

Global Cities (Adapted)

This report is about the low paid workers who keep London 'working': the city's cleaners, hotel workers, and care assistants. Such workers provide vital services. Without them, London would grind to a halt. Yet very little is known about the people who do such jobs, or about the conditions in which they work. For example, London's Underground system relies on the labour of thousands of people who clean the trains each night ready for the morning rush hour. In every top West End hotel, an army of cleaners, porters, kitchen staff and maids ensure the smooth and efficient service for which such hotels are famed. Although vital to the continued functioning of London's economy, these workers are rarely seen by the public or the customers who take such services for granted.

Recent research by the Greater London Authority reveals that 1 in 7 of London's workers earns less than £5.80 an hour. As well as low wages, such workers often endure extremely poor conditions of employment, working long or unsociable hours and without the benefits that many take for granted: access to a pension scheme, sick pay or maternity leave. These are London's 'working poor'. Although unemployment remains the single most important cause of poverty in the capital, as many as 37% of the children living in poverty in London reside in households where at least one person works.

A very significant proportion of London's working poor are migrants. The number of people coming to London from overseas has increased rapidly in recent years such that the city is now home to a little over 2 million people born outside the UK. Taken as a whole, migrants account for 35% of London's population and 29% of its working age population. Especially striking is the high proportion of recent migrants (45% of the total number of migrants) who have arrived in the city since 1990. People from different countries fare differently in London's labour market. Broadly speaking, people coming to London from high-income countries are more likely than those born in Britain to work in professional and managerial occupations. For example, around a third (36%) of migrants from Japan, and a little under a quarter (23.1%) of migrants from Germany are employed in managerial positions: far higher than the figure for British born Londoners (17.6%). At the other end of the spectrum, people coming to London from the Global South are much more likely to find only low paid work (although migrants from countries like India and South Africa may end up at either end of the occupational spectrum).

Migrants make up a disproportionate number of London's low paid workers and as many as 46% of all of London's 'elementary' jobs (labourers, postal workers, catering staff and cleaners) are filled by migrants. People from Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and South Asia often find it especially hard to secure wellpaid work, even if arriving in the UK with good skills and qualifications. For example, a significant proportion of working age migrants who currently live and work in London but were born in Ghana (50.3%), Ecuador (59.5%), Serbia and Montenegro (45.6%) and Bangladesh (45.2%) are found in the lowest paid occupational groupings. This includes jobs in personal services, sales and customer services, processing and plant operatives, and elementary occupations. These figures are particularly striking when compared with the much lower proportion of British born Londoners in these jobs (24.8%). Specific migrant groups also concentrate in particular occupations at the bottom end of the labour market. For example, 40.5% of working age people born in Slovakia now living in London work in personal service occupations (as nursery nurses, housekeepers and care assistants) and 23.2% of

people from Ghana and 38.9% of people from Ecuador are found in elementary occupations (many working as cleaners).

The British media often paint a very negative picture of London's migrants, constructing them as 'benefit scroungers'. The reality could not be more different. Migrants take on the jobs that keep London 'working'. Crucially, despite having to pay tax and National Insurance*, many are in fact ineligible for Income Support or Unemployment Benefit**. Nor are they always able to claim the 'top up' benefits designed to supplement the wages of low paid workers and 'make work pay' (for example, Working Tax Credits).

In a bid to improve the pay and conditions of London's low paid, including migrant workers, the East London Communities Organisation launched its *Living Wage Campaign* in 2001. The campaign has secured major improvements in the terms and conditions of contracted workers employed at a number of East London hospitals and some financial companies in Canary Wharf. The campaign has involved the unionization*** of more than a thousand low paid workers, the identification and development of new leaders, and increased the political profile of this neglected group. Responding to the campaign, the Mayor of London has recently set up a Living Wage Unit at the Greater London Authority (GLA). Recognising the very high cost of living in London, the Unit has called for the introduction of a 'Living Wage' of £6.70 an hour: some way above the National Minimum Wage of £5.05. The GLA estimates that 1 in 5 workers (400,000 full-time and 300,000 part-time workers) in the capital continue to earn less than the Living Wage.

The Living Wage Campaign is demanding that public and private sector organisations take responsibility for the conditions of work endured by those who clean, cater and care on their behalf. If London is to be a socially and economically *just* city, rather than just an economically successful city, these labour market issues must be addressed. The predominance of migrants from poor countries in the Global South (and increasingly the East) in the lowest paid jobs highlights the need to think about a development policy 'at home' as well as 'away'. Global injustice is increasingly in evidence in tube stations, in offices, hospitals, banks, restaurants and hotels. If London is to retain its reputation as a multi-cultural society that works, politicians, business leaders and policy makers need to address the structure of the low paid labour market. The GLA has made the welcome move of setting up the Living Wage Unit and publishing a figure for the London Living Wage, but there is now the harder task of implementing measures for fairer employment in London.

(Word count: 1054)

* *a payment to the Government for future healthcare costs*

** *money and/or housing given to people with no jobs, or a very low income*

*** *joining workers to a union that will represent them in terms of protecting their jobs and working conditions*

Source: Evans, Y., Herbert, J., Datta, K., May, J., McIlwaine, C., Wills, J. (2005). *Making the City Work: Low Paid Employment in London*.

Available from: http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/globalcities/reports/docs/research_report.pdf [accessed 25/10/12]

Original text

Source:

Global Cities report

The authors

Evans et al (2005)

Main idea:

The poor working conditions of migrant workers who provide vital services in London.

Supporting Points:

1. Recent research by the Greater London Authority reveals that 1 in 7 of London's workers earns less than £5.80 an hour. As well as low wages, such workers often endure extremely poor conditions of employment, working long or unsociable hours and without the benefits that many take for granted.

2. A very significant proportion of London's working poor are migrants. The number of people coming to London from overseas has increased rapidly in recent years such that the city is now home to a little over 2 million people born outside the UK.

3. Migrants make up a disproportionate number of London's low paid workers and as many as 46% of all of London's 'elementary' jobs (labourers, postal workers, catering staff and cleaners) are filled by migrants.

*4. The British media often paint a very negative picture of London's migrants, constructing them as 'benefit scroungers'. The reality could not be more different.

5. In a bid to improve the pay and conditions of London's low paid, including migrant workers, the East London Communities Organisation launched its *Living Wage Campaign* in 2001. The campaign has secured major improvements in the terms and conditions of contracted workers employed at a number of East London hospitals and some financial companies in Canary Wharf. The campaign has involved the unionization*** of more than a thousand low paid workers, the identification and development of new leaders, and increased the political profile of this neglected group.

6. ...the Mayor of London has recently set up a Living Wage Unit at the Greater London Authority (GLA). Recognising the very high cost of living in London, the Unit has called for the introduction of a 'Living Wage' of £6.70 an hour: some way above the National Minimum Wage of £5.05.

**It can be argued that point 4 is not necessary. Depending on the viewpoint / subjectivity of the student on this matter, including this point would be okay. It could also be placed a lot earlier in the summary.*

Authors' opinion:

1. If London is to be a socially and economically *just* city, rather than just an economically successful city, these labour market issues must be addressed. The predominance of migrants from poor countries in the Global South (and increasingly the East) in the lowest paid jobs highlights the need to think about a development policy 'at home' as well as 'away'.

and

2. If London is to retain its reputation as a multi-cultural society that works, politicians, business leaders and policy makers need to address the structure of the low paid labour market. The GLA has made the welcome move of setting up the Living Wage Unit and publishing a figure for the London Living Wage, but there is now the harder task of implementing measures for fairer employment in London.

(acceptably) Paraphrased text**Source:**

According to the Global Cities report, ... According to the authors, ... According to Evans et al (2005), ...

The Global Cities report states / describes / highlights etc....

The authors state / describe / highlight etc....

Evans et al (2005) state / describe / highlight etc....

Main idea:

The problems faced by foreign workers doing/undertaking important low-paid jobs in London.

Supporting Points:

1. A significant number of London's workforce earn an extremely low salary while enduring poor working conditions. A lot of the benefits that are expected by workers, are not received by 'working poor'

Exemplification is acceptable if deemed necessary to support the point being made.

2. With the ever-increasing number of people arriving in London from abroad, a large proportion of Londoners are not native to the city and make up a huge segment of London's poorest workers.

Exemplification is acceptable if deemed necessary to support the point being made.

3. Menial jobs are disproportionately undertaken by migrants to the extent that they almost represent half of the low-paid workforce.

*4. The media in the UK portray a false image of migrants in London; they are wrongly described people wanting money for doing nothing,

5. The working conditions of a number of migrant workers have been improved with the help of groups such as the London Communities Organisation who began the Living Wage Campaign which involved, among other initiatives, increasing the political profile of migrant workers

6. (Additionally) the Living Wage Unit was established by London's mayor to increase the wages of low-paid workers in response to the high living costs in London.

**It can be argued that point 4 is not necessary. Depending on the viewpoint / subjectivity of the student on this matter, including this point would be okay. It could also be placed a lot earlier in the summary.*

Authors' opinion:

1. (The authors believe / the report claims etc.) A 'development policy' needs to be implemented both in England (London) and the dominant countries that migrants arrive from in order for London to become both a socially and economically 'just' city.

and

3. (The authors are adamant that / The reports argues that etc.) multiple parties, such as politicians and business leaders need to deal with the issues faced by those doing the lowest paid jobs. By doing this, London may retain its reputation as diverse city that functions well. Although positive steps have been taken to improve the situation, the authors claim that these steps will be challenging to enforce.

Final Paraphrased Summary

The Global Cities report illustrates the problems faced by foreign workers undertaking important low-paid jobs in London. A significant number of London's workforce earn an extremely low salary while enduring poor working conditions. A lot of the benefits that are expected by workers, are not received by 'working poor'. With the ever-increasing number of people arriving in London from abroad, a large proportion of Londoners are not native to the city and make up a huge segment of London's poorest workers. **Additionally**, menial jobs are disproportionately undertaken by migrants to the extent that they almost represent half of the low-paid workforce. **As a result of these issues**, the working conditions of a number of migrant workers have been improved with the help of groups such as the London Communities Organisation who began the Living Wage Campaign which involved, among other initiatives, increasing the political profile of migrant workers. **Moreover**, the Living Wage Unit was established by London's mayor to increase the wages of low-paid workers in response to the high living costs in London. The authors believe a 'development policy' needs to be implemented both in England (London) and the dominant countries that migrants arrive from in order for London to become both a socially and economically 'just' city. The authors are adamant that multiple parties, such as politicians and business leaders need to deal with the issues faced by those doing the lowest paid jobs. **The authors claim that** by doing this, London may retain its reputation as diverse city that functions well. Although positive steps have been taken to improve the situation, the authors **point out** that these steps will be challenging to enforce.

(276 words)