imminent threat of the 'troubled family' is found in inheritance, in the untamed and disorderly bodies of children.

The TFP thus bears the trace of racialized sexuality which operates as an ordering principle of (post)colonial government in the UK. Whilst just one aspect of this wider order, the TFP reveals how colonial logics still persists and are reinvested in contemporary welfare strategies and through apparently unrelated areas of social policy. Treating the TFP as aligned to the racialized-sexuality of previous forms of colonial rule and imperial power helps appreciate the mundane sites through which violence is invested in neoliberalism. It reminds us how racialisation is always linked to both claims over colonial and developmental logics of civility/savagery but also the production of surplus populations, those who can be killed or left to die. The TFP feeds upon and reproduces anxieties around postcolonial difference (race, class, sexuality, gender) in Britain, but by mobilising ideals of familial domestic intimacy (the hearth, sanctuary, warmth, care) these discourse obscure the often violent hierarchy on which they rest.

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