

The Struggle That Has No Name:

Race, Space and Policing in Post-Duggan Britain



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<sup>1</sup> Image: 4 August 2013, Ferry Lane, Tottenham, where Mark Duggan was shot and killed by police on 4 August 2011

## Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	Page 3
<b>Abstract</b>	Page 4
<b>List of abbreviations</b>	Page 5
<b>List of figures</b>	Page 6
<b>Timeline showing key events in black resistance</b>	Page 7
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>	Page 10
<b>Chapter Two: The Colour of Space: Conceptualising Race and Resistance</b>	Page 33
<b>Chapter Three: Spaces of Scholar Activism</b>	Page 72
<b>Chapter Four: Historical Geographies of Black Resistance to Racial Violence</b>	Page 91
<b>Chapter Five: Placing Race: New Struggles Against Police Violence</b>	Page 134
<b>Chapter Six: Naming Names: The Racialised Body and Justice Campaigns</b>	Page 177
<b>Chapter Seven: Regenerating Resistance, Reworking Solidarity</b>	Page 213
<b>Chapter Eight: Conclusion: The Fire This Time</b>	Page 257
<b>Bibliography</b>	Page 272

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## **Abstract**

*State violence, and policing in particular, continue to shape the black British experience, racialising geographical areas associated with African and African-Caribbean communities. The history of black struggles in the UK has often centred on spaces of racial violence and resistance to it. But black-led social movements of previous decades have, for the most part, seen a decline in both political mobilisations, and the militant anti-racist slogans and discourses that accompanied them. Neoliberalism, through securitisation, resource reallocation, privatisation of space and the de-racialising of language, has made radical black activism an increasingly difficult endeavour. But this does not mean that black struggle against policing has disappeared. What it does mean, however, is that there have been significant changes in how anti-racist activism against policing is articulated and carried out. Three high-profile black deaths at the hands of police in 2011 led to widespread protest and civil unrest. These movements of resistance were strengthened when the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States mobilised hundreds of young people in solidarity actions in England. In this thesis, I argue that, over time, racist metonyms used to describe places racialised as black (Handsworth, Brixton etc.) and people racialised as black (Stephen Lawrence, Mark Duggan etc.), have led to the rise of metonymic anti-racism. While metonymic anti-racism was used alongside more overt anti-racist language in the period between the 1950s and early 1990s, I argue that such overt anti-racist language is becoming rarer in the post-2011 period, particularly in radical black grassroots organisations that address policing. Intersecting with metonymic anti-racism are gender dynamics brought to the surface by female-led campaigns against police violence, and forms of resistance which target spaces of post-industrial consumer capitalism. Understanding how*

*police racism, and resistance to it, are being reconceptualised through language, and re-configured through different forms of activism, provides a fresh understanding of grass-roots black struggle in Britain.*

### **List of Abbreviations**

BARAC - Black Activists Rising Against Cuts

BASH - Blacks Against State Harassment

BNP - British National Party

CCARD - Co-ordinating Committee Against Racial Discrimination

CMP - (West London) Community Monitoring Project

CRE - Commission for Racial Equality (now EHRC)

DWP - Department for Work and Pensions

EDL - English Defence League

EHRC - Equality and Human Rights Commission (formerly CRE)

GLA - Greater London Authority

HYPE - Haringey Young People Empowered

iNAPP - interim National African People's Parliament

IPCC - Independent Police Complaints Commission

IRR - Institute of Race Relations

LCAPSV - London Campaign Against Police and State Violence

LSX - (Occupy) London Stock Exchange

NAACP - National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (USA)

NAAR - National Assembly Against Racism

NMP - Newham Monitoring Project

NUS - National Union of Students  
OBV - Operation Black Vote  
ROTA - Race on the Agenda  
SPG - (Police) Special Patrol Group  
SWP - Socialist Workers Party  
TDC - Tottenham Defence Campaign  
TMG - The Monitoring Group  
TR - Tottenham Rights  
UAF - Unite Against Fascism  
UFFC - United Family and Friends Coalition

### **List of Figures**

Figure 3.1 Poster for CMP's launch event – a film viewing of The Mangrove Nine.  
Figure 3.2 Map to show organisations and campaigns covered in research  
Figure 5.1 TDC Bustcard  
Figure 5.2 OBV Website Homepage  
Figure 5.3 NMP Website Homepage  
Figure 6.1 Photograph of Mark Duggan commonly used in the press  
Figure 6.2 Flier produced by Justice4Mark  
Figure 6.3 Image from the *London Evening Standard's* 'Gangs of London' campaign  
Figure 6.4 Logo for Liberation Squad  
Figure 8.1 Logo for LCAPSV  
Figure 8.2 Protests in central London against black deaths at the hands of the state  
Figure 8.3 Anti-Fascist and Anti-Far-Right protests in central London

## **Timeline showing key events in black resistance**

1919 (May)	Cardiff race riots
1958 (August)	Notting Hill uprising
1959 (May)	Kelso Cochrane killed in racist attack in Notting Hill
1961	Co-ordinating Committee Against Racial Discrimination (CCARD) founded in Birmingham
1964 (May)	Smethwick By-Election (Birmingham)
1970 (August)	Protest and rioting at The Mangrove, Notting Hill
1971 (October–December)	Trial of the Mangrove Nine
1977 (August)	Notting Hill Carnival uprising
1980 (April)	Rebellions in St. Paul's, Bristol
1981 (January)	Thirteen black teens are killed in a house fire which the community suspects is a racist arson attack – this became known as 'The New Cross Massacre'
1981 (March)	The Black People's Day of Action marches from New Cross to Hyde Park to protest the 'New Cross Massacre'.
1981 (April–July)	Rebellions in Brixton, spreading across London, Toxteth (Liverpool), Hyson Green (Nottingham), Moss Side (Manchester) and other English towns and cities
1985 (September)	Handsworth uprisings (Birmingham)
1985 (September)	The police shooting of Cherry Groce in September leads to a rebellion in Brixton
1985 (October)	The police killing of Cynthia Jarrett in October leads to the Broadwater Farm uprisings (Tottenham)

- 1987 (March) The 'Tottenham Three' are convicted of killing PC Blakelock during the Broadwater Farm uprising
- 1991 (November) The last of the 'Tottenham Three' have their convictions overturned for the killing of PC Blakelock during the Broadwater Farm uprising.
- 1993 (April) Stephen Lawrence is killed in a racist murder in southeast London
- 1999 (February) The MacPherson Report finds London's Metropolitan Police institutionally racist, following the Inquiry into the Death of Stephen Lawrence.
- 2011 (March) Smiley Culture dies during a police raid on his home near London
- 2011 (March) Kingsley Burrell dies in police custody in Birmingham
- 2011 (August) Mark Duggan is shot dead by police in Tottenham; civil unrest ensues in Tottenham and then in almost every major English city.
- 2012 (February) Trayvon Martin is shot and killed by George Zimmerman in Miami Gardens (Florida).
- 2013 (June) George Zimmerman is acquitted of all charges following the killing of Trayvon Martin, and the slogan Black Lives Matter is coined by Alicia Garza in Oakland (California).
- 2013 (June) Ex-Metropolitan Police spy Peter Francis claims he and other officers were tasked with spying on, infiltrating, collecting intelligence on, and smearing the family of Stephen

Lawrence, the Stephen Lawrence Campaign, and a number of other 'black justice campaigns'.

- 2014 (January) Inquest into the police killing of Mark Duggan passes a Lawful Killing verdict
- 2014 (July) Eric Garner is killed by police in New York
- 2014 (August) Mike Brown is shot and killed by police in Ferguson (Missouri)
- 2014 (November) A grand jury decide not to indict Darren Wilson, Mike Brown's killer
- 2014 (November) Black Lives Matter protest shuts down shopping districts Oxford Circus and Bond Street (central London).
- 2014 (December) A grand jury decide not to indict Daniel Pantaleo, Eric Garner's killer
- 2014 (December) Hundreds join Black Lives Matter protest at Westfield Shopping Centre (Shepherd's Bush, West London); 76 people are arrested

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

This thesis was inspired by my engagement with socially marginalised young people. In 2008, I volunteered as a part-time youth worker in the Radford area of Nottingham. I worked with young people (aged between 14 and 17) who were permanently excluded from secondary school in this historically African-Caribbean neighbourhood. Although our main focus was on developing basic English, Maths and IT skills, in addition to Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and careers advice, some of the most interesting exchanges, for the purposes of this thesis, took place during periods of recreation. My colleagues and I were interested in engaging the young people in social issues, often relating to capitalism, racism or heteropatriarchy. Posters of black inventors and pre-colonial African monuments lined the walls, and many staff members were knowledgeable about the history of racism and resistance in the area. When talking with the young people about social issues, we began by drawing on problems the young people encountered in their own lives, carefully avoiding jargon. Nonetheless, the response to our attempts to engage in socio-political discussion was almost always boredom or dismissal.

At times, when speaking to the young people it seemed as though the politics of race and racism was seen as “boring black stuff” and there was a sense that some of them were rejecting critical race analysis due to overexposure. However, when the topic of conversation turned to policing, they were engaged; almost all of them shared experiences of violence, harassment, incarceration or neglect at the hands of the state. During one session, the staff and young people collectively agreed that the role of the police is to protect people and property, but we then went on to ask: which people, and whose property, are they pro-

protecting? The negative experiences they shared indicated that people from wealthier backgrounds were those more likely to enjoy a satisfactory police service. This point of entry allowed us to embark on critical discussions about the operations of power within our society – of the state and its security forces, and their relationship with black people, especially the young. For many of the young people I worked with, the threat of incarceration seemed more pertinent than the difficulty of obtaining secure housing and a fulfilling livelihood. While youth workers are often able to identify the problems that arise from the policing of black communities, our engagement with the young people in Nottingham was also solution-driven. Similarly, this investigation uses the problem of racialised state violence as a backdrop for its focus on radical grassroots resistance.

This study emerged from these encounters with young people, as well as from the 2011 protests in the UK that followed the deaths of three black men at the hands of the police that year, and the civil unrest that responded to the third. In the next section of this chapter, I will assess how the deaths themselves, and the civil unrest in the summer of that year, grabbed national headlines. The main aim of this thesis, however, is to investigate radical black grassroots activism, which is often under-reported in the mainstream; specifically how black communities are organising to defend themselves from the police in post-2011 London and Birmingham. These are England's two biggest cities, and the nation's largest black communities, constituting 52% (London) and 5.2% (Birmingham) of the country's black population (Census 2011b). My preliminary research and personal experience indicated that these two cities are where the bulk of radical black resistance to policing is taking place. This informed my choice of research locations, which fortuitously fitted in with my personal links with these cities. I was thus able to focus on specific organisations while

maximising the number of research participants I was able to interview. The organisations investigated are listed in Figure 3.2 in Chapter 4.

The ethnographic approach to my research, which began in the youth clubs, provides me with the scope to examine how activists articulate radical black politics, organise political actions and understand how racialised geographies shape both past and present racisms and anti-racisms. By uncovering and critically interrogating these struggles against state racism, I identify historical continuities and emergent trends, highlighting their pitfalls and potentialities. My intention is that this research should contribute to the existing anti-racist scholarship in Britain, and offer an alternative to the neoliberalisation of anti-racism with which this thesis takes issue (Chapter 2). As a scholar who has also engaged in field research documenting, recording and challenging instances of police racism for nearly ten years, I maintain that it is imperative that socio-political formations of this nature be submitted to serious academic scrutiny.

It is widely understood that African and African-Caribbean people are disproportionately stopped and searched by police in Britain – in 2009/10, black people in England and Wales were stopped and searched for drugs at 6.3 times the rate of white people, while people identified as Asian were stopped and searched at 2.5 times the rate of whites (Eastwood, Shiner & Bear 2013). But it does not end here: when found in possession of criminalised drugs, black people are six times more likely to be arrested than their white counterparts, and if found with cannabis, black people are five times more likely to be charged than white people. Black people are over four times more likely than white people to be taken to court if found in possession of drugs; over four times more likely than white people to be found guilty in court; and five times more likely than whites to be taken into

immediate custody (*ibid.*). This disproportionality extends to other offences too, black people being 38 per cent more likely than white people to be sentenced to prison for public order offences or possession of a weapon, with this figure rising to 44 per cent for driving offences (Rogers 2011a).

These patterns of policing and court decision-making are evidence of institutional racism, as the normal functioning of these organisations produces (possibly unintended) racist outcomes (Bell 2004). Unsurprisingly, this pattern of racial injustice is reflected in incarceration rates. According to the EHRC, figures in 2010 show that African/Caribbean people make up 2.8% of the UK population, but 10% of its prison population. Police in England and Wales also have a DNA database, in which the DNA of everyone taken into their custody is stored, including those eventually found innocent and even those wrongfully arrested. Roughly 10 per cent of white males in Britain are currently on this DNA database, but this figure jumps to 30 per cent for black British men (Human Genetics Commission 2009: 53). In 2014, only 1% of the nearly 8,000 complaints of racism against police in England and Wales were upheld (Evans 2014). A year later, London's Metropolitan Police failed to uphold a single complaint of racism, claiming that such criticisms are generally a simple misunderstanding or poor communication' (Taylor & Dodd 2015: npn). Reports from the Institute of Race Relations (Athwal & Bourne 2014) and Inquest (2014) found that 69 racially minoritised people were killed by the British state between 2002 and 2012, 18 per cent of the total, despite constituting only 7–13 per cent of the British population during that period (Census 2001, Census 2011a).

These data indicate institutional racism at every juncture of Britain's criminal justice system, from being identified as deviant by officers on the street, to being imprisoned or even

dying at the hands of the state. Nonetheless, this thesis focuses on policing not because it is necessarily the most pertinent issue facing black communities in Britain. Rather, it is an issue that is in the immediate reality of the most marginalised blacks in Britain, and this thesis addresses a gap in the scholarship, as discussed presently.

### Contributing to the Literature on Policing Black Britain

There is a great deal of literature on police racism and violence in Britain. Some of the most influential contributions include *Policing the Crisis* by Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke and Brian Roberts (1978). This text analysed how politicians and the corporate press mobilise populist racism against African-Caribbean people by racialising some crimes as black, such as ‘mugging’. This alleged street robbery epidemic created a ‘moral crisis’, whereby journalists and politicians portrayed a stable and righteous Britain being invaded by deviant and dangerous racial outsiders (Elliott-Cooper 2014b). This work was developed by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, with Paul Gilroy, John Solomos, Hazel Carby, Errol Lawrence, Pratibha Parmar, Bob Finlay and Simon Jones (1982) focusing on British racism as a legacy of colonisation in *The Empire Strikes Back*. The present doctoral thesis is greatly indebted to the cultural and post-colonial analyses offered by these theorists, drawing on this scholarship to critique contemporary discourses which racialise crime. More recently, scholars have incorporated anti-Muslim racisms into our understanding of state power in Britain, which are shaped by both historical and modern imperialism (Patel & Tyrer 2011, Kundnani 2014).

Historically, much research has been carried out on radical black political action in Britain. Well-known studies include that of John Rex (1979), who looked at black militancy in the Midlands, and its relationship with both the British labour movement and the state. Some activists published accounts of the campaigns they were involved in, such as John La Rose (1992), who ran a bookshop and publishing house called New Beacon Books in north London. Biographical texts of black activists such as Claudia Jones (Boyce Davies 2008) and Darcus Howe (Bunce & Field 2014) also provide vivid contributions to UK-based anti-racism and its global connections (Elliott-Cooper 2014c). These historical texts are vital in contextualising the post-2011 political organising investigated in this thesis, and it is my intention that my research should contribute to this literature. Some of the studies on black resistance to policing argue that the neoliberal tide ushered in by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s co-opted activists and cut resources, reducing the power and influence of radical anti-racist organising (Sivanandan 1983, Tompson 1988, Shukra 1997). The (perhaps unintended) implication of this analysis is the notion that people in Britain, particularly the young, are no longer engaged in radical anti-racism. It is important that existing forms of grassroots black organising against policing are examined, in order for us better to understand the effects of neo-liberalism, and how anti-racist activists are attempting to resist it.

While accounts of post-2011 resistance to police racism exist, many are confined to journalistic articles or blogs such as The Monitoring Group or the London Campaign Against Police and State Violence. There is also policy-centred work being published, including that carried out by think tanks such as The Runnymede Trust (Sveinsson 2012). These analyses are vital components of anti-racist discourse in Britain, but there is still a need for rigorous, far reaching and in-depth academic study, particularly that which is positioned in

solidarity with radical black action and thought. Standing in stark contrast to the aims of this thesis, we are increasingly seeing the influence of black conservative activists and youth workers (Warmington 2014), such as Shaun Bailey (2005) and Ray Lewis (Gyngell & Lewis 2006), who combine grassroots organising with policy proposals that rarely deviate from mainstream party politics. These paternalistic conservative approaches normalise neoliberal economics and patriarchal identities that further entrench unjust racial hierarchies. This thesis will critique this neoliberalised anti-racism, re-centring radical alternatives that challenge patriarchy and capitalism as well as racism.

The urgency of investigating black struggles against policing became apparent in 2011, as black people in Britain were compelled into mass mobilisation following three high-profile black deaths in police custody. On 15 March, the home of reggae artist Smiley Culture was raided by police. According to officers, Smiley went to the kitchen to make a cup of tea, where he stabbed himself to death (BBC News 2013b). No incriminating evidence was found in his property. One of the first British reggae artists to gain television airplay, Smiley's biggest single, 'Police Officer', helped make him famous among reggae-listeners across the country. His 1984 hit 'Cockney Translation' conveyed how the identities of working-class Londoners and people of African-Caribbean heritage converged, yet remained separate (Sebba & Tate 2002). Smiley's popularity and anti-establishment stance led to widespread outrage over his death following police contact as over a thousand people marched from Vauxhall (south London) where Smiley performed regularly, to Scotland Yard, the Headquarters of London's Metropolitan Police, a mile and a half from the Houses of Parliament. Although it was much smaller than demonstrations in previous decades, it is still important to note that many of the activists present considered that this was

the biggest black-led protest since the Stephen Lawrence Campaign over a decade previously.

The Lawrence Campaign followed the racist murder in April 1993 of Stephen by a gang of white youths in south London, and the police neglect, racism and corruption which allowed his killers to escape apprehension in the immediate aftermath of the killing (McPherson 1999). In the mid-to-late 1990s, the Lawrence family and their supporters mobilised thousands to challenge racial violence on the streets and institutional racism in policing. It was not until 2014 that the Lawrence campaigners began to realise the full extent of the police racism they faced, when ex-police spy Peter Francis blew the whistle. Francis claimed that 'black justice campaigns', such as the campaign for Stephen Lawrence, were being spied on, infiltrated and smeared by the Metropolitan Police's Special Demonstration Squad (Elison 2014). The huge resources put into disrupting these black community campaigns are some indication of their potential for challenging state power, and the lengths the police will go to in order to maintain it.

The second high profile black death during 2011 took place towards the end of March - Kingsley Burrell died at the hands of West Midlands Police in Birmingham. Burrell, a student with a history of mental health issues, called the police because he feared he was being followed. When officers arrived on the scene, he was detained and held down with leg restraints, handcuffs and a towel over his head, on the floor of a mental health unit – he eventually died of a cardiac arrest (Lloyd 2015). The biggest black community demonstration in Birmingham since the 1980s took place in protest shortly afterwards. Finally, in Au-

gust that year, Mark Duggan was shot dead by police in Tottenham (north London), leading to the most widespread civil unrest in England for 30 years (Gilroy 2013). These three events re-shone the spotlight on police racism and resistance to it.

The rebellion of August 2011 that began in Tottenham quickly spread to other areas of the capital and other cities in England. In Nottingham, police stations in St. Ann's, Canning Circus, The Meadows, Oxclose and Bulwell were attacked with petrol bombs (McCabe 2011). Many of these locations were not far from the youth centre where I worked in 2008, and the communities where the young people were growing up. Non-acquisitive crimes of this nature constituted roughly 50 per cent of riot-related convictions in Britain in 2011 (Rogers 2011b). The mainstream press focused on the 'torching [of] small businesses' in the disturbances (Littlejohn 2011: npn), with Tottenham Labour Party Member of Parliament (MP) David Lammy highlighting:

The post office, shops, news agents, mobile phone shops, council buildings that deal with customer complaints, smashed to pieces by mindless, mindless people (Howie 2011: npn).

Media outlets such as BBC News (2011b) followed the stories of independent shopkeepers for months after the unrest. Yet, according to magistrates' records, chain stores, such as Argos, Tesco, Currys and JD Sports, were the shops most frequently targeted by those revolting (Rogers 2011b); in fact, over 90 per cent of the acquisitive crimes were directed at major chain stores (Ball 2011). Mobilising public outrage at the disturbances was assured by channelling attention to small shops, with the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson,

assuring the electorate that the police and courts would 'get medieval' on those responsible (Barrett 2014). The state response to the unrest, and community resistance to this response, will be a central focus of the analysis presented in this thesis.

My own experiences working with young people have strongly suggested that their antagonism towards the police is inherently political. This is supported by the research presented in this thesis, but many commentators, including those on the left, disagree with this approach. Harvey saw 'mindless rioters' participating in 'feral capitalism' (2011: npn), and Sivanandan claimed they were 'neither community-based nor politically-oriented', dismissing them as 'riots mobilised on a Blackberry' (2011: npn). Such analyses are lacking in critical political, economic context, since working-class people appropriating high-value goods, even if they go on to sell them through criminalised avenues, disrupt neoliberal markets. Thus, while Harvey may wish to identify revolters as feral, they were certainly not engaging in the traditional exchanges prescribed by market capitalism. Furthermore, organising a rebellion on a Blackberry requires everyone to have each other's individual contact details, suggesting community links and networks rather than an arbitrary, anonymous (and unthinking?) summoning from the internet.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the revolts in August 2011 were different from disturbances in previous decades – the social movements that coalesced with uprisings in the 1950s, '60s, '70s and '80s were notably absent. Yet the fact that such social movements were not present to influence and interpret the rebellion does not make these urban revolts devoid of political efficacy, motivation or intent. Rather than focusing on the civil unrest itself, however, this investigation is concerned with the how black communities are – post-riot – organising, campaigning, and protesting against policing in London and Birmingham.

## Definitions (or Lack thereof)

This thesis employs the terms racism and anti-racism throughout, but it is worth reviewing the critical analysis of these terms, as they are not without their problematics (Lentin 2008). Gilroy (1993) has suggested we do away with many racialised identities, replacing seemingly fixed notions of blackness in the West with more transient, diasporic notions, such as the Black Atlantic. Lloyd (2002) expands on this idea, in relation to racialised oppression and resistance:

using the racism/anti-racism formulation involves taking anti-racism for granted and subordinating it to racism ... There is an implicit, yet unacknowledged recognition that anti-racism is always attempting to become something but is not always successful (60).

This thesis does not acknowledge one anti-racism, but rather a multitude of anti-racisms, arguing that one of the many strands of anti-racism is emerging through resistance to policing. Lloyd continues to use the term racism, despite its flaws, yet scholars also focus on 'whiteness' (Ware & Back 2001) or white supremacy (Gillborn 2005) to describe the structural, socio-economic power maintaining and benefitting from racism. This thesis will use all of these phrases, when appropriate, while acknowledging that 'race' is a problematic term.

The ways in which different people are racialised often changes depending on the social context, making the description of the race of an individual or group of people difficult. Like

Keith (1993), I have used the term 'black' to describe communities of African heritage (including African-Caribbeans who consider themselves black British). However, this term can be ambiguous; it can include, for example, South Asian communities, and it is sometimes used to refer to all people who are not racialised as white (Kundnani 2007). As the concept of race is socially constructed and fluid, racial categorisation (or attempts at racial categorisation) are also changeable, and so the term 'black' may have a different meaning, depending on the part of Britain, the community organisation, the historical period or the specific political issue being discussed in different parts of this thesis. Further complicating definitions, few of the organisations investigated in this research are exclusively black, even if they identify as being black or black-led, or are categorised by the state as 'black justice campaigns'. While some black activists described their campaign as black-led by default, the Newham Monitoring Project, which has a white director, explicitly identifies as a black community organisation. Racialisation appears to emerge through a commitment to racial justice, the presence of black people in a given organisation, and/or the association with a place racialised as black. This indicates that the fluidity of blackness as a personal identity also has malleable meanings as a political signifier for organisations. Every activist who participated in this research was made aware that it was analysing black struggles against policing, and was therefore comfortable with being identified in this way. The fluidity of race, and wider critical theories of racialisation, are examined in more detail in Chapter 2.

### **Language and the Metaphorology of Race**

Between the 1950s and the 1990s, black-led social movements were often associated with racialised places, such as the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign (Adams 1998) or the

Brixton Defence Committee (Stewart 2013). They were also associated with people who were victims of police or racist violence, such as the Cherry Groce Campaign (Grover 2014) or the campaign for Kelso Cochrane (Boyce Davies 2008). These organisations worked alongside black-led social movements that used more overt racialised nomenclatures, such as Blacks Against State Harassment (Stewart 2013) or The Black Panther Movement (Wild 2008). Decades of black communities organising to defend themselves from the racist activities of the police resulted in spaces associated with black rebellion becoming metonyms for resistance:

At a confrontation in Coventry in May 1981 ... young Asians chanted 'Brixton, Brixton' as they charged the police ranks (Gilroy et al. 1982: 294).

In this description of how 'common oppression can generate united black struggle' (ibid.), resistance is articulated through a racialised space: Brixton. This phenomenon has been reproduced in many other racialised spaces in London (Keith 1993). The spaces occupied by, and associated with, black people in Britain have changed considerably since the onset of neoliberalisation in the 1980s. Goldberg (2009) asserts that racism has been 'buried alive' by a neoliberal discourse that refuses to articulate race overtly, while reproducing white domination. This leads to:

A range of discourses on social differentiation [that] may have a metonymic relationship to racism. The semantics of race are produced by a complex set of interdiscursive processes in which the language of culture and nation invokes a hidden racial narrative (Solomos & Back 1995: 5).

This thesis employs metaphorology, the study of metaphors and other linguistic modes such as metonyms, to better understand how racism and anti-racism are articulated. The difference between metaphors and metonyms is important for understanding the ways in which racialised language is deployed. While there are multiple interpretations of what differentiates these two modes of language, first developed by Jakobson (1956) who identified metaphors as based on similarities and metonyms on contiguity, Warren (2002) offers a useful distinction in the context of race and racism.

According to Warren (2002) both metaphors and metonyms replace a word or words to convey a relatable meaning, but differ in the way these meanings are deployed. Metaphors rely on the interpreter extracting meaning from the word or term being used - the relationship between the source (the person using a metaphor to convey a message) and the target (the person interpreting the message) is less direct than in the case of a metonym. The source of the metaphor therefore has relatively little power over how the message is specifically interpreted by the receiver - this can be intentional, as metaphors often convey a more general message or sentiment. Metonyms on the other hand rely upon a process in which 'the explicit modifier (source) and the implicit head (target) together pick out the intended referent' (Warren 2002: 113). Conveying a metonymic message therefore requires the source to retrieve and retain shared references for its target audience - in other words, there is a pre-existing relationship between the source and target as to what the metonym in question is referring to. A metonym therefore relies on this relationship in conveying a message that is potentially more specific than a metaphor. For example, if a person is described as a weasel, this is a metaphor which implies a sly or deceptive personality, since a weasel is considered to embody these traits. But saying that Downing Street released a statement, is a metonym which draws upon the contiguity between

Downing Street and the British prime minister (being their official place of residence), thereby communicating that such a statement is from central government.

This thesis seeks to apply metonymy to spaces of racialised policing and resistance in Britain; so for example a place racialised as black, Broadwater Farm housing estate in Tottenham, or a body racialised as black, Mark Duggan, replaces more overt racial language, such as 'anti-racism', or the word 'black'. The people and organisations using metonyms such as Broadwater Farm or Mark Duggan rely on their targets interpreting these terms in a manner which conveys a message of anti-racism through their mutually agreed proximity. This thesis argues that this proximity is developed through a number of factors, with a particular focus on struggles against racism – in these cases, either in Broadwater Farm itself, or in relation to Mark Duggan, who many consider to be a victim of racial violence. It is the sources' knowledge of their own references, as well as the proximate reference points of the individuals and groups they are communicating with, that makes this racialised language metonymic, rather than metaphoric. In both these examples, police violence contributes significantly to these spaces becoming racialised metonyms. Thus, places racialised as black, and racialised and gendered black bodies subjected to state violence, are both spaces vital to the understanding of both oppression and resistance (Fanon 1967, McKittrick 2000, Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, Gilmore 2007).

This thesis analyses a range of grassroots struggles employing different metonyms to articulate anti-racist resistance to policing. This means that that which was previously a named struggle – the anti-racist struggle or the black struggle – has been replaced by a range of metonyms. The entrenchment of these metonyms has become so common that, in the context of anti-racist struggles against policing, they have replaced the name of

these struggles altogether - metonyms now identify these campaigns and organisations, today engaged in a struggle that has no name.

## **Capital, Consumption and Resistance**

The overt racial violence, and resistance to it, that leads to the rise of racial metonyms in relation to place, can be further cemented by gentrification. Through gentrification, the state facilitates both capitalist investment and aggressive policing of public spaces, and in areas racialised as black, gentrification often incorporates the black identity of an area into the development process (Smith 1996, Mavrommatis 2010). This thesis investigates the complex set of relations which shapes how gentrification reaffirms or disrupts the collective memories and perceptions of spaces racialised as black in the city.

The synergy between capital and the state (Harvey 2008) is also reflected in how resistance to state violence is increasingly carried out in spaces of consumption (e.g. shopping centres), which are easily identifiable, draw significant media attention, and disrupt the flow of capital in semi-privatised spaces. These grassroots political actions challenging police use peaceful direct action to prevent large spaces of commerce from functioning. This thesis examines how these attempts to disrupt corporate power can affect how political decisions are made, given the huge political power of the interests of capital under neoliberalism. This newer form of resistance to policing highlights the tense relationship between state violence, neoliberalism, racialised places and racialised bodies. One example of this is analysed in Chapter 7, whereby political actions challenging the dehumanisation of black bodies disrupt a neoliberal space of capitalist consumption (Westfield Shopping

Centre). This thesis focuses close attention on how the re-emergent radical black struggles against the police, beginning in 2011 and continuing at the time of writing, employ notions of space to articulate, delineate and support their aims. By exploring activism that targets symbols of neoliberal capital as well as state institutions, this thesis investigates significant conceptual and practical changes in the ways black communities organise to defend themselves from police violence.

The terms employed to define the political participation and organisation of black individuals and communities can be difficult to establish. Some scholars have lamented the end of the black political movement since neoliberalism co-opted or cut resources to many grassroots activists (Sivanandan 1985, Tompson 1988, Shukra 1997). Furthermore, some of the campaigns investigated in this thesis are carried out by a small number of friends and family members, particularly those resisting a specific death in custody. This brings increased difficulties in determining whether these examples of political organising should be understood as forming a social movement. While the broad definition of a social movement is simply socio-political activity which takes place between the personal sphere and the state, social movements also constitute:

networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organisations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities (Diani 1992: 1).

Nonetheless, the activists participating in this investigation understood social movements as political entities that were larger and more far-reaching than the collectives and cam-

paigns of which they were a part. The participants I interviewed and spoke to while researching this thesis have used different terms to define the groups with which they organise, including, but not limited to: organisation, group, family, network, campaign, squad or even gang, with police records generally referring to them as 'black justice campaigns' (Elison 2014). I have decided to use the phrase 'black community struggle' to describe the variety of individuals, families, collectives and campaigns that have emerged from black communities. This term can be somewhat ambiguous, but has been used in other accounts of anti-racist activism (Hall 1992, Solomos & Back 1995, Alexander 2014), and serves as a useful umbrella term for a range of political actions, without necessarily denoting the existence of a 'movement'.

The main aim of this thesis is to examine how black communities are organising to resist police violence in London and Birmingham post-2011. The aforementioned deaths at the hands of police during that year led to a number of black-led mobilisations. Unlike the black social movements of the decades that led up to the 1980s, the organising which coalesces with mass protests post-2011 is operating within a neoliberalised socio-economic and political environment. These circumstances necessitate an analysis of emergent tactics and articulations of anti-racism during this period and beyond. These radical black struggles in Britain were re-energised by the Black Lives Matter movement, an African-American social movement resisting state violence, which was set up following the shooting of Trayvon Martin in 2012<sup>2</sup>.

This thesis has four objectives:

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<sup>2</sup> <http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/> accessed 4 January 2016

- 1) to analyse how the neoliberalisation of race has changed the ways in which anti-racism is articulated;
- 2) to examine the contradictory relationship of race and space between the state and those resisting it, with an emphasis on the latter;
- 3) to assess how the racialised black body becomes a site of contestation between the state and radical black struggles;
- 4) to identify and analyse the methods used to further the goals of those engaged in black resistance to policing.

Completing these objectives requires a range of theoretical tools, which I centre on the critical geographies of race, post-colonial thought and black feminism. Race, as we know it in Britain today, is intrinsically connected to the British Empire and the racial myths necessary for its reproduction (Gilroy et al. 1982, Hall 1990). Colonial white domination is always spatialised, and a geographico-historical approach enables us to draw conceptual continuities between the colonial world and African descendant communities living at the centre of Empire (Fanon 1986, Goldberg 1993b). Examining space and place in relation to capitalism (Lefebvre 1991, Massey 1991, Harvey 2008), helps us better to understand how racism and anti-racism are spatialised in Britain (Jackson 1987, Keith 1993, Dwyer & Bressey 2008).

Bodies racialised as black in Britain are sites of contestation, criminalised by the state and defended by radical black action and thought. The dehumanisation that racism projects onto black bodies makes them a space upon which violence becomes legitimised (Fanon 1986). However, racialised state violence is also gendered (Davis 2001, Connell & Mes-

serschmidt 2005, Bernstein 2012), requiring an intersectional analysis of how such violence is deployed. An intersectional approach draws on black feminism to analyse gender alongside capitalism and racism. This conceptual tool is also vital in understanding resistance, as patriarchy and the interests of capital also shape how activists interact with each other, as well as with the state (hooks 2004, Hill Collins 2006).

One of the most important theoretical points I explore is how race is articulated under neoliberalism. This thesis examines the ways in which racial metonyms, where symbols associated with a specific racial group (such as black people and Tottenham) replace overt racial language, and shape how black resistance to policing is articulated. If, as Goldberg (2001) argues, neoliberalism makes it more difficult to identify race and racism overtly, then how do people engaged in black struggle navigate this problematic? In Tottenham, where the 2011 revolts began, a defence campaign was organised, and I participated from the outset. Developing relationships with activists, and knowing where to access a range of grassroots campaigns challenging policing, I used ethnographic observations as an action researcher and semi-structured interviews with organisers themselves. As my interest in the articulation of antiracism developed, I also began to analyse the literature that different campaigns disseminated, both in print and online. It is through these methodological tools and on these theoretical groundings that I develop existing theories of race, space and resistance in Britain.

## Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Following this introductory chapter, *The Colour of Space: Conceptualising Race and Resistance* (Chapter Two) discusses the conceptual framework. This chapter is of necessity a complex interaction of theories, employing as it does the tools for critically examining race, gender, space and resistance in post-2011 Britain. My assessment of radical theories which critique whiteness, neoliberal capitalism and patriarchy, enables me to draw upon the strongest elements of social movement theory in addition to theories that centre on anti-racist and feminist activism.

My methodological approach, *Spaces of Scholar Activism* (Chapter Three), critically examines scholar activism, describing a number of my interactions with activists and with the state throughout my field research. Assessing the strengths and weaknesses of this approach, together with the ethics and the political goals, this chapter positions my research among the radical scholarship which seeks to transform society for the better.

The fourth chapter in this thesis, *Historical Geographies of Black Resistance to Racial Violence*, draws on archival research and accounts I recorded myself from people politically active in the 1970s and '80s. The chapter is divided into five sections, the first four of which focus on separate, but connected, geographical locations: Handsworth (Birmingham), Notting Hill (west London), Brixton (south London) and Tottenham (north London). The chapter identifies the functions of black grassroots organising in the past, and goes on to analyse how activism is constitutive of space and how these spaces are sites of connected historical memories. The final section looks at the period from the late 1980s to the

turn of the century, critically interrogating the role of neoliberalism in changing anti-racist action and thought.

Chapter Five, *Placing Race: New Struggles Against Police Violence*, examines the aftermath of the August 2011 civil unrest beginning in Tottenham. The police stops, searches, interviews or interrogations, raids, arrests and imprisonments are just some of the manifestations of state power against which black activists mobilise. I unpack how and why locations associated with black people are criminalised by the press and police, and discuss the ways in which these racialised places can transcend their physical boundaries (McKittrick 2011). In analysing campaigns in Haringey, the London borough where Tottenham is situated, I begin to theorise how race and space intersect, and how they shape anti-racist articulations.

*Naming Names: The Racialised Body and Justice Campaigns* is the sixth chapter. Here, I expand on the notion of space, to include not only places but also bodies – specifically the bodies of dehumanised black people subjected to racial violence. This chapter critically analyses black masculinities, and how subordinating them reproduces both criminalisation and institutional forms of state violence (Douglas 2012). I combine my own ethnographic observations of these masculinities through racialised tropes such as the ‘gang’. I then examine how dehumanised black bodies are rehumanised through black activism that challenges racialised criminalisation. The chapter closes with an analysis of these new articulations of resistance to police racism, building on the theories proposed in the previous chapter.

The seventh chapter is titled *Regenerating Resistance, Reworking Solidarity*. This chapter analyses the practicalities of black organising against policing in Britain, through both external and internal solidarity. External solidarity involves analysing the impact of Black Lives Matter. By disrupting spaces of commerce, Black Lives Matter solidarity actions overlap with anti-capitalist social movements such as Occupy (Halvorson 2015), providing new potentialities for resisting neo-liberalism. I also assess the extent to which other anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations link with grassroots black struggles against policing. The rise of metonymic anti-racism has the potential to foster miscommunication between these different groups, a problem that requires significant attention in relation to the ways racial metonyms are deployed. Investigating internal solidarity is centred on how resistance is gendered. Analysing the significance of women-led campaigns, as well as how the state and the corporate press respond to female-led anti-racist activism, I argue that state violence is patriarchal, and that black feminism can provide useful analyses for resisting it.

I conclude the thesis with Chapter Eight *The Fire This Time*. I reflect upon the current political landscape, whereby overt articulations of race are being replaced by racial metonyms, and ask how are activists articulating an issue that cannot be named? Neoliberalisation has made not only discussion of racialisation more difficult, but also organisation. Activists today struggle to ignite the fiery spirit of black radicalism, smothered by resource reallocation and co-optation. While the far-reaching militancy of previous decades is yet to be rekindled, what possibilities does post-2011 organising present for the future? Can the growing influence of intersectional thinking strengthen campaign groups? Are new tactics opening up possibilities for solidarity across the left at home and abroad? What role will radical scholarship play in determining the future of black struggle in Britain? While race is being

reconceptualised by neoliberal opponents of radical change, it is arguably the responsibility of academia to engage with black struggles, providing new ways of thinking about resisting the state violence that continues to mark indelibly black life in Britain. Such scholarly engagement necessitates the use of a range of conceptual tools which are examined in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Colour of Space: Conceptualising Race and Resistance**

#### Introduction

Can geography be racist? This simple but somewhat abstruse question is often asked when I tell people I'm a geographer researching racism. It can perhaps be better answered if we ask ourselves if racism has a geography – is it spatialised? The answer to this question is more straightforward; examining divisions created by imperial conquest or racial segregation throws up a myriad of examples. It therefore makes sense that anti-racism has a geography too, but as this thesis will attest, racialised geographies are far more nuanced and complex than the spaces of racial apartheid or anti-immigrationism that jump out at us in black and white. Indeed, '[r]acism is not confined to the views of a few bigoted individuals ... [but] is deeply rooted in British society's unequal power structure and is perpetuated from day to day by the intended and unintended consequences of institutional policies and practices' (Jackson 1987: 3). While racism in England is ideologically rooted in the white supremacy of the British Empire and its aftermath, the material consequences of racialisation differ across time and space (Garner 2007). Such complexities require an investigation of how black resistance to police violence is influenced by the ways in which space, culture, gender and language are structured around this resistance. These processes point to how racism is reproduced and challenged through the geographies of violence and community struggle in post-2011 London and Birmingham.

This chapter is a review of the literature covering the critical geographies of race, post-colonialism, black feminist thought and social movement theory. The critical geographies of race are a broad signifier of the literature that critically analyses the intersections between

race and space. Owing to the critical approach to race which this thesis adopts, and its focus on how racialisation is spatialised, such approaches are integral to my understanding of state violence and black resistance in Britain. Race and racism in Britain today find their roots in the European Empires and their legacies, making post-colonial thought intrinsically linked to racialisation, contextualising it in the histories which invented race and in the theoretical tools for understanding how racialised oppression, and resistance to it, functions. Racism does not exist in a vacuum, and always intersects with gender and class. Black feminism will provide me with the theoretical tools to examine how patriarchy shapes state violence. Dominant social movement theories critique capitalism while offering proposals for overthrowing it; many of these theories are based on empirical studies of social movements such as Occupy.

This corpus of literature will enable me to analyse the major conceptual tools and develop the conceptual framework necessary to reflect critically on post-2011 black resistance to police violence in London and Birmingham. Space and place as abstract concepts are first discussed in relation to their intersection with race in European colonies, and then to present-day racialised spaces in Britain. This will draw out the historical continuities between racialisation in the colonies and that which has emerged in the centre of Empire. The latter requires three different ways of analysing the effects of neoliberalisation. One will look at the intersection between neoliberalism and racist state violence, intensifying the punitive nature of the state. This is compounded by gentrification, a process that prices out working-class communities from urban centres, particularly in areas racialised as black (Smith 1996), such as Ladbroke Grove and Brixton in London. Secondly, neoliberalisation leads to overt racism being replaced by language that is racialised, simultaneously reproducing both the neoliberal logic of free-market meritocracy and existing racial hierarchies (Kapoor

2013). Rather than employing a racist assertion directly, terms that are associated with a specific racial or ethnic group are used instead, thereby forestalling accusations of bigotry. This process has been described as a metonymic elaboration (Solomos & Back 1995, Keith 1995). Thirdly, neoliberalism has also affected resistance to police racism in other ways. Post-industrial urban economies, such as London, have seen a decline in trade union organising (Harvey 2008) along with the emergence of newer forms of social movements and other political action which disrupt capital flows in major commercial districts.

While pertinent literature already exists on metonymic racism, the role that racialised spaces and places play as a metonym for *anti-racism* in contemporary black resistance to police violence is yet to be theorised extensively. The scholarship that does exist is focused on the context of North America, as exemplified in Tyner's discussion of resistance to the legacies of enslavement and Jim Crow. The strategies of the US civil rights and Black Power movements are carefully contrasted by Tyner (2006a: 76), pointing out that: 'Segregation and separatism are not synonymous. The insights of Malcolm X, and other black radicals, therefore, offer the possibility of a reinvigorated discussion of the sociospatial dialectics of identity and space'. Although such an insight is useful, formal segregation and mass black separatist movements have never existed in Britain. While extensive work has been carried out on Britain's anti-racist histories, more recent black community struggles, particularly since the 2011 English civil unrest, have not been investigated in relation to the racialised spaces that they seek to defend. This chapter seeks to help fill this gap in our conceptual understanding of race, space and struggle. Actively responding to the issues that arose during the course of this research necessitates looking to theories that speak to the multiple spheres of life with which the research participants, as well as I myself, interact. Neoliberalisation simultaneously provides both pitfalls and fresh opportunities

for struggle against police racism, and this chapter provides a framework for understanding how activists conceptualise and articulate their political identities, strategies and visions.

### Placing Race

Many of the locations examined in this thesis are physical places such as Ladbrooke Grove (west London) or Tottenham (north London). While 'place' is a term that holds a multitude of meanings (Harvey 1993), we can understand places as 'articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings' that are not necessarily contained within physical boundaries, shifting in form as these relations decay and renew (Massey 2005: 28). This thesis is also concerned with a more abstract conceptualisation of space, which pertains to 'the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist' (ibid: 5) – in the case of this study, networks of racialised spaces. Importantly therefore, space and place are relational – meaning that they emerge through interactions, and are shaped by institutions, ideologies and forms of domination/subjugation (Lefebvre 1991). Taking this into consideration, it is useful in this context to understand place as specific and space as something that is more general (Agnew 2011). In other words, space seeks to identify specificities of places (Casey 1996); for example, a place such as Brixton can be described as an urban, as opposed to a suburban or rural, space. Thus, while individual places are vital in understanding histories, struggles and how urban landscapes are occupied, contested and manipulated through racialisation, these processes operate across space.

In order to analyse effectively race and space, I use critical race theory and critical geographies of race, theoretical tools that overlap in three key areas: the identification of the aforementioned structural nature of racism (white supremacy in its hegemonic form), primarily reproduced through institutions; the importance of narrative analysis in understanding how racism operates; and the problematising of racialisation manifesting itself in a black/white binary (Price 2009). Racialised spaces and places have less to do with how the people who live, work or socialise in a given area are racialised, and more to do with the relationship that space or place has with white supremacy. As a result of gentrification, a place such as Brixton may have fewer and fewer people racialised as black living in it. Nonetheless, such places are still racialised as black, owing to the histories of racialised struggle (Gilroy 1982), in addition to more recent forms of police repression such as operation 'Brixton Unite'<sup>3</sup> in 2014. This operation saw uniformed and plain-clothed officers occupying the area, making stops, searches and arrests, using dogs, traffic stops, anti-gang units, the UK Border Agency and the Tactical Support Group (which specialises in public order). Police disproportionately targeted black people as they passed through Brixton's transport hubs, with local activists likening the initiative to 'Operation Swamp', which had contributed to the civil unrest in Brixton in 1981<sup>4</sup>. This local history and these social perceptions of Brixton result in it being racialised as black, regardless of the shifting racial demographics of those living in the area. As Knowles (2003: 80) argues, '[s]pace is an active archive of the social processes and social relationships composing racial orders', which can therefore be understood only by taking into consideration the histories and agency of

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<sup>3</sup> [www.brixtonblog.com/heavy-police-presence-brixton-unite-operation-tridents-total-policing-event-scaled-protests/20813](http://www.brixtonblog.com/heavy-police-presence-brixton-unite-operation-tridents-total-policing-event-scaled-protests/20813) accessed 3 April 2015

<sup>4</sup> [www.swlondoner.co.uk/brixton-policing-event-scaled-back-after-criticism-from-activist-group/](http://www.swlondoner.co.uk/brixton-policing-event-scaled-back-after-criticism-from-activist-group/) accessed 3 April 2015

racialised individuals and groups. The power of racialisation as an ideology, rather than a description of reality, is discussed below in relation to gentrification.

Place, like race, is relational (Massey 2005), and can be used to maintain racialised power relations which often involve 'defensive and reactionary responses – certain forms of nationalism, sentimentalised recovering of sanitised 'heritages', and outright antagonism to newcomers and 'outsiders'" (Massey 1991: 24). As is the case with racialisation, a sense of place can also be employed positively. The relationality of race, space and place is corroborated by critical geographers of race, who have developed theorisations of 'a sense of place' as being open, pluralistic and transient. McKittrick (2011) identifies 'a black sense of place' as a site of black resistance to racial violence, such places being consequentially more precarious, and subject to upheaval, than non-black places. The (US) localities her work first identifies, such as plantations or prisons, are non-specific, and are here better described as spaces. These spaces, such as Detroit or New Orleans, serve to disrupt a black sense of place, owing to the ways in which they are sites of violence and displacement. A black sense of place is, therefore, constructed through collective histories and memories of violence and resistance, such as – in the British context – Ladbroke Grove (west London) or the plantations of Barbados, rather than a fixed location.

Like space, racialisation takes multiple forms, from neoliberal colour-blindness to far-right nationalism, and from liberal integrationism to black separatism (Tyner 2006b). Space can, therefore, here be understood as a racial archive of shifting and overlapping meanings (Knowles 2003). Taking into consideration how both race and space are policed, this chapter examines how racialisation and spatialisation are constructed through black community struggle.

## Globalising Race and Space

One of the most commonly recognised racial signifiers is the human body. Complexion, body shape and hair type have been the most common aesthetic indicators of racialisation (Lorimer 1978). As with geographical places, it is helpful to understand the body as a space – an environment in which social life is performed and power relations are contested (Massey 2005), since ‘geography speaks through bodies. It is on the body that the complexity and ambiguity of history, race, racism and place are inscribed’ (McKittrick 2000: 225). When thinking about racialisation through a spatial lens, therefore, the body as a racialised space must play a central role in our analysis. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, bodies racialised as black were displayed in zoos, circuses and travelling exhibitions, and subjected to experimentation by European scientists (Gilman 1986). Commodified, exploited, exoticised, fetishised, dehumanised and discarded, these racialised bodies became spaces which justified white supremacist colonisation (Fausto-Sterling 1995).

The practice of reducing people to their racialised body in order to reproduce colonial relations was theorised by psychiatrist and post-colonial scholar Frantz Fanon. In his seminal text, *Black Skin, White Masks*, he quotes: ‘we have a Senegalese history teacher. He is quite bright ... Our doctor is coloured, he is very gentle’ (Fanon 1987: 88). Here, Fanon shows that even liberals reduce racial Others to a racialised identification, their ‘black skin’, even if they do not knowingly intend to be derogatory. Fanon expands on the effect of this racialisation: he ‘knew, for instance, that if the physician made a mistake it would be the end of him and of all those who came after him’ (ibid.). Thus, racialisation essentialises blackness, making both positive and negative characteristics the attributes of a racialised

body, rather than of an individual human being. In other words, although the doctor is an individual, his negative racialisation means he represents the collective of that racial category.

It is not only physical bodies that serve as racial signifiers; places are also sites of white domination. Global spaces have been racialised since the western European empires first began to divide the human species into what they called the different human 'races' (Livingstone & Dobzhansky 1962). Racialised geographical divisions were set in academic stone by the German, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, who, in *On the Natural Varieties of Mankind* (1775) invented five distinct races of human: Caucasian, African, Malayan, Mongolian and American (Villanueva 2006). This was compounded by the rise of the eugenics movement in London. The term eugenics was coined by Francis Galton in 1883, in the book *Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development*, in which racialisation was rationalised by contemporary science (Kevles 1985). Eugenics illustrates the way in which racialisation is ideologically charged, as it uses the language of rationality and science to argue that people racialised as white are more intellectually and morally evolved than other human beings:

[S]ome special quality of race or culture or environment or mind or spirit, which gives this human community a permanent superiority over all other communities, at all times in history and down to the present (Blaut 1993: 1).

This enabled Europeans to conceive of all intellectual and moral progress emanat-

ing from 'Greater Europe' (which included some of the Middle East and North Africa) in what Blaut (1993) calls *diffusionism*. Those peoples outside Greater Europe were marked by irrationality, tradition and an ahistoricism that could be countered only by contact with Europe.

The racialisation of space and place became further cemented in the materialities of the European colonies, where the European quarters of the colonial city were kept separate from those inhabited by the natives (Neeley & Samura 2011). Employing a combination of genuine fear and racist propaganda, the European colonialists avoided contact with spaces racialised as black, for fear of disease, crime or political resistance. This racialisation was particularly pertinent in the settler colonies of Kenya, Rhodesia and Algeria, and taken to its extreme in South Africa, which used mass forced migration. Yet it is important to note that, as Goldberg (1993: 192) argues:

The standard assumption is that the racial experience of South Africa is unusual. My point here is to invert this presumption, to show just how deep a certain kind of experience of racial marginality runs in 'the West'.

Thus, although the materialities of colonialism differ, the ideological logic of white supremacy remains consistent. This is why, in Algeria, where Fanon carried out much of his research, he remarked:

[t]he settler's town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and steel ... The settler's town is a well-fed town, an easy-going town; its belly is always full of

good things. The settler's town is a town of white people, of foreigners ...

The town belonging to the colonised people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the madina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute ... The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire. It is a town of niggers and dirty Arabs (Fanon 1967: 30).

Here, Fanon makes a spatialised distinction between the area of the city racialised as white and European, and therefore predominantly inhabited by the coloniser, and that racialised as Black, Arab or African, and thus inhabited by the native. Rather than reducing the relationship between coloniser and colonised simply to one of physical coercion and economic exploitation, Fanon, like Goldberg, understands colonisation as a historically and geographically situated ideology. He therefore argues that the historical and geographical junctures that mark colonisation can also be used to mark its antithesis, decolonisation, in both process and completion. We see this dialectic reproduced in the centres of Empire, as comparable racial boundaries are marked by both racism and anti-racist struggle.

### Centres of Empire

By understanding that the practical application of racism, while retaining ideological consistencies, differs across time and space, we can draw judicious parallels between how racism was constructed across the colonial world, and how it is reproduced in the West

generally, and in Britain in particular. As discussed in Chapter 4, Britain's post-World War II labour shortage led to increased migration from the colonies to the metropolitan centres. The size of black communities increased substantially in cities such as Liverpool, Cardiff and London during this period (May & Cohen 1974). Indeed,

[i]t seems uncontroversial to claim that the roots of the racialised postmodern city can be traced to the end of the colonial era. Not until this juncture did the metropolises of the West have to confront directly the 'problem of the racially marginalised', of (re)producing racial marginalisation in their own spaces (Goldberg 1993b: 187).

Unlike the often violent invasion and coercion which took place in the colonies, the areas of British towns and cities where black communities settled became racialised gradually (Smith 1989). Often called the 'coloured quarter' (Banton 1955), these spaces are shaped by 'our present system knowledge, inherited from enlightened colonialism and Eurocentric modernity, [which] repetitively constitutes blackness as a discrete (and hostile) racial category that routinely 'troubles' an already settled whiteness' (McKittrick 2011: 950). One of the ways in which the supposed unsettlement of this post-colonial relationship between Britain and the people it colonised is managed, is through the deployment of police violence (Gilroy 1982). Since the establishment of black communities in Britain, their policing has been categorised as constituting continual 'premeditated repression' (Keith 1993: 3) rather than reflecting policy or legislative changes. Nonetheless, it is widely argued that significant qualitative changes have emerged in the ways state violence is racialised, following the onset of neoliberalisation.

Scholars argue that the urban policies employed to repress, punish and reform criminalised peoples are forms of symbolic, or neoliberal, violence (Bourdieu 1994, Wacquant 2010). Wacquant depicts neoliberalism as 'an articulation of state, market and citizenship that harnesses the first to impose the stamp of the second onto the third' (Wacquant, 2012: 1). In other words, the state, through financial deregulation, subsidies or social manipulation, facilitates the increased power of the market, which in turn provides it with greater control over people. Wacquant draws on Foucault and Bourdieu in important ways, including Bourdieu's vehement criticism of the state, which asserts that 'when it comes to the state, one never doubts enough' (1994: 1). The social problems or 'symbolic violence' which the state creates through the school system and other avenues of information distribution are used to legitimise its power as a rational 'universal group' creating and enforcing rights that are internalised as serving the common good – a tool described by Bourdieu as 'symbolic capital'.

Bourdieu notes that state dominance can be resisted only when there is a system of education and social science which understands the need for knowledge of the social world, is independent of political and economic forces, and is complemented by autonomous social movements. This epistemological process begins with 'a model of the emergence of the state', which Bourdieu describes as 'a process of the concentration of different species of capital', namely instruments of force (police), economic capital, information capital and the aforementioned symbolic capital (ibid.: 4). It is also important to note here that the state uses physical force in two ways: to challenge external threats, such as rival states, and to challenge internal threats, such as those that emerge from subordinated classes. Foucault's (1977) analysis of space and power supports this theory, for example in his depic-

tion of a plague-stricken town, which the logic of the state describes as perfectly governable since the social order of the population remains stable. It is this maintenance of stability and order that Wacquant (2005) argues is manifested in a class-based, as well as an ethnic, hierarchy in modern industrialised states. Wacquant thus uses Bourdieu's conception of the bureaucratic field, but transposes it onto Foucault's (1977) focus on the prison as a central component of control by the neoliberal state (Wacquant 2009).

Wacquant uses the US as a case study, but asserts that his theory, which looks at how neoliberalisation punishes the criminalised, poor and unemployed, applies across the post-industrial world. In the mid-1970s, the prison population in England and Wales was around 40,000, but by 2013 this figure had more than doubled to over 84,000 (Berman & Dar 2013). Wacquant asserts that the rise of the punitive state 'is a political response, not to the rising *criminal* insecurity, but to the diffuse *social* insecurity' (Wacquant 2010: 198, emphasis in original). The two main manifestations presented are, first, the 'prisonfare' system, which involves mass incarceration, often for petty crimes, in prisons which impose a system of forced or highly exploitative labour. The second manifestation is the topical 'workfare' system, in which the unemployed are obliged to provide free labour for multinational corporations (ibid.). This thesis is mainly concerned with the former of these two policy formations, both of which Wacquant (2009) argues are distinctly racialised, particularly towards blacks – this is described as a process of 'punitive paternalism'.

## (Re)Globalising Race and Space

A number of questions arise when thinking about the newness of Wacquant's theory of punitive paternalism, and a well-known Marxian concept can help us to answer them. Marx talks about the 'annihilation of space through time'. In saying this, Marx argues that as capital flows, migration and communication become faster across space, and the time it takes for these things to travel decreases to the point that space almost disappears. In other words, spatial distances matter less and less, as the speed at which people, goods and ideas to travel across space accelerates (Marx 1993: 539).

But what about time? Can the movement of people and ideas change how we conceive of time? If ideas imposed by an Empire on its colonial subjects are considered too outdated to be employed in the mother country, what happens when those colonial subjects migrate to the centre of Empire? Can those old colonial ideas re-emerge as if new? If so, what effect does this have on the relationship between time and space? The social-democratic ideals which eventually formed the British welfare state emerged at the start of the twentieth century, with the introduction of probation, fines by instalment and provisions for those with learning needs or substance abuse problems. Moreover, the prison population, which decreased by around 70 per cent between 1908 and 1918, stayed fairly static until the outbreak of WW2 (Moore 2015: 33). But the British mainland was not the only place governed by Britain during this period, and in the colonies, crime was not responded to with the welfareist consideration emerging in the mother country (Dikötter & Brown 2007).

In India, for instance, one of Britain's most profitable non-slave colonies, the Criminal Tribes Act of 1924 saw entire societies (labelled 'Tribes') undergo mass searches, imprisonment and surveillance through the tattooing of foreheads. At the time of Indian Independence in 1947, an estimated 60 million people had been subjected to the punitive measures of the act. These measures were imposed to protect the colony against particular ethno-racial groups that the colonial administration considered to be predisposed to petty crimes such as theft (Yang 1985). In colonial Kenya, the prison system evolved into labour camps in the 1950s, in response to the threat of violence during the Mau Mau uprisings. An estimated 160,000 Kenyans were imprisoned and tortured, others were subjected to 'attacks that included wiping out an entire village of men, women, and elderly (the children were spared) using bayonets, rifles, machine guns, and fire' (Elkins 2005: 3).

The punitive approach to crime and punishment taken by the British government towards commonwealth citizens did not emerge only through neoliberalisation (as Wacziarg argues); importantly, it coincided with the establishment of black communities in Britain. By the 1970s, racialised moral panics over perceived black criminality, such as mugging, filled newspaper headlines and political rhetoric (Hall et al. 1978). This continues today, with comparable racial tropes being used in relation to 'gang' violence (Alexander 2008, Williams 2014) (Chapter 6). These racialised crimes are used to justify punitive neoliberal penal policies, reproducing the racialisation of criminality constructed in the colonies. As the geographical disjuncture between the British mainland and its colonial subjects began to close through post-war migration, the British government drew on the punitive approach to criminal justice that had been otherwise superseded in Britain itself, but continued in its colonies. This movement of colonised people gave rise to the (re)introduction of regressive criminal justice policies, with the government often presenting them as new, necessary

and rational – arguments that were strengthened by the neoliberal logic of prisonfare. This inverts Marx's 'annihilation of space by time': what is now taking place is the annihilation of time by space. As the space separating Britain from its (former) colonial subjects closes, the supposedly linear process towards more progressive penal policies appears to go backwards. Wacquant's analysis of neoliberalism may partly explain the political economy of the return of punitive justice, but an understanding of the legacies of colonisation adds a vital additional dimension in explaining how and why such policies were justified by the British state.

### Urban Front Lines

Some racialised spaces become so closely associated with police violence that militaristic terms such as 'Front Line' are used to describe them (Keith 1993) (Chapter 7). But the 'hard' power of police repression is often accompanied by the 'softer' power of neoliberal gentrification. In the pre-neoliberal era, middle-class migration took the form of suburban expansion – access to better housing, cleaner streets and reduced proximity to poor and minoritised racial groups was regarded as the primary impetus (Smith 1996). Gentrification first emerged in the 1970s and '80s due to multiple shifts in how urban spaces were valued, both culturally and economically.

The developmental changes in working patterns of the middle classes towards the finance and IT sectors and other services required (or desired) increased access to city centres. This economic process is spatialised owing to the post-industrial nature of work, which no longer requires large working-class populations to be located in urban centres (Hamnett 2003). However, this economic pressure is complicated by a cultural push towards the

preservation of urban centres which are considered sites of heritage. This gentrifying phenomenon draws upon a perceived, and often romanticised, history of an area, as well as on more recent working-class migrant cultures. The contradictions between liberal cultural politics and neoliberal economics, what Jane Jacobs (2002) calls the 'authentically local and the appropriative global' (36), leads to multiple groups of people across class and ethnic lines being unevenly impacted by the opportunities and threats posed by gentrification.

Working-class communities, often constituting racially minoritised groups, may be threatened by displacement due to higher costs of living, as neoliberal gentrification invokes 'regeneration', in the course of which public spaces are privatised and property prices rise (Schaffer & Smith 1986). Gentrification is, therefore, one of the processes that can reproduce a black sense of place as a result of the violence and displacement involved:

In 1986 the massive raid on ACCE, the Afro-Caribbean Cultural Centre, Operation Condor, involving almost 2,000 police officers, produced little violent conflict principally because of its vast scale ... Perhaps most notable of all, however, the terraced streets around Railton Road were, in varying degrees, ideal targets for the gentrification of the late 1980s property boom. Certainly, by the end of the decade the area in the centre of Brixton had changed considerably (Keith 1993: 26).

State repression, combined with the neoliberalisation of public space and housing, can be considered one of the principal drivers of gentrification, making it a state-led phenomenon (Mitchell 2003). Capital identifies a 'rent gap', whereby current rents are compared with potential rents if an area is 'regenerated'. Developers purchase property on the peripheries of to-be-gentrified areas, or 'urban frontiers', often creating securitised spaces of luxury which

gradually consume the inner city (Smith 1993). Yet the impact of gentrification, like much capitalist development, is uneven. The 'heritage politics' (Jacobs 2002: 36) of gentrification thus draws on the cultural capital that working-class and migrant groups bring to an area. In Brixton, and other areas associated with African-Caribbean communities, this could be cultural centres such as the one described in the above quote from Keith, whereas in parts of east London such as Brick Lane, on which Jacobs (2002: 100) has written, this could be Bangladeshi-owned restaurants and garment businesses.

This process can also be driven by the response on the part of capital and the state to major events. Such events are used to justify a need for regenerating an area, for example in the aftermath of civil unrest (Keith 1993) (Chapter 7). Some scholars argue that gentrification has reaffirmed the need for black communities to defend the places in which they live, while 'new urban pioneers seek to scrub the city clean of its working-class geography and history' (Smith 1996: 25). Yet, rather than erasing symbols of the working class (including working-class people themselves), gentrification seeks to control and manipulate aspects of these cultures. This involves implicating multiple individuals and groups into the gentrifying process, engendering a neoliberalised, consumer-based citizenship, whereby classed and ethnic identities lay claim to an area, attempting to capitalise on the investments attracted to gentrifying areas of the city (Paton 2014).

Thus, gentrification sees the interaction of working-class and migrant communities, middle-class homemakers and capitalist developers, as '[c]ontemporary urban transformation is far more likely to engage consciously with the local character of an area than rapaciously obliterate it' (Jacobs 2002: 72). Therefore, while large-scale investors may wish to capitalise on a convivial nostalgia engendered by a multicultural community, upwardly mobile

working-class and ethnically minoritised individuals and groups may also pragmatically commodify a version of their own culture, in the hope of maintaining housing rights, developing smaller businesses or otherwise exploiting the rising value of the area. This is a re-mapping of black communities, which reforms post-colonial geographies from segregated 'quarters' to the service areas and culturally valuable spaces desired by those in both dominant and racially subjugated groups. This thesis demonstrates how these geographically closer yet socially unequal relations require state management, often characterised by aggressive policing.

### Metonymising race and space

Key to a better understanding of the changing nature of black resistance to police violence in London and Birmingham, is the way in which race is presented within a neoliberalised discourse that racialises space. Critical race theory, which emerged from critical legal studies in the US, argues that the gains of the civil rights movement proved insufficient in effectively addressing structural racism (Bell 2004). This shifted the analysis of race politics from a problem which legislation and equal opportunity could solve, to an understanding that racism was entrenched in the fabric of society, marking Britain, as well as the US, as structured by white supremacy (Gillborn 2005, Garner 2007). Understanding unequal structures of power positioned critical race theorists as challengers to 'colour-blind' policies which treated all people equally, as they argued that this would simply reproduce existing racial inequalities. Positive action was therefore required to address the imbalances of power that existed (and continue to exist) rather than the liberalism which dominated pre-critical race theory discourses (Delgado & Stefancic 1993), and the neoliberalism that followed (Goldberg 2009).

Neoliberalism claims to eradicate class, but has in fact 'become a broad-based political and cultural movement designed to obliterate public concerns ... while allocating wealth and resources to those who are most privileged by virtue of their class, race, and power' (Giroux 2008: 13). The assumption is that the meritocratic nature of the market means that the most productive individuals and organisations will yield the highest returns (Harvey 2008). This reproduces existing inequalities, creating a seemingly colourblind racism (Hill Collins 2006: 8). Neoliberalism thus 'embraces both race-blindness and a post-Black framing as correctives to historically articulated racial exclusions and subordinations' (Davis 2007: 394). This neoliberalised racism has been analysed under a number of headings by scholars in the US: anti-racialism (Goldberg 2009), muted racism (Davis 2007), colour-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2010), dog-whistle racism (Lopez 2014). This thesis uses the term metonymic racism, which is more widely used by scholars investigating neoliberal racism in Britain, and which best depicts the linguistic element of this phenomenon (Solomos & Back 1995, Keith 2005).

A metonym – literally 'name transfer' – is a form of metaphor that uses an associated image or term to replace a wider concept. Metonymic racism can thus be understood as a category – in fact the most important category – of the metaphorology of race. In the context of metonymic racism, rather than referring to black people directly, individuals may be characterised by using pejorative terms associated with a specific ethnic or racial group, such as mugger (Hall et al. 1978), or by being identified with an area racialised as black (Watt & Stenson 1997), such as Tottenham in north London. These metonyms rarely reflect material realities – the idea that the mugger is generally a young black male was created by a police and media campaign during the 1970s. This campaign identified 'areas of

above-average crime rates, even though at the time black immigrants were under-represented in the crime rates of these ‘criminal areas’ (Hall et al. 1978: 45). Similarly, although the largest racial group in the area, only around 30 per cent of the people in Tottenham identify as black (Haringey Council 2012a), yet the whole area is still racialised as black by local activists (HYPE Interview 1: 22 October 2013). It is also racialised as black by the local police, which engage in initiatives such as Operation Trident specifically targeting African-Caribbean communities (Metropolitan Police 2012).

Metonymic racism, like other racisms, skews perceptions, reproduces stereotypes and further embeds essentialism. It also reproduces a neoliberal logic, which denies the continuation of structural racism, choosing instead to apportion blame for social inequalities on the failings of individuals (Kapoor 2013), in this case ‘muggers’ or the residents of Tottenham. Neoliberalism therefore seeks to bury racism alive (Goldberg 2009) under metonyms that articulate racism while denying its existence. Once these metonyms have been used to essentialise specific racialised groups, they serve the same purpose as overt racialised language: the maintenance of white domination. This of course throws up a number of important questions: could this lead to a watered-down version of the militant anti-racism of the past (see Chapter 4)<sup>5</sup>, or is this approach an opportunity to fight racism without reifying or essentialising race? How effective are metonyms in communicating *anti*-racism, and does it run the risk of becoming geographically isolated or single-issue campaigns? Over the course of this thesis, the implications of racial metonyms are scrutinised, and conclusions about how best to respond to them are suggested.

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<sup>5</sup> Black resistance in England during the period leading up to the 1990s generally used overt racial language, such as the London, Manchester and Nottingham chapters of the Black Panthers, Blacks Against State Harassment or Hackney Black People's Association.

## Embodying Racialisation: Gender, Space and Hegemony

In Britain, overt racist language is still the most common and easily recognised manner in which people are racialised as black. This process of domination is also reproduced in the images we see in art, popular media and academia. While historically the black body is mocked through minstrel dancers and black-face (Fitzhugh Brundage 2011), it continues to be sexualised and portrayed as a source of physical violence – associating working-class males in general, and the black male body in particular, with danger, and a subordinated masculinity which must be controlled (Davis 1983). This control is monopolised by the state; in the cases examined in this section, the criminal justice system is understood as the agent which polices subordinated black masculinities through the deployment of hegemonic masculinities.

In order to understand black community/police relations, it is vital that we unpack how patriarchy intersects with violence and other forms of criminalised behaviour:

Young black males, like all boys in patriarchal culture, learn early that manhood is synonymous with the domination and control over others, that simply by being male they are in a position of authority that gives them the right to assert their will over others, to use coercion and/or violence to gain and maintain power (hooks 2004: 88).

Black masculinity under neoliberalism has led to the reconstitution of 'individual success and personal notoriety [being] damagingly portrayed as more valuable than collective effort and community accountability' (Douglas 2012: 383). Furthermore, these neoliberal values are something that black boys and their fathers/father figures are disproportionately unable to attain. This leads to many black males engaging in criminalised forms of labour, and 'often black males choose crime to avoid the hierarchy in the workforce that places them at the bottom', reinforced by a 'fantasy of easy money [which] is pushed in popular culture [and] state-sponsored lotteries' (hooks 2004: 27-8). This perpetuates the notion that unearned wealth is both legitimate and desirable. Here, Davis, Douglas, hooks and others are talking in the US context, and although there are many qualitative differences between the African-American and the African-Caribbean experience, these categories of people share a common social history. The legacies of the transatlantic slave trade, and the periods of enslavement and colonisation that followed, mean that neither of these groups has developed cultural or socio-political formations in isolation from whiteness. Furthermore, like African-Americans, young black people in Britain are more likely than their white counterparts to be unemployed (45 per cent and 19 per cent respectively, in 2014) (DWP 2014), and black graduates are more likely to be over-qualified in their place of employment than white graduates (Brynin & Longhi 2015: 27). Shaun Bailey, a man of African-Caribbean heritage who grew up in London and became Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron's advisor on youth and crime, explains how he avoided criminalisation:

[My mother] made sure that I never went to a school in our locality – she didn't want me to be too friendly with the boys here. A deliberate ploy not to leave me among too many black children. She had seen how black people interact with black

people – what they say to other black people – that means you can't go forward.

That you're trapped in your own poor community (Bailey 2005: 2).

Implicit in Bailey's analysis is the need for black people from poor communities to leave, and spend as much time as possible with affluent non-black people. Yet, rather than critiquing the patriarchal identities which lead to violence and other criminalised behaviour, Bailey's analysis instead reproduces what scholars call hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity implies that male identity is attained by men 'who received the benefits of patriarchy without enacting a strong version of masculine dominance' (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 832), for example by accumulating capitalist wealth, intellectual supremacy and/or wielding physical and psychological power through controlling spaces occupied by the physical arm of the state (police, prisons and armed forces) or the nuclear family unit.

Since black men are often unable to access institutions which provide the means to realise patriarchal identities of physical power, intra-communal violence increases. Black men in urban centres on both sides of the Atlantic, such as Chicago (Papachristos, Hureau & Braga 2013) and London (GLA 2014), are more likely to be affected by such intracommunal violence. This forms part of an environment in which 'symbolic shoot-outs occur in which black males are assigned the position of hypermasculine, out-of-control male body, and white males (whether enforcers of law or educators) are perceived to be acting with reason' (hooks 2004: 56). As a result, the disproportionate policing and incarceration of black men in the US (Davis 2001) as well as the UK (EHRC 2010a) is legitimised, as it is articulated as a necessary force to maintain law and order. Bailey asserts:

When the whole smoking and carrying knives thing came about I could have been one of them ... I was unique in that I was cool but I wasn't having to be carrying out the crime to be seen in that way. What it was, Army Cadets made me confident ... My connection with the army cadets gave me an understanding of Britishness and that made my life much easier. I felt much less separated. I didn't feel the whole racism thing (Bailey 2005: 3).

Here, Bailey reveals two important features of hegemonic masculinity. First, he demonstrates how manifestations of black masculinity (smoking and carrying knives) are delegitimised and criminalised, while institutionalised forms of hegemonic masculinity (the army) provide confidence, social assimilation and a sense of patriotism. Secondly, this hegemonic masculinity legitimises the structural racism that produces both the conditions of the African-Caribbean community where he grew up and the role of the British armed forces in carrying out acts of violence in the Global South. Bailey's argument, reproducing a neoliberal logic, is that hard work within the parameters of capitalist and state institutions can overcome the structural barriers of racial discrimination, such as police violence, prison and other manifestations of 'the whole racism thing'. Bailey's logic thus runs counter to radical anti-racist and decolonial thought, which identifies capitalist and state institutions as the primary mechanisms for reproducing racialisation, rather than tools for transcending it.

Likewise, former academic and CEO of Generating Genius<sup>6</sup>, Tony Sewell, has argued that black under-attainment in schools has nothing to do with institutional racism or structural

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<sup>6</sup> Generating Genius works with "high-achieving students from disadvantaged communities" [www.generatinggenius.org.uk/about-us/vision/](http://www.generatinggenius.org.uk/about-us/vision/) accessed 12 October 2014

inequality, but is a cultural pattern which makes black boys 'feminised' and therefore unable to concentrate for as long as their white counterparts (Sewell 2008). Ray Lewis, advisor to Conservative London Mayor Boris Johnson, assumes that problems with black boys in Britain stem from poor parental discipline and the fact that 'there are no males in our [black British] households' (Gyngell & Lewis 2006: 10) reproducing the patriarchal norm of the nuclear family unit. This is reflected in Conservative policies such as the Mayor's Mentoring Scheme: 'Wanted: Positive role models for black boys in London' (GLA 2010), through which the state attempts to reconstruct the 'traditional' family. The hegemonic masculinity posited by these mainstream approaches has led critical scholars to argue that the notion of strict self- and imposed discipline as a masculine trait 'promotes a simplistic and monocausal description of gender relations' (Odih 2002: 100), as these 'mentoring models ... fall short of recognising the vast differences and variations of those who are black and male' (ibid: 96). These critics argue that these patriarchal approaches homogenise and essentialise black masculinity, prescribing it according to the dictates of hegemonic masculinity, reproducing, rather than critiquing, dominant power relations.

### Carceral Feminism and its Critics

Feminist scholars argue that male violence is an outcome of patriarchal powers and identities seeking dominance over each other. Since the 1970s, there has been a rise in what Bernstein calls Carceral Feminism, 'a cultural and political formation in which previous generations' justice and liberation struggles are recast in carceral terms' (Bernstein 2012: 236). While critiquing the conservative approach to male violence put forward by advocates such as Shaun Bailey, who champions the violence of military or corporate power,

carceral feminism argues for punitive penal policies in dealing with male violence. These proposed solutions position prison as a deterrent for gender-based violence, and an effective punishment for those who engage in it.

The critique of this approach, often cited by black feminists, is the relationship between domestic abuse and the prison-industrial complex. According to Richie (2012), although laws protecting women against domestic abuse should be viewed as important, they must be contextualised within an understanding of state violence. In so doing, we find that much of the legislation relating to domestic violence in the US did not arise from the feminist movement, but rather from the criminalisation of 'everything'. This served the interests of the prison-industrial complex and, by extension, the state's monopoly on violence. Like the US system, the British state will consider the use of criminalised drugs or carrying a knife (Bailey 2005) as a threat to its monopoly on violence, and respond by reproducing its own structures of violent control, such as the institutionally racist<sup>7</sup>, ever-expanding and increasingly privatised prison system (Garside & Ford 2015). Similarly, recruiting teenagers into the army cadets and the police is promoted and protected by the British state. Distinguishing between different forms of patriarchal violence is therefore fundamental to understanding how the black body is dehumanised by the logic of white supremacy.

While men are the primary agents of patriarchal violence, women are the primary victims (Heise 1998). What is interesting, therefore, is the role of women in resisting racist state violence, particularly in relation to black deaths in police custody. The political heterogeneity within black communities means that opinions vary as to how far this leadership can be

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<sup>7</sup> The UK Prison Service admitted to being institutionally racist in 2000, following an investigation by the chief inspector of prisons at the time, Sir David Ramsbotham. [www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/prison-service-admits-it-is-institutionally-racist-710902.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/prison-service-admits-it-is-institutionally-racist-710902.html) accessed 19 December 2014

described as a form of feminism or women's liberation (Chapter 6). Women from other minoritised groups in Britain, such as those involved in the 1976–8 Grunwick Strike in Willesden, north London, showed how 'South Asian women's bodily practices intersect with their position in the workplace to both reinforce and challenge dominant representations' (McDowell, Sundari & Pearson 2012: 143). The women of African heritage challenging state violence in London and Birmingham reflect this in their bodily practices as both mothers and outspoken activists against state violence. Women of African heritage are gendered and racialised in specific ways, in fact:

[t]he reading of black women's bodies as chaotic by empowered men and women suggests that the place of black femininity rests outside modern conceptions of rationality, citizenship and belonging (McKittrick 2000: 226).

In developing this notion, Hill Collins (2006) argues that, owing to the specific ways in which race and gender intersect, black female leadership enables women of African heritage to map out new concepts of black male identities. This leadership aids us in reforming the manner in which police violence is challenged through black community struggle. Identity and space are transient, as theorists such as Hall (1990) and Massey (2005) argue, and continually present fresh opportunities for a more inclusive and liberating resistance to police violence. This can be done through our relationship with gendered and racialised bodies – how we articulate these political spaces and how this translates into action. The evidence drawn upon later in this thesis (Chapter 6) will go some way to helping us understand how and why the body has become a space that has been turned into an anti-racist metonym for black resistance to police violence.

## New Movements, Struggle and Space

While neoliberalism and metonymic racism compel us to rethink continuities and emergent trends in racialised oppressions, new forms of resistance such as Occupy have often been framed through the 'new social movements' discourse (Castells 2012, Halversen 2015).

Although social movements fall into a broad range of definitions, none of the activists interviewed in this research considered themselves currently to be part of a social movement.

Movement-building was a core aim of many of the people who participated in this research, but terms such as community organising, campaigning and struggle better describe the political manifestations emerging from black resistance to police violence in London and Birmingham since 2011. Nonetheless, the geographical literature on new social movements is still useful in understanding the emergent struggles analysed in this thesis. Furthermore, notions of the 'Right to the City' will better enable us to formulate ideas relating to direct action in spaces controlled by capital and the state. Building on the previous section, the gendered nature of resistance will be revisited, aiding our understanding of the role of patriarchy, female-led resistance to state violence, and how gender intersects with racialisation.

Social movements are a highly malleable section of the political sphere, best defined as inhabiting the political terrain between individuals and the state (Blair 1997). Current literature is dominated by 'new' social movements, which are explored in the following paragraphs, in addition to how they have emerged in the British context. In order to understand how social movements operate, it is important first to note the way in which new social movement theory has (re)conceptualised

democratic struggle. The rise of neoliberalism led to capital dominating workers not only on the production line, but in multiple areas of social life, such as culture or environment (Mouffe 1999). Mouffe (1988: 90) is, therefore, 'opposed to the economic view of social evolution as governed by a single economic logic'. Mouffe (1999) affirms that social movements are today engaging in new democratic struggles. This is because, although a relation of production (class) is the hegemonic formation of social relations within capitalism, other forms of oppression mean that a 'constant struggle must create the conditions necessary to validate capital and its accumulation' (Mouffe 1988: 91). The result of this is a 'democratic revolution' (ibid.), which involves the emergence of multiple relations of production and, by extension, spaces of resistance, addressing issues of race, gender, sexuality and other social relations.

Some of the most influential theories on urban social movements over the past decade have emerged from theories which relate to the 'Right to the City' (Lefebvre 1991; Mitchell 2003; Purcell 2002; Harvey 2008; Attoh 2011). The original analysis of Lefebvre (1991) makes a distinction between representations of space, which are created by society to fit certain norms, such as public parks being for middle-class joggers rather than the homeless (Mitchell 2003), and representational spaces, which are sites of resistance to these social constructs (Lefebvre 1991). For Lefebvre, '[e]very society in history has shaped a distinctive social space that meets its intertwined requirements for economic production and social functioning' (quoted in Arefi & Meyers 2003: 332), and therefore space is the product of competing ideas, waged through grassroots politics.

This analysis calls on the masses to reclaim urban spaces along with the means of production. Harvey draws heavily on Marx's assertion that 'between equal rights force decides' (Marx, in Harvey 2012: xv). Mitchell (2003) observes that the rights that are codified in state legislation are often weak, do not promote economic justice, and can often protect the 'wrong' interests. Here, Mitchell refers to the interests of capital or of the state as being 'wrong', drawing on evidence from the US, where citizens' 'rights' have been used to disempower the homeless and prevent peaceful protest (Mitchell 2003). In building a fresh conception of what constitutes the 'Right to the City', Harvey (2008) develops the idea that 'rights of private property and the profit rate trump all other notions of rights' and, employing a Marxian analysis, proposes a 'collective power to reshape the process of urbanisation' (Harvey 2008: 1). Drawing on a range of processes which result from neoliberalism in urban spaces, Harvey's most notable analysis is that of gentrification. He provides an account of the 'embourgeoisement' of central Paris in the nineteenth century, which led to the poorer suburbs around the city today (ibid: 33), making comparisons with the rent hikes, policing and privatisation which cleansed much of the Bronx of its working-class communities and spaces in the latter half of the twentieth century – a process he terms 'accumulation by dispossession' (ibid: 34). It is through the destabilising crises of capitalism that opportunities for such reshaping of public space are presented, such as the economic crash in France in 1868 that contributed to the creation of the Paris Commune. Following the economic downturn in 1960s America within the context of 'the soulless qualities of suburban living ... discontented white middle-class students went into a phase of revolt, sought alliances with marginalised groups claiming civil rights and rallied against American imperialism' (ibid: 28).

However, the right to the city has been criticised by many theorists who, despite also adopting a Marxian analysis, do not support the universal approach to citizenship and the reclaiming of public spaces owing to its economic determinism. Purcell presents the neoliberalisation of urban spaces as a process that has 'destabilised traditional forms of citizenship', observing the need for 'alternatives to the current citizenship order' (Purcell 2003: 563). Harvey asserts that social movements wishing to reclaim their right to the city must understand that '[c]apitalism rests, as Marx tells us, upon the perpetual search for surplus value (profit)' (Harvey 2012: 5). A movement's demands must therefore call for 'greater democratic control over the production and utilisation of the surplus' (Harvey 2008: 37). Many of the black community struggles have demanded different things from the state, such as transparency of policing in the UK (Adams 1994) or prison abolition in the USA (Gilmore 2007), precisely because they often relate to populations that are surplus to capital and are therefore compelled to struggle simply for the right to live. Migrant and racially minoritised communities have therefore often made 'attempts to expand the public through political demonstrations [which] can create new public spaces and citizenship practices that encompass the Right to the City' (Carpio, Irazabal & Pulido 2011: 188).

As a result of not fitting into conventional interpretations of citizenship, some black community struggles have organised around issues which did not involve making demands of the state, as it was often felt that state racism is so engrained into the system that black communities must organise autonomously to build their own economic, educational and socio-political structures (Tyner 2006b). It is therefore important to recognise the multiple representational spaces which relate to the politics

of race as well as class, arguing, as other scholars have, that the right to the city must incorporate 'varied conceptions of rights' and therefore remain 'open' (Attoh 2011: 670). Expanding democratic control to multiple representational spaces where new social movements operate (Mouffe 1999) requires a detailed understanding of the changing role of democracy. We will then be able better to investigate how black community struggles can gain influence in the battle over representational space, such as the aforementioned racialised areas from which many movements take their name.

Analysing the role of democracy is an influential theoretical tool employed by scholars to make sense of the changing nature of the state and of neoliberalism in urban spaces. The notion of post-democracy is one in which choice and autonomy of the electorate are reduced to little more than spectacle and the remit of discourse on policy is narrowed (Swyngedouw 2011). One of the many externalities of this system of governance is the outbursts of urban violence which, scholars attest, are one of the few spaces available to challenge the dominant democratic ideology. Power is no longer devolved to the electorate, but increasingly to consultants or technocrats depicted as neutral scientists hired to fix faults in what they consider an otherwise well-functioning political and economic system. However, Swyngedouw contests this, arguing that, much like Bourdieu's 'symbolic capital', fear of the 'ethnic' evil often leads to violence, as open debate is repressed within post-democratic institutions (ibid.).

In order better to understand the internal contradictions of post-democracy, Swyngedouw (2011) makes use of the 'politics/policy' and 'the political' dichotomy,

or what Ricœur (1965) called the 'Political Paradox'. Politics and policy are terms used to describe the narrow, institutionalised manifestation of democracy which is the subject of Swyngedouw's critique. The political is ontologically different, in that it 'expresses the non-existence of society, stands for the absent ground of society' (Swyngedouw 2011: 373), a process often applied to the open, direct democracy used in Occupy. For Swyngedouw, the political is a prerequisite for the pursuit of equality, and is pursued through the 'construction of new egalitarian spatialities inside and through the existing (public and private) geographies of the police order' (Swyngedouw, 2011: 377). This is often applied to the fluidity and lack of concrete demands from the Occupy Movement, but the example he uses is Rosa Parks' direct action in 1955 against the laws of segregation on public buses in the US, occupying a space reserved for those of the racial elite, in defiance of the law.

Swyngedouw's analysis is well observed, yet lacking in an understanding of the core components that construct a social movement. Spaces of violence are often regarded as something separate from spaces occupied by social movements. In addition, the notion that single acts of defiance create ruptures in systems of injustice, resulting in organic movements for change, is reductionist and empirically flawed. First, the ethnic and racialised violence which Swyngedouw talks about is described as an inevitable, but wholly negative and isolated, externality of post-democracy. However, many black community struggles began to mobilise or re-form following the 2011 civil unrest in England, which began when young, mainly black, people violently confronted police in Tottenham following the killing of an African-Caribbean resident (Athwal 2011). Although the unrest spread to other areas and eventually became multi-ethnic, black community struggles such as the Tottenham Defence

Campaign emerged as a direct response to the public/state conflict there, which was largely seen as a manifestation of state racism (ibid.). Scholars have argued that instances of urban violence can reveal underlying structural issues, such as the racialised unemployment and poverty through deindustrialization which set the context for the 2001 Bradford riots (Amin 2003). These outbursts of violence, and the state violence which followed, (re)mobilized black communities in many parts of London and beyond to protect themselves from what they perceived as a manifestation of increasingly repressive state racism (Francois-Cerrah 2012).

The example used by Swyngedouw to illustrate his theory of an act of defiance which exposes a system of injustice and results in the emergence of a social movement is also problematic. A popular misconception about Rosa Parks' refusal to stand up on a segregated bus is that this act of defiance was an isolated incident, and that it was outrage at the arrest of a woman which sparked the Montgomery bus boycott. In fact, Rosa Parks was trained at the Highlander School, which used popular education and direct action training to organise African Americans in the civil rights movement; Martin Luther King and Stokely Carmichael were also participants (Payne 2007). Parks was well connected with a large network of African-American activists (she was also secretary of her local NAACP chapter), and she was able to use her arrest to call key organisers across the region to respond (Parks & Haskins 1999). When Swyngedouw portrays Parks as a woman who sparked a movement with a single political 'act of performatively staging equality, a procedure that simultaneously makes visible the 'wrong' of the given situation' (Swyngedouw 2011: 374), it inaccurately detracts from the years of organising and networking carried out by her and hundreds of other African-Americans at the time,

to whom the injustice of segregation was already very much visible. This is not to detract from the significance of Parks' act, but the historical evidence suggests that it is only a fragment of the full political picture.

The examples of the 2011 civil unrest in England and Rosa Parks in the US demonstrate two important points. The first is that violent disorder can actually be a precursor to organised resistance. The second is that individual acts of defiance which lead to a mass movement also require huge amounts of social movement building. Swyngedouw's depiction of Rosa Parks also indicates how the gendered nature of resistance can often be misinterpreted. Revisiting black feminist analyses will enable us to think about how black community struggles are gendered, and better understand the role of black women in these campaigns.

The logic of patriarchy rarely frames women as rational agents shaping historical progress. At worst, a narrative is reproduced which depicts black women as 'no more than passive puppets in a unidimensional plot to control their actions' (Roberts 1997: 7), where at best they may inadvertently spark political change, often due to an emotional response to injustice as in the case of Rosa Parks. The gendered nature of black community struggle takes intersectionality as a point of departure. Patricia Hill Collins argues that black women occupy a unique position in movements of resistance owing to their intersecting position within the power structures of Western society – they are oppressed by patriarchy, white supremacy and capitalism. The position of black women within patriarchy means that the public/private domains cannot be separated. Not only are black women oppressed by patriarchy within the home and in wider society, but the racialised nature of patriarchy means

they must contend with how white supremacy affects them and their families (Hill Collins 2000). This of course includes how black women are treated in the workplace and other social spaces. But it also includes their families, particularly their sons, for whom they are often the primary caregiver. One example of this is Mothers Reclaiming Our Children (ROC) in the US; Gilmore (2007: 207) analyses this political organising of African-American women whose children had been criminalised: '[the mothers] came to talk about their own children's and other loved ones' cases; they came because there was someone, at last, with whom they could talk about what concerned and frightened them most'. Here, we see the private sphere of mothers as caregivers in the home, transposed to the public sphere as they defend their children from state violence. In other words, black women often also deal with the structural racism that affects their male family members, resulting in them often being compelled to defend black men from the racial violence of the state. This example shows how, even within gendered spheres of influence, such as the mother at home, women are still active agents against, rather than emotional respondents to, the structures of racism.

## Conclusion

While black resistance to police violence in London and Birmingham post-2011 may appear a relatively narrow topic of inquiry, it quickly becomes clear that a range of concepts is required to provide the necessary tools for articulating and understanding the themes that continually emerge in this exciting and dynamic quarter of black political space. It is unsurprising that colonial policing has transcended the boundaries of the Global South, finding its way to black communities in Britain as the historical centre of Empire. Such an

understanding provides a useful framework for analysing the multiple spheres of power with which racist state violence, and resistance to it, intersect.

Race and space in Britain are coloured by the legacies of chattel enslavement and colonisation, the black freedom struggle in the US, gentrification, institutional racism and multiple forms of oppression, in addition to state violence. Rather than attempting unnecessarily difficult and dense theoretical acrobatics, which either makes one theory relevant to everything or a gaggle of theories relevant to each other, this approach draws on specific theoretical strands which overlap, intersect and are mutually reinforcing. In this research, I have attempted to move beyond my immediate experience of the world, using theory to 'hover above the ethnographic ground in order to provide a vocabulary for its explanation' (Back 2006: 21). Theories that attempt to be all-encompassing often overlook colonial histories, gender or other issues which may not be in the immediate reality, and therefore not in the consciousness, of the theorist in question.

The physical distance between Britain and its colonies often leads to us building conceptual barriers that restrict our analyses to racial injustice occurring on British soil after World War II, or to that found in the abundance of US literature. As Goldberg (2001) reminds us, the materialities of racism, white supremacy in its hegemonic form, differ, while their conceptual roots and ideological logic remain consistent. Whiteness has served as the arbiter of moral and intellectual supremacy since the invention of modern racial categories, through the rise of the British Empire and the eugenics movement, to the current displacement caused by gentrification and the deployment of state violence on the criminalised. Therefore, we can identify parallels between racialisations across time and space, while

maintaining the specificities of racist state violence and resistance in post-2011 London and Birmingham.

The intersections of gender and class can serve either to compound or to resist racism. While hegemonic masculinities criminalise and incarcerate the subordinated, black feminist critique and action provide the tools to cut through patriarchy, offering an alternative to male-dominated solutions. The role of women in resisting police violence is a vital aspect in theorising black community struggles of this nature, plugging a gap left by both conservative neoliberal thinkers and those on the radical left. Throughout this thesis, neoliberalism serves as a backdrop to the changing nature of racialisation, patriarchy, state violence, political economy and resistance. Yet, as neoliberalism's broad back bends to infiltrate and manipulate these socio-political phenomena, different theoretical tools are required to understand and problematise the issues we face as a result. Like neoliberalism, the meanings and materialities of racialisation are continually reinvented to better suit the reproduction of racial injustice and hierarchy. What this chapter has therefore also demonstrated, is how such reinventions can be subverted by those engaged in resistance to police violence.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Spaces of Scholar Activism**

#### Introduction

Staring up, shivering on a cold, hard, blue bed I kept reading the words glaring at me from the ceiling: “Do you have information about a crime? If so, call Crimestoppers anonymously ...”. I imagined how I might feel if I had actually witnessed a crime, and how reading those words might affect me. For years I had run workshops and disseminated information with the aim of preventing people from being wrongfully apprehended by the police. It had taken until this work had become professionalised, as part of my doctoral research, for me to be arrested as a result. I had been a legal observer at a Black Lives Matter protest in Westfield Shopping Centre in Shepherd’s Bush (west London) on a bitterly cold November evening in 2014.

Wearing an orange reflective jacket clearly marked ‘Legal Observer’, I had been noting the details of police officers, taking photographs and distributing legal information to demonstrators. Despite not being part of the – generally peaceful – protest, I was one of the 76 people arrested for violent disorder. Between half and three quarters of young black men in Britain are on the police DNA database<sup>8</sup>, and I was now one of them. After having my belongings confiscated, and being searched, photographed and fingerprinted, I was asked my ethnic identity. “Black Other”, I responded. “Are you sure you’re not mixed-race?” came the reply. “Is Black Other not an option?”, I asked. “Yeah, but you look mixed-race to me”. Having spent the last few years absorbing dense theoretical writings which unpack the social constructions of race and racism, I was determined to assert some autonomy in the

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<sup>8</sup> [www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/human-rights/privacy/dna-retention](http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/human-rights/privacy/dna-retention) accessed 30 June 2014

face of an officially institutionally racist arm of the British state. But the hours spent in the freezing wind being 'kettled' by police prior to my arrest had left me with little emotional energy to argue back.

Before that evening, the worst I'd faced were stops and searches, but a taste of life at the harder end of policing is to be expected for someone engaged in participant observation and action research. Using these methods alongside archival research and semi-structured interviews with activists, this thesis comes out of my experience as an organiser in Newham (Newham Monitoring Project) and Tottenham (Tottenham Defence Campaign), as well as national campaigns addressing police violence (The Monitoring Group, NUS Black Students' Campaign). This participation, and the relationships I built over this period, provided me with access to many individuals and groups which is rarely afforded to academics. Making the best possible use of my position, I have employed three different methodological approaches: semi-structured interviews, observations and textual analysis. All three of these approaches are informed by action research, engaging in praxis in addition to carrying out academic research and analysis.

This chapter is divided into three sections, the first of which analyses action research itself. Here I identify the benefits of carrying out observations in the field, in environments where participants often perform more freely and comfortably than in formal interviews. It also allows me to analyse the literature produced by the organisations I investigate, examining both the overtly racialised language and the racial metonyms employed to communicate the politics of grassroots black struggle. In addition, this section highlights the benefits that action research can bring to activism, contributing to organising efforts and building connections between groups which carry out similar work. It could be argued that researchers

who have working relationships with their participants can produce biased, and therefore invalid, data. Such arguments are rejected on the basis that all academics frame social science research within their socio-political positionality, and it is therefore better to make the reader aware of them, rather than attempting to create an impression of objectivity. Furthermore, I draw upon the work of scholar activists who argue for the necessity of scholarship that is embedded in the political organising being investigated, in order to contribute positively to movements for social change.

This chapter's second section covers the archival research used during my investigation. Analysing archival materials from both state actors and grassroots social movements provides much of the data for Chapter 4, in addition to giving context to the post-2011 political formations studied in the field. The third section of this chapter analyses the semi-structured interviews I carried out during my time in the field. This approach supported my textual analysis, as I was again able to identify overt and metonymic racialised language, with the advantage of being able to probe my participants, questioning why they use terms such as 'gang' or 'whiteness' in their organising and everyday language. The locations in which my participants chose to be interviewed was also interesting, as places such as The Tabernacle in Ladbroke Grove allowed me to experience the micro-aggressions that are a common feature of gentrification and securitisation (Lomeli 2014). This section also analyses some of the problems I encountered during the interview process, such as engaging in sensitive topics relating to gender, accessing activists in areas where I did not have organic links, and maintaining formality and assuring anonymity with activists I already knew.

Much of the contemporary literature on black community/police relations consists of observations and interviews with the 'youth' in schools, clubs, 'the streets' and other social settings (Briggs 2010, Guardian/LSE 2012, Reynolds 2013). This focus on the 'genuine experiences' of young people is important, but it can have the unintended consequence of rendering invisible the radical activists within that community, who work to improve everyday conditions and struggle for fundamental change. While this may not be the researcher's intention, such a methodology can leave readers with the impression that black communities in Britain today are at best reformist, and at worst passive, at the grassroots level. By focusing specifically on activists fighting for racial justice, my research disrupts this trend. It highlights the historical continuities with previous political organising, and better contextualises anti-racism and black identities in relation to policing in post-2011 London and Birmingham.

### Action Research

Theorists associated with critical pedagogies have observed that learning happens everywhere through action, but that this learning must be questioned and debated. This critical approach to research seeks to produce 'reliable knowledge upon which to construct power, or countervailing power, for the poor, oppressed and exploited groups' (Fals-Borda 2007: 3). Action research uses the practitioner's interactions within a community or social movement to stimulate learning and activism, with the goal of improving not only their collective knowledge but also their political demands. I have adopted this approach because scholars have found that attempts at value-free social science fail, since all researchers bring their own personal biases into their analysis (Greenwood & Levin 2005). More recent

interpretations of this process have used the term 'activist scholar' to describe academics working with social movements for long periods and contributing to their development (Motta & Nilson 2011).

As a researcher with a background in anti-racist organising, I intend for the findings of this investigation to contribute to two overlapping areas. First, I aim for this research to contribute to the scholarship of activists engaged in anti-racism. This includes those employed in academia (Keith 1993, Gilmore 2008, Chari & Donner 2010), and researchers not formally affiliated to an academic institution (La Rose 1974, Adams 1998, Grover 2014). Secondly, this research is driven towards the strengthening of activist currents organising to challenge state power. Black community struggles against policing are one aspect of this, and through my active contributions during field research, and the analyses I shall subsequently publish, I offer a renewed understanding of how best we can bolster current efforts to challenge racial violence and state power.

Observational research has been deemed in some ways preferable to interviews, particularly in the research of race and class in the UK: 'Not being limited to what people say explicitly enables us to train a kind of attentiveness to what remains unsaid and tacit forms of recognition and coexistence' (Back & Duneier 2006: 13). I carried out observations in public gatherings (of which I then had access to recordings), or smaller organising meetings (where I took field notes). I also participated in local pickets, large protests and community monitoring projects, carrying out analyses of flyers, posters, blogs and other forms of social media. I identified recurrent themes, including racialised language, gendered language and strategies for resistance. It is through this process that I was able to perceive continui-

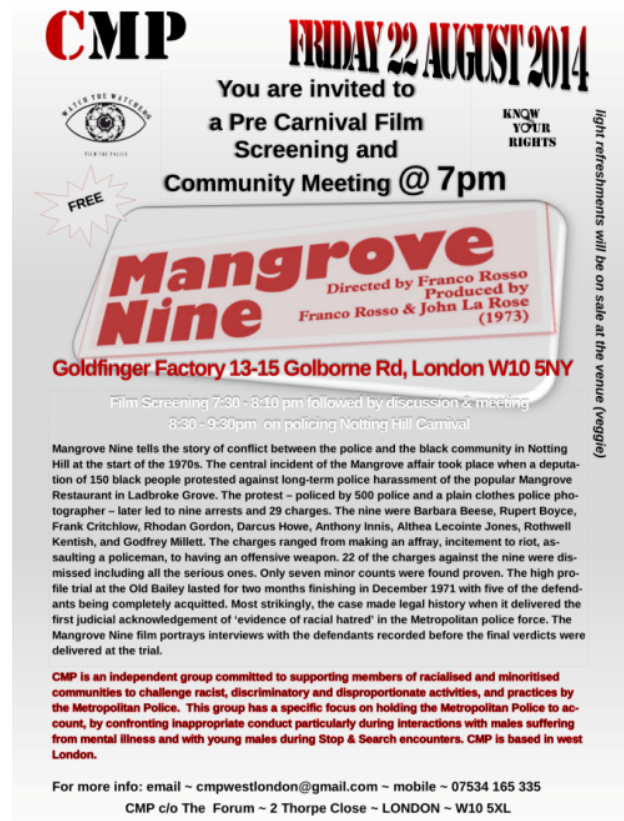
ties among different individuals and organisations, which suggested new patterns of resistance. Owing to the sensitivity of the work undertaken, some of the detail learned during analysis of black struggle, and in particular its formulation of strategy and tactics, is not reproduced in this thesis. However, overarching goals, public campaigns and theoretical underpinnings still provide rich and useful data, sufficient for furthering our understanding of how black communities are organising to defend themselves from the police.

Action research offers a number of benefits, particularly when studying ongoing forms of political activism. This form of activist-scholarship is not uncommon among geographers, and many have brought their analysis of the spatialisation of power and politics into their activism (Routledge 2003, Gilmore 2008, Chatterton 2010). Every activist I interviewed was aware of my position as a researcher, and following formal interviews, I discussed my ideas about how the racialisation of language and space affects the way in which black struggles are articulated. This ensured that there were no profound disagreements with my observations. It is also vital that academic research is able to collaborate with the individu-

als and groups from which it extracts knowledge (Gilmore 2008). Local knowledge is therefore a central component of scholar activist research (Greenwood & Levin 2005). The local knowledge I drew most upon was in the use of language, analysing how racialised terms are deployed by activists.

Figure 3.1

One example of the literature analysis I carried out was when West London CMP piloted their project at the 2014 Notting Hill Carnival, where black individuals and community groups regularly complain of unfair treatment at the hands of police (Stavri 2012). To help build interest and support for the campaign, CMP organised public events, such as a screening of a film about the Mangrove Nine. This documentary provided an account of a campaign led by members of the British Black Panther Movement against police brutality in the 1960s. Analysing the posters for this event, I took note of the logo used by CMP, an eye with the words 'Watch The Watchers' and 'Film the Police' around it, clearly conveying their political position with regard to police monitoring, and the methods they deploy in carrying out this work. I also identified a number of racial metonyms, such as the Mangrove Nine, in addition to more overt racialised language in the small print, which described the aim of the organisation: 'to challenge racist, discriminatory and disproportionate activities, and practices by the Metropolitan Police' (Figure 3.1). Analysing how and when different kinds of racialised language



are deployed enabled me to draw on these points during my interviews, in addition to informing my findings more generally.

I carried out research on 20 different organisations operating in London and Birmingham;

Figure 3.2: Map to show London-based organisations and campaigns covered in research

their names and locations are displayed in Figure 3.2 (below). As I pointed out in the introduction to this thesis, these areas have England's largest black populations. Regularly attending the Annual March Against Deaths in Custody, where campaigns against state violence from across Britain gather, enabled me to get a better idea of what was taking place nationally. My work with the NUS Black Students Campaign also enabled me to travel to many parts of England, engaging with anti-racist activism. My preliminary knowledge of the field and the organic links I have in London led me to identifying London and Birmingham as the cities with the most anti-racist organising. Chapter 4 will show how these two areas have also been historical centres of black struggle, which means that discourses and activities taking place in these areas have the potential to spread to other areas of Britain. I carried out 25 interviews, and took detailed field notes at over 100 meetings, protests and public gatherings, including pickets outside Brixton Police Station in solidarity with Ricky Bishop, weekly meetings with West London CMP, and workshops on civil and legal defence against police harassment organised by LCAPSV.

Figure 3.2



National Organisations:

- interim National Afrikan People's Parliament
- United Friends and Families Campaign
- Black Activists Rising Against Cuts (BARAC)
- Trayvon Martin Solidarity Campaign
- Ferguson Solidarity Campaign

Birmingham-based Organisations:

- Justice for Mikey Powell
- Birmingham Strong
- Liberation Squad
- Justice for Kingsley Burrell

There is a degree of overlap between organisations, as some individuals were active in more than one. For example, UFFC is a network of campaigners, many of whom also belong to individual justice campaigns. There is also some geographical imbalance within my research. Of the organisations in the capital, the majority are based in north or south (as opposed to east or west) London (Figure 3.2). There are four from Birmingham, while five identify themselves as national organisations. These imbalances can be explained by my own personal biases in areas where I have links, and/or simply that there happens to be more organising in some areas of London. The focus on north or south London can also be attributed to the histories of activism in specific areas or the intensity of racial violence during my time in the field. I attempted to address this imbalance through analysis of public meetings, demonstrations and other political actions and events. The varied geographical spaces in which my work was carried out were imperative in providing solid empirical foundations for theorising about the racialisation of space. The inclusion of Birmingham in addition to various parts of London meant that I was able to draw parallels between the approaches of different groups, and communicate these to their organisers as I came into regular contact with them. This led to facilitation of contact between groups, an example of which is described below.

One of the groups I worked with closely was One Voice, in west London. After my first interview with one of their main organisers, I was invited to attend meetings for their West London Community Monitoring Project (CMP). Before I knew it, I was being assigned tasks – drafting letters and leaflets for parents, and helping to design workshops. Then for a period of 18 months I attended CMP weekly meetings in Ladbrooke Grove, helping to organise police monitoring initiatives during the local Notting Hill Carnival, an event which sees a

huge police crackdown on young black people. Section 60 powers allowed officers to stop and search any individual in the Carnival area, and during the 2015 processions, over 250 arrests were made (Morgan 2014). Through this process, I was able to contribute practically to radical black grassroots organising while engaging in action research. Being able to see how a project designed to defend black communities from the police develops from the planning stages, official launch and implementation, provided an additional angle to my field research. The above-mentioned project also draws on historical spaces of black resistance – this included places such as Notting Hill and Ladbroke Grove, but also Carnival itself, and how, as Chapter 4 will show, it creates a space racialised as black. Such racialisations led to both a violent police crackdown and a popular mobilisation by activists seeking to defend this space. Noting how these indicators were employed by the CMP in west London, in addition to having regular dialogue with the organisers, provided additional validity for my work. The thoughts and actions of the organisers were fed directly into my research, helping me to formulate my theories around mobilisation and how black struggles are spaced and articulated.

### Archival Research

The two archives used in this research are the National Archives in Kew (London) and the Institute of Race Relations (IRR) Archives in King's Cross (London). The former allowed to me access recently declassified information on internal government correspondence following the civil unrest which took place across England in 1980, 1981 and 1985. The IRR holds leaflets, magazines and newspapers published by radical anti-racist campaigns during the 1970s and '80s. These two contrasting perspectives on police violence, civil unrest

and black activism provided much of the data for Chapter 4, in addition to enabling me to understand better how police racism, and resistance to it, developed between the 1980s and 2011. My intention, as an activist scholar, was to utilise archives in a way that made a direct contribution to analyses of the post-2011 period.

In December 2015, the National Archives in Kew declassified a series of internal government memos titled *Civil disorder: the Handsworth, Brixton and Tottenham riots*. These documents, in addition to another set of files, *Inner cities policy and problems/ regeneration of Liverpool and London*, showed how the state made decisions as to how best to respond to the civil disturbances of the 1980s. This enabled me to assess continuities between the response of the state to civil unrest in the 1980s, and its response to that which took place in 2011. I was also able to identify how approaches differed between London and Birmingham. Importantly, these documents showed how the 'soft power' of co-optation was formulated, as evidence of this is often more difficult to access than evidence of harder powers of arrests, raids and incarceration.

Identifying which resources were relevant in the IRR archives was relatively straightforward, as all their material is from individuals and groups which self-identify as black and/or anti-racist. My primary source of information was *Race Today*, a former bi-monthly black power magazine, which published contributions from some of Britain's most influential black scholar-activists, including Darcus Howe, Gus John and Paul Gilroy. It has been noted that archival research is less participatory, as the people being studied are generally no longer alive, yet this was not the case with my investigation. I was able to speak to a number of activists who had been involved in *Race Today*, in addition to some of those involved in the social movements and civil unrest covered within its pages. There appeared

to be a broad consensus, from both supporters and critics of Race Today, that it is the most comprehensive source of information on black activism from its founding in 1969 to 1988 when the magazine was discontinued. At IRR I also analysed a range of leaflets and public statements from former anti-racist groups based in London and Birmingham, including the Asian Youth Movement, Black Defence Committee and Handsworth Defence Committee.

Using a similar textual analysis to that which I employed when analysing contemporary activist literature and press reports, I identified how racialised language is used, with a specific focus on how it relates to space and place. This enabled me to examine how race is articulated by both state actors and anti-racist activists. Through this process, I was able to compare and contrast government strategies and policies, the rhetoric of black power/anti-racism and activist tactics in the 1970s-'80s and the post-2011 period. These historical comparisons were necessary for assessing the newness of the current patterns of anti-racism I observed in the field. Overall, the addition of archival resources added a more in-depth methodical dimension to my historical comparisons, through a systematic comparison of language, the analysis of recently declassified data and a comprehensive overview of the topic.

## Interviews

### **Accessing Interview Participants**

Interviews took place in a venue convenient to the interviewee – generally a community space or local cafe. One interview, with a member of One Voice (west London), took place

in The Tabernacle. This historically black space had been the focus of the organisation's first campaign, *Reclaim the Tab*, prompting the interviewee to refer to the relevance of this in their responses. As a result of gentrification, The Tabernacle is now a very middle-class, and white, space. When I asked the European bar tender if I could have more water in my coffee, she appeared bemused: "Are you sure ...? OK then". This implication that I wasn't having my coffee as it should be served made me feel quite alienated in a cafe/bar where my interviewee and I were the only black people. The bartender's attitude can easily be dismissed as rudeness or pretentiousness, but other black Tabernacle users have articulated similar feelings of not having the social capital to use its services. So this subtle micro-aggression can also be viewed as part of something larger and more far-reaching.

To yield the richest, most detailed data, I interviewed the primary organisers and spokespeople of the movements I had access to. I consulted with the main contact person in each case, as there are often many people loosely affiliated to an organisation who attend events or political actions, whereas only a small number of core organisers are regularly present at meetings and do much of the work. I generally made contact through a personal recommendation, approaching people at a protest/public meeting or via online platforms. I understand the limitations of this approach, as the spokespeople of organisations, particularly those with formal or informal hierarchies, may not necessarily reflect the thoughts of other group members or affiliates. Nonetheless, given that my research looks at a number of organisations, interviewing those most accessible and knowledgeable about the organisation makes the most practical sense. Also, the number of organisations gives a wider and more representative range of opinions. What is important is taking the relative standpoints of my interviewees into consideration when analysing their responses.

One meeting in Birmingham, with a member of an organisation called Liberation Squad, took place in the large new Library of Birmingham. There was a quiet-ish cafe with plenty of seating, despite the layout feeling more like a shopping centre. When my participant arrived, a little late, I was quite taken aback. Dressed in full camouflage gear, complete with a green hat covering a red bandana, he strolled in casually, accompanied by his young nephew who he was caring for that day. The latter was duly bought some juice and sent off to play in the children's area. My participant felt totally at ease in his militaristic attire, even though this may have concerned some of the middle-class library visitors who peered at him over their cappuccinos. As for myself, I was concerned that he might misconstrue me as a researcher from an elite university who might belittle or misinterpret him. However, I was made to feel quite comfortable as the conversation digressed into the legacies of enslavement, the need for a healthier diet and economic self-sufficiency, and parent-child relations. Leaving the interview, I felt energised by the thought, experience and ingenuity of Liberation Squad. Much of their legal and intellectual knowledge was self-taught, or learned outside institutional settings, and their ideas for engagement were more creative than some I had encountered in workshops, film viewings and panel discussions in London.

This would not be my last encounter with Liberation Squad. We kept in touch, and one of their members contacted me when he came to London a couple of months after the above interview. I invited him to attend a workshop I was running on the Haitian Revolution for a group of young people in west London. Some of my contacts from One Voice's CMP were also present. They were organising their new community monitoring project and, through my introduction, they invited Liberation Squad to speak at the launch, share resources and co-ordinate campaigns. Gaining access to the groups in Birmingham had not been

straightforward, but I learned a great deal from them. With Liberation Squad in particular I felt that I had not only succeeded in building trust but also contributed something to the organisation. I hope to sustain this working relationship in the future.

## **Analysing Interview Data**

In order to ask specific questions about my research objectives I carried out 25 semi-structured interviews over eight months. Each interview lasted between one and two hours, and was recorded and then transcribed. Each interviewee completed a consent form, highlighting both the nature of the research and the potential for their identification through any specificities in their responses. I chose semi-structured interviews because of the relative freedom this gives, particularly for people from marginalised groups, to articulate their thoughts (Kvale 2006). I had been working with, or had had working and in some cases informal relationships with, many of the participants I interviewed. This makes gaining access and legitimacy in the eyes of participants far easier than if I were unfamiliar to them. Scholars have also stated that these kinds of relationships with participants can make them feel more at ease when sharing information, experiences and opinions (Kirsch 2005).

Building on the analysis of activist literature that I made in the course of my fieldwork, semi-structured interviews enabled me to investigate further how language is racialised by activists challenging police racism. The interviews were examined according to the following criteria: methods of resistance, racialised language, gendered language and references to space/place. The last were analysed in more detail in order to draw out the extent to which space was essentialised, gentrified, securitised and racialised. The linguistic analysis of interviews in critical race research is by no means new; Clarke and Garner (2010)

noted that their interviewees would refer to places associated with minoritised racial groups as a 'shorthand' (450) for more overt racial language. One example in my own research was the use of the term *Street Politics* (Chapter 6). When I asked why this term was used, I was told that the association that the word 'street' has with black identities in the area was one of the reasons. After identifying the use of a racial signifier, I would ask my interviewees why they had not used overt racial language e.g. *Black Politics*. Probing them as to how such a title might be received by the local community, the mainstream press or other formal institutions enabled me to understand better how racial metonyms are formed, and why they are deployed by activists challenging police racism.

My positionality as a Londoner of African-Caribbean heritage under the age of 30 enabled me to quickly identify language I recognised as racialised, drawing on my own knowledge and experiences of racial discourses in London, Nottingham and other parts of the UK. An understanding of the manner in which individuals and organisations articulate their political identities, motives and actions is imperative if we are better to appreciate how people are mobilised into organising against police violence. The credibility and validity of such research is partly directed by the activists who occupy the necessary positionality to determine the accuracy of my interpretation of their political identities, thoughts and actions (Fein & Weis 2005). As my ideas developed during my field research, I discussed them openly with my participants after formally interviewing them. This use of local knowledge enabled the development of theories on the articulation of anti-racism and its effect on political mobilisation and action.

## Ethical Considerations

When addressing sensitive issues around gender, particularly when working with female participants, scholars have noted that semi-structured interviews are a progressive tool for interviewees to discuss complex intersections of power (DeVault & Gross 2006). Such interviews also gave me the opportunity to confront dominant members of groups on gender or other forms of power politics. For instance, almost every interviewee insisted that black women were, and have always been, the backbone of the black struggle. So asking them what black men can learn from black women was a question I expected to be less well-received. However, I felt this question was important, as feminist approaches to research compel academics to question whose thoughts and interests are worthy of debate (ibid.). Although some participants hesitated, and at times struggled to answer the question, at no point did they appear uncomfortable or offended. This methodology involved carefully calculating the degree to which an interviewer can confront an interviewee in order to draw out their thoughts on a problematic manifestation of power which they may resist sharing. My experience with the organisers in some of the groups I researched (such as Tottenham Defence Campaign) enabled me to use this technique without alienating participants, limiting any possible negative effects that this might have on the richness of the information I was able to collect.

There were a number of challenges gaining the trust of activists in Birmingham, as I do not have organic roots in the area, with some organisers not responding to my messages. Given the sensitivity of this work, such precaution is understandable, particularly given the history of state spying and infiltration in organising of this nature (Ellison 2014). Activists

also talked about how professionals, such as academics, politicians or those in race equality institutions, interact with working-class black communities. To some participants, my positionality as a researcher was a concern, despite my background as an activist. Owing to the interest that uprisings often stimulate, some people have allegedly used engagement with black communities for:

career development and opportunities for people to pick up on issues and then write a PhD about them, no offence, do the intellectual fucking assessment of our communities' lived experiences of racism, make a bundle out of it – and then we never see them again (BARAC, Interview 2: 6 March 2014).

Wariness on the part of interviewees is not the only stumbling block. Burman (1997) has warned against the use of qualitative interviews since they can lead interviewees into a false sense of security, creating the impression of an informal conversation rather than a piece of recorded academic research. This was particularly important with my own research – given my long-standing working relationships, and in some cases social relationships, with the participants, some of them felt very much at ease during our recorded conversations. It was therefore important that I maintained the appropriate level of professionalism before and while conducting interviews and making observations.

In order to account for the ethical issues that arise from carrying out interviews with activists I knew well, and discussing potentially controversial issues relating to state power, I ensured all interviews were anonymised. Owing to the uniqueness of the people, organisations and movements I investigated, and the small number of core organisers in each group, I made my participants aware of the difficulties in ensuring complete anonymity. I

also gave interviewees the option to use their real name if there were specific issues they would like personally voiced in the public domain. This approach enabled participants to consider carefully their options for responding, with the intention of allowing them as much autonomy as possible within the constraints of the interview process. Accounts of public events that I attended in which contributions were made from people on a platform have not necessarily been anonymised.

## Conclusion

In April 2015, I went to a police station in east London to find out whether the police were upholding their charge of violence disorder. After waiting for over an hour, I was informed that I had been re-bailed until the following month, after which the charges were eventually dropped. Of the 76 arrested, one teenager was found guilty of assaulting a police officer, receiving a non-custodial sentence. Action Research comes with its risks, yet unlike many of the people I met during my research, I knew I had the detachment of being a doctoral researcher, as well as secure housing and other support structures at my disposal. No researcher can ever become truly immersed in political struggles; they are always set apart by the social capital that institutional affiliation affords them.

What academics can do, however, is use the resources of the academy to enrich our understanding of grassroots political organising. By utilising a range of methodological tools, this thesis has collected a variety of different datasets. This has been both formal, through interviews, and more informal, through analysing other interactions and spaces encountered in the field. My hope is that such an investigation can create a better understanding

of black resistance to police violence in Britain more generally, even if my research has been limited to London and Birmingham. As these centres of black community organising exhibit new types of protest, we can contextualise them historically and nationally in a way that makes an important and timely contribution to what is an under-researched topic of enquiry.

## Chapter 4

### Historical Geographies of Black Resistance to Racial Violence

In 1980 and 1981, sparked by black youths in St. Paul's (Bristol) and Brixton (south London) respectively, England erupted in what *Race Today*, Britain's biggest Black Power magazine, called an insurrection. Unable to physically repress the discontent, the government set into motion a new approach: community policing, liaison committees, an independent complaints system and 'other such trivialities'<sup>9</sup> were fielded as ways to incorporate blacks into the bureaucratic machinery of the state, with the apparent aim of channeling frustrations so that they did not erupt as 'riots'. On the other side of the barricades 'about one dozen young blacks at a youth club ... analysed the police reaction in cold, matter of fact terms'. A journalist from the Race Today Collective asked "where will this all end?" ... With an ease of expression, one of them replied, "We have to kill one of them"<sup>10</sup>.

While such a response could be dismissed as male bravado, this account echoes one of the most influential post-colonial thinkers of the contemporary age: 'Colonialism is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence', was the sobering analysis of Frantz Fanon (1967: 61). Yet, Fanon's conceptualisation of racial violence, and how it is opposed by the colonised peoples subjected to it, goes beyond simplistic notions of combat. According to Fanon, the structural violence of poverty, indignity and exploitation must be challenged with forces that have the capacity to overwhelm systemic oppression (Frazer & Hutchings 2008). This chapter will therefore consider the black-led social movements that employed a range of organising tactics during periods of

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<sup>9</sup> *Race Today* - February March 1982, p.52, accessed Institute of Race Relations Archives

<sup>10</sup> *Race Today* - February March 1982, p.52, accessed Institute of Race Relations Archives

relative stability, feeding into the urban rebellions which periodically confronted the state.

This chapter makes three core arguments. First, grassroots organising acts as a form of self-defence against state violence. This self-defence is constitutive of space – the places where people live and organise grassroots defence from the police (e.g. Tottenham or Handsworth). This process is brought together through the collective experiences of black struggle in these areas. Secondly, the collective memories of different uprisings in different parts of the country constitute spaces of inter-community solidarity (e.g. activists in Handsworth identify with struggles in Tottenham). These first two points contribute to these spaces becoming racialised as black, and serving as racial metonyms. Thirdly, I identify a historical paradox – in spite of the historical richness of grassroots organising, and in spite of its importance before and during 1980s uprisings, the 1980s witnessed its relative weakening and marginalisation. This paradox is explained by the co-option of community organising by the state in the neoliberal period. It is the history of these spaces of black struggle and the attempts to co-opt these struggles through neoliberalisation that have made them racial metonyms, explaining the conditions for post-2011 organising.

For centuries, black communities in Britain have organised to defend themselves from structural oppression and police violence, from the plight of the Black Poor in the eighteenth century to the uprisings in Cardiff in 1919 (Fryer 2010), and the post-2011 organising investigated in the chapters that follow. Although changing both in the manner in which it is implemented and in how it is articulated, state racism has remained a relatively constant feature. Indeed, when it comes to the state's agents of physical force, Michael Keith (1993) affirms:

Changes in the techniques, motivation and ideology of [police] repression may lie at the heart of changes in police practice, but are irrelevant to the anti-racist struggle precisely because they make such little difference to the lived experience of those 'at the sharp end' (2).

The structural nature of racism has remained, in spite of superficial transformations such as those of a bureaucratic nature alluded to above. This research does not focus on the consistently negative experiences of those at the 'sharp end', who are, in the case of both Keith (1993) and this thesis, the black population of Britain. Rather, the bulk of this investigation concentrates on grassroots, black-led forms of political resistance. While it is widely acknowledged that radical black politics emerges from an allegiance to the working class (Rex 1979, James 1981, Hall 2000), the gendered nature of racial oppression is often overlooked (Bryan, Dadzie & Scafe 1985, Jarrett-Macauley 2005). This chapter includes a discussion of the racial violence experienced by black women, using the shooting of Cherry Groce and death of Cynthia Jarrett as case studies. This attempts to address this gendered imbalance, and to contextualise the analyses of black female resistance in the rest of the thesis (Chapters 5 and 7).

The geographies of race have long held relevance for black people organising to defend themselves from racial violence. This has involved defending physical spaces, previously termed coloured quarters (Banton 1955), from far-right racism on the streets, an issue ignored or even sanctioned by police (May & Cohen 1974). By the 1970s, black people were not simply responding to racist rioting by white people, but were instigating civil unrest in response to police racism (Sivanandan 2008). The demands of black resistance to policing

in Britain have thus centred on territorial defence (Keith 1993), often articulated as a response to a specific act of state violence. When Cherry Groce was shot by officers raiding her home in 1985, Brixton rose up against the police for the second time in four years, forcing officers to retreat from the area. When youths in Tottenham were similarly confronted a fortnight later, police made monkey noises while beating on their riot shields. Apparently well-prepared for physical confrontation, the officers shouted: “This ain’t Brixton!”<sup>11</sup>. They were wrong. Decades of black struggle meant that that area of south London was more than a bordered locality, it was a space racialised as black. Transcending its physical boundaries, Brixton, like many other spaces marked by militant anti-racism, became an articulation of black identity and political action.

One of the gains of the anti-racist movement is the social impact it has had on overt bigotry. Racism today is universally understood as negative, with even the leaders of far-right organisations such as the English Defence League claiming to be anti-racist (Hurd 2013). However, what replaced this overt racist language is a veiled racism that employs a neoliberal logic to shift the blame from structural factors, to problematising the deficiencies of individual people (Villanueva 2006). This ‘new racism’ also critiques racialised cultures (Barker 1981), spaces or other social phenomena – a metonymic racism (Keith 2006). These cultural and social factors, often the result of structural white supremacy, are used to explain exclusion or injustice, confusing cause and effect, leading to a racism without racists (Bonilla-Silva 2009). Indeed, this led to what Goldberg (2001) calls anti-racialism, a racist environment where it is taboo to mention race. These two shifts in discourse are mutually reinforcing – on the one hand, it is assumed that more obvious and explicit forms of

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<sup>11</sup> Stafford Scott, Brixton Field Notes, 3 October 2015

racism are in decline, and are therefore no longer suitable subjects for discussion or investigation, and on the other, cultural and individualised explanations of social inequality are used to articulate and enforce racism and racist structures (Chapter 2). It is within this neoliberal context that the final section of this chapter situates the decline of black movement-building in Britain.

Black-led political mobilisations took place across the country between the 1950s and 1990s, but this chapter briefly looks at those in London and Birmingham, building on the conceptual analyses of race, space and resistance presented in the previous chapter. I draw on archival material, such as pamphlets, posters, leaflets and other communications, and newly released government publications. As with the participants and organisations investigated in the chapters which follow, my focus is on grassroots organisations that were independent of for-profit corporations and central government. This approach builds on existing literature on this topic, while also exploring entities with a degree of political and economic autonomy.

This chapter examines community groups and social movements that include: the Asian Youth Movement and the Handsworth Defence Campaign (Birmingham); the Mangrove Nine and the Black Defence Committee (Notting Hill); and the Brixton Defence Committee and the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign (Tottenham). News articles published at the time by the Race Today Collective provide much of the information on spontaneous uprisings. This chapter also cites first-person accounts of people who were active during the period, which I recorded at public meetings and protests, or through semi-structured interviews. This historical overview provides context for the post-2011 struggles covered in the rest of this thesis. While movement-building is vital in understanding black political thought

in Britain, urban rebellions shook the nation and became deeply concerning for the political establishment. The state needed a solution to militant anti-racist organising and the unrest among black youth during the 1980s. In investigating state responses to black resistance, I draw on the Home Affairs files: internal memos between ministers and advisors following the urban rebellions in 1981 and 1985, which were declassified in 2015. The final section of this chapter argues that, for the state, Margaret Thatcher's neoliberal project could not have emerged at a more convenient time.

### Making it Plain: Handsworth (Birmingham)

Racial discrimination in the middle of the twentieth century was marked by a crude and overt bigotry, and Birmingham, England's second-largest city, was no exception. Handsworth, now a multicultural area of Birmingham, was a Conservative Party stronghold in the early 1960s. The Tories fought vehemently against incoming migrants, hoping to maintain majority white residents. One of the best-known initiatives by the Tories was their campaign in Smethwick, a district that borders Handsworth. The 1964 by-election there saw the slogan "If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour" used by the party (Anwar 1975). The Conservatives went on to win the seat, arguably setting the tone for the racial harassment that followed, as racist views had been explicitly encouraged and endorsed in their campaigning. In 1965, white residents in nearby Rowley Regis organised protests against the first black family that moved into a local housing estate. Shortly afterwards, a burning cross was left on Albert Road in Handsworth (ibid.). This symbol of white violence, imitating the US Ku Klux Klan, the US white supremacists who terrorised African Americans during the Jim Crow era, marked a pivotal moment in the area becoming a place of

contestation between white and black residents. It is this contestation over space (explored in Chapter 1) that would, over the coming decades, see Handsworth develop into a racialised metonym.

A number of anti-racist organisations were established in the West Midlands during this period, such as the Co-ordinating Committee Against Racial Discrimination (CCARD). It was formed in 1961 alongside a number of trades unions representing African, Caribbean and South Asian workers and young people (Heineman 1972). In 1965, the Indian Workers' Association invited Malcolm X to visit Marshall Street, where the local Tory MP had used his position as a councillor to lobby for public housing to be nationalised and rented only to whites (Narayan & Andrews 2015). In 1973, the National Committee for Trade Unions against Racism co-ordinated community and industrial action by anti-racists across the Midlands (Sivanandan 2008).

As the proliferation of black labour organisations attests, life for black people during the 1960s and '70s was shaped by more than bigoted harassment and violence on the streets. The racial slurs, threats and attacks were symptomatic of a structural system of racial injustice:

Black people have been pushed into the lowest paid jobs throughout the economy. In the West Midlands they have suffered the brunt of the collapse of the manufacturing industries in which their labour was confined. No retraining offered, no new

skills provided, no new investment, no alternative jobs, and no hope is how they describe their situation today<sup>12</sup>.

Racism is therefore not the result of individuals holding racist views, but is so deeply woven into British culture and structures of power that the normal functioning of society marginalises black people from employment and education (Gillborn 2005). Migrants from Britain's colonies in the Caribbean and elsewhere had flocked to industrial cities such as Birmingham during the post-war period (Wild & Ridgeway 1970). As economic crises in the 1970s saw the post-war boom come to an end, employment fell, and black labour became surplus to the requirements of capital (Joshi & Carter 1984). As is often the case (Cowen & Siciliano 2011), the state intervened to manage this surplus population, intensifying the antagonism between the police and black communities<sup>13</sup>. Criminalisation of African-Caribbean life defined approaches to policing, as one officer told a researcher at the time:

When these people have their heads full of pot and alcohol, spurred on by the thumping beat of these reggae records, they are not humans any more, and only those who don't like themselves would set out to treat them as humans ... There really is only one way to deal with them (ibid: 63).

This dehumanising attitude led to crude and overt racial violence on the part of the police. Some of the best-known rebellions against this saw hunger strikes used as a tactic by

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<sup>12</sup> A Different Reality: An account of Black people's experiences and their grievances before and after the Handsworth Rebellions of September 1985, Report of the Review Panel: February 1986, p. 60, accessed at the Institute of Race Relations Archive

<sup>13</sup> A Different Reality: An account of Black people's experiences and their grievances before and after the Handsworth Rebellions of September 1985, Report of the West Midlands County Council Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee Review Panel: February 1986, p. 60, accessed at the Institute of Race Relations Archive

those detained or imprisoned. In 1979, a Rasta named Steve Thomas had his locks cut off and was sent to Rampton Secure Hospital for protesting. Rasta 'Cartoon' Campbell was arrested in March 1980 on what he claimed were false charges. After ten days imprisonment, he refused food and drink, and forced-feeding began on 26 March. By 31 March he was dead, the culmination of a solemn protest against the racism of a criminal justice system which touched much of the black community (Sivanandan 2008: 136–7). This sporadic and often atomised opposition of brave people such as Thomas and Campbell changed soon after their deaths. Later that decade, a different kind of spontaneous resistance to policing would emerge – it was collective, co-ordinated and widespread, and it would change the face of race in Britain forever.

Unlike other parts of England, Birmingham did not see widespread uprisings until the mid-1980s. On 9 September 1985, when revolts had already taken place in many parts of the country (see below), Handsworth also went up in flames. The uprising began after police got into a dispute with a local resident over an alleged parking infringement. Over 300 residents engaged in pitched battles against police which raged throughout the night and continued for three consecutive days (Fazakarley 2009). The police were clear as to who was to blame, identifying “young criminals” who were “black and Afro-Caribbean origin”<sup>14</sup>. Allegedly, the roots of the unrest could be found in a ‘criminal minority’, namely ‘drug pushers’ who pressured ‘opportunists’ from other communities to participate in the rebellion (ibid.). While such black folk devils are generally gendered as male (Hall et al. 1978, Gilroy 1987b), contemporary accounts maintain that

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<sup>14</sup> Race Today, January 1986 Oh Dear! That ‘Criminal Minority’ Again: Gus John Examines the Police Report on the Handsworth Riots, p.7, accessed Institute of Race Relations Archives

Black women were also part of the rebellion through all its stages. However, the media chose to focus on the 'Black youths', as it was easier to label 'Black youths' as criminal.<sup>15</sup>

This intervention disrupts the popular wisdom that black rebellions are the political labour of men (Bryan, Dadzie & Scafe 1985). Rather than occupying the gendered position of caregiver, this historical record shows how women were active participants in physically resisting state violence. The police and press gendered the disturbances as male by using the term 'youths', as involvement of black women or older people may point to a revolt against an issue which is more widespread, or even systemic.

According to the radical local Asian Youth News, the police tried to turn the South Asian and African-Caribbean community against each other when a Post Office fire killed two people. The Asian Youth News also claimed that this tactic was not new:

Only a few months ago, three Birmingham Asian businessmen were caught bringing heroin in. The police only harass the African youth for small amounts of soft drugs while they leave their rich friends alone<sup>16</sup>.

Here, we see activists from the Asian Youth Movement analyse how ethnic and class cleavages are exploited in an attempt to control racially subjugated populations. Yet, in

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<sup>15</sup> A Different Reality: An account of Black people's experiences and their grievances before and after the Handsworth Rebellions of September 1985, Report of the West Midlands County Council Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Committee Review Panel: February 1986, p. 72, accessed Institute of Race Relations Archive

<sup>16</sup> Asian Youth News, Special Edition, September 1985, Police Hypocrisy and Media Conspiracy, npn, accessed at the Institute of Race Relations Archive

Handsworth there appears to have been resistance on both sides of this attempted division. A statement released by an African-Caribbean community meeting expressed their condolences<sup>17</sup>, and 'Asian and African members of the community laid wreaths at the Post Office as a mark of respect'<sup>18</sup>. Institutions also racialised those responsible for the violence as specifically African Caribbean in attempt to further contain the perimeters of debate about the cause of the disturbances. The contradictions of this racist and divisive narrative were also challenged by the Asian Youth News:

[A] Tory magistrate has attended a meeting where Asian businessmen have started to set up vigilante squads of Asian youth to go against the African community. The police would like to have us fight each other so that we do not organise against the brutality and poverty we face.<sup>19</sup>

These critiques of Handsworth's petite bourgeoisie should be understood as a continuation of how the colonial bourgeoisie was mobilised to re-entrench white domination throughout the British Empire. The meagre wealth that privileges small-scale business owners over the proletariat gives them a stake in a racist system, an investment they defend by aligning themselves with the state (Fanon 1967: 118-120). These class cleavages are compounded in Handsworth by the ethnic divisions between people of African and South Asian heritage.

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<sup>17</sup> Community Statement following a meeting of members of the African/Caribbean Community of Handsworth on 10 September, 1985, accessed Institute of Race Relations Archive

<sup>18</sup> Asian Youth News, Special Edition, September 1985, Police Hypocrisy and Media Conspiracy, npn, accessed Institute of Race Relations Archive

<sup>19</sup> Asian Youth News, Special Edition, September 1985, Police Hypocrisy and Media Conspiracy, npn, accessed Institute of Race Relations Archive

The Handsworth Defence Campaign was established in the aftermath of the unrest, to provide civil and legal support for those at risk of arrest, incarceration and other forms of state violence, which escalated during this period. Education activist and writer Gus John, who went on to chair the Handsworth Defence Campaign, offered further criticism of the racist trope that the Handsworth uprisings were a simple case of violent African-Caribbean men intent on criminality, in the pages of *Race Today*:

Having interviewed young people and adults in Handsworth on September 10 and 11 [1985], and sat in the magistrates court as scores of those arrested were paraded in front of magistrates determined to see law and order restored at any costs, I am convinced that those drug-pushers would have had as much luck getting those men and women to riot in their defence as I would by taking a loud-hailer and walking the streets, summoning people to come out and riot.<sup>20</sup>

John exposes how the state attempts to utilise black folk devils, such as the drug-dealer (Gilroy 1987b), in its attempt to delegitimise the concerns of those rebelling. In so doing, he alludes to the community support being articulated for the uprising in Handsworth. It could be argued that such support was not simply to challenge the harsh sentencing for those arrested in the uprising, but symbolised a collective consciousness surfacing among black people, challenging racial violence. The political establishment echoed the police and media narrative, and soon the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, visited the area. He asked a member of the local African-Caribbean community why the unrest had taken

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<sup>20</sup> *Race Today* - January 1986, Oh Dear! That 'Criminal Minority' Again: Gus John Examines the Police Report on the Handsworth Riots, p. 8, accessed in the Institute of Race Relations Archives

place, to which the man responded by citing rising levels of unemployment. Hurd dismissed this analysis, later commenting that "[a]ll this ground has been ploughed over quite a lot and I am not sure there is a lot of good soil to be turned up" (Fazakarley 2009: 2). Moments later, groups of young people began to pelt Hurd with rocks, and he was rushed into an armoured police vehicle for protection<sup>21</sup>. Again, we see a challenge to structural violence, unemployment, coalescing in a Fanonian manner with more overt forms of violent resistance, in an open attack on a powerful state representative.

Following the rebellion on 9 September, over 600 people were arrested, and according to the Handsworth Defence Campaign 315 were charged – 40 whites, 50 South Asians and over 200 African-Caribbean people<sup>22</sup>. While the Campaign identified itself as representing Handsworth, the rhetoric it used goes beyond its geographical boundaries. Handsworth Defence Campaign drew parallels with Brixton and Tottenham, claiming that 'these areas are brutally policed and ... 60% unemployment amongst the African-Caribbean community [in Handsworth] and social deprivation is responsible for the disturbances' (ibid.), thus positioning itself within Britain's anti-racist movement. The local Asian Youth Movement released a statement in 1986, simply titled: 'Handsworth, Brixton, Tottenham'<sup>23</sup>. In using these names, Handsworth-based activists sought to evoke more than a sense of solidarity between these places. These localities were now written into the racial lexicon of Britain, and were thus employed as a metonym for racialised conflict.

The state used the unrest to ferment gendered, ethnic and class disunity among the local

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<sup>21</sup> Footage from Birmingham Oral History Project, available at [www.bbohp.org.uk/node/25](http://www.bbohp.org.uk/node/25) 6 mins 30 secs, accessed 22 August 2014

<sup>22</sup> Handsworth Defence Campaign, Handsworth Under Attack, Pre-Monday 9 September 1985, npn, accessed at Institute of Race Relations Archives

<sup>23</sup> Asian Youth News (1986, exact date unknown), npn, accessed Institute of Race Relations Archives

population, deploying racist stereotypes to justify state repression. There were attempts to reproduce racialised, class-based co-optation following rebellions in London, as analysed in the final section of this chapter. As statements and publications from the time indicate, such a policy was interpreted by many in the West Midlands as 'divide and rule'. Indeed, the uprisings and their aftermath arguably strengthened the fight for racial justice in Birmingham and beyond. 'No amount of police and state repression can keep the lid on our revolt', a statement proclaimed, as black-led rebellion in Britain reached a high-point (ibid.). The urban revolt of the late 1970s and early 1980s had gathered momentum by 1985, and activists thought that this would now force the British state into submission. In order to understand better the prelude to this period of hope, we must turn to London, in particular Brixton and Tottenham, and the capital's first black spiritual home, Notting Hill.

### Communities of Resistance: Notting Hill, West London

Although Notting Hill is best known for its Caribbean Carnival, it tends to be forgotten that the costumes and sound systems were brought to the area in part as a response to racism (Boyce Davies 2008). In the 1950s, when a black community became firmly established in the Notting Hill and Ladbrooke Grove areas of west London, attacks from white, often armed, mobs were an increasing concern. By 1958, rioting spread across the area, as mainly African-Caribbean residents fought back. Shouting "We will kill the blacks", hundreds of whites roamed the streets attacking black homes and businesses (Bunce & Field 2014: 96). Policing, and the criminal justice system more generally, soon became an equally important issue. Many blacks considered the police to be on the side of the racist

mobs, and members of the latter who were arrested for quite brutal attacks were often released on bail, or not charged at all (Pilkington 1988).

The overt and violent racism in this part of west London stimulated not only spontaneous rebellion but also grassroots organising. The looming threat of attack, and the tacit complicity of the state, meant that black people had little option but to defend themselves. The most high-profile incident that galvanised resistance to racial violence was the death of Kelso Cochrane, a young Antiguan carpenter who was stabbed to death in a racist murder in 1959 (Sherwood 1999). A multitude of organisations was set up in the wake of the 1958 rioting and the subsequent death of Cochrane. The West Indian Gazette, the Coloured People's Progressive Association and what became the Notting Hill Carnival, all co-founded by Claudia Jones, were among a coalition African-Caribbean community groups that set out to challenge racism in the area (Boyce Davies 2008: 178). The Notting Hill/Ladbroke Grove area was to become a centre of black organising for decades to come. Given the attitude of the state to racism, it is unsurprising that spaces such as The Notting Hill Carnival were targets for criminalisation by the police. Yet, rather than repressing black struggle in Notting Hill, the contestation between police and black people led to the area becoming a space that symbolised anti-racism in Britain.

One of the best-known places of grassroots black organising was the Mangrove restaurant in Notting Hill. By the late 1960s, it had become a fashionable establishment frequented by black radicals. The restaurant, nicknamed a 'resting place in Babylon' through its association with Black Power politics, did not go unnoticed by London's Metropolitan Police (Johnson 2014). As a result, the Mangrove was under constant police surveillance. It was regularly the subject of raids, where staff were accused of serving food and drink illegally, and

customers of using criminalised substances<sup>24</sup>. As Chapter 2 argued, the migration of colonised people to Britain led to colonial policing migrating with them. Some aspects of state violence and harassment had been considered outdated in Britain, but the racialisation of crime and deviancy gave it a renewed legitimacy and emboldened the police. Proof of drug deals was never found on the premises of the Mangrove, and Scotland Yard admitted that the first raid was not based on intelligence; past raids were then used as grounds for future suspicion.

In response, a group of longstanding Mangrove frequenters organised an 'Action Group for the Defence of the Mangrove' to provide legal defence for local blacks accused of breaking the law, and called for the officers who instigated the raids and arrests to be sacked. The owner of the Mangrove wanted to pursue institutional solutions to the problem through local MPs and the courts, but the Action Group insisted he turn to the community in organising its own collective self-defence (Bunce & Field 2014). The approach of the Action Group is unsurprising, as they understood racism as an injustice reproduced by state institutions, rather than simply the bigotry of individual police officers. By organising independently of state structures, the Action Group's intent was to confront the state directly.

This grassroots initiative culminated in a picket outside the Mangrove in August 1970 (Keith 1993: 47). Over 500 officers (including Special Branch and CID) policed the demonstration of fewer than 200 activists, many of whom had been under close police surveillance. The police formed barriers blocking the march, confronting the demonstrators head-on. This inevitably led to pushing, scuffles and eventually more widespread confrontation. Bottles, bricks and stones were thrown at police as they surged forward with truncheons,

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<sup>24</sup> Race Today - September/October 1977, p. 127, accessed Institute of Race Relations archive

outnumbering the protesters three to one (Bunce & Field 2014). Nine arrests were made, with demonstrators charged with a range of offences, including 'inciting a riot' and 'assault on a police officer' (Farrar 2004: 6). The accused became known as the Mangrove Nine, and their case was politically charged from the outset. Their campaign was covered extensively in *Race Today*, with which some of the defendants were formally associated<sup>25</sup>.

Given the attitude shown towards the black community by the police, not only in their aforementioned indifference to racist street violence, but also the violence that they themselves had engaged in towards the black community, the trial of the Mangrove Nine was considered a continuation of this state-sanctioned repression. The Fanonian (1967) dialectic between racial violence and resistance by those subjected to it, was played out in Empire's capital. The overt violence activists considered necessary for resisting the policing of protest had shifted to a campaign challenging the structural violence of the criminal justice system. Covered widely by the black press, the racist suppression of black community members, like the attacks in 1958, fuelled greater support. Over double the number of protesters who came to the original demonstration outside the Mangrove came out in support of the Mangrove Nine<sup>26</sup>.

The prosecution rested on testimony from four officers claiming to have simultaneously watched through the single narrow observation window from inside their van as Darcus Howe, the highest-profile defendant, incited the riot. It was put that the officers each had one eye peering out at the demonstrators. Howe's response was, of course, "where was your face?", exposing the absurdity of such a claim and the fabrication presented by the

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<sup>25</sup> *Race Today* 1970-71, accessed Institute of Race Relations Archive

<sup>26</sup> *Race Today* 1970-71, accessed Institute of Race Relations Archive

prosecution. Three of the Mangrove Nine defended themselves in court, drawing attention not only to the irregularities in the cases against them, but also to the racist approach of the British state towards black people in the UK and abroad. The activists illustrated how the violence of police and the criminalisation of black people were tactics common in colonies such as the Caribbean, which had now been transposed to the centre of Empire. All nine were acquitted of the most serious charge of inciting a riot; four found guilty of assault received suspended sentences.

This campaign demonstrated that black people could defend themselves from the state, both physically on the streets of Notting Hill and intellectually in the highest criminal court in the land. As the Black Defence Committee stated in 1977: 'the Mangrove is part of a long history of brutality'<sup>27</sup>, and black activists took it upon themselves to support the physical place and what it came to represent. This space, and its position as a symbol of Black Power, built an important bridge between spontaneous unrest and community organising. The power of the Action Group for the Defence of the Mangrove was felt not only by those it represented, but also by those it challenged, as it laid the foundations of future forms of resistance.

The victory of the Mangrove Nine campaign generated renewed energy and confidence in Britain's Black Power movement. The Notting Hill Carnival was established five years later, cementing the area as a black space in London. The Carnival saw uprisings during the

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<sup>27</sup> Notting Hill Commission of Enquiry Into Police Brutality and Malpractice Against the Black Community, circa 1977, npn, accessed Institute of Race Relations Archive

1976 processions, and the Mangrove was attacked by police during the festival the following year<sup>28</sup>. These incidents mobilised far more people than the 1970 protests at the Mangrove, reaffirming Notting Hill and The Mangrove as spaces that symbolised Black Power in Britain. Stafford Scott, of Tottenham (north London), recalls the mobilisation spreading to other parts of the capital:

from the days of the Notting Hill riots, when man was getting mash up and bash up and bruk up in Notting Hill, it is well known, it is well, a legend, that when the people from Brixton left Brixton, [and] went down there to help them, that that all got dealt with (Scott, Brixton Field Notes, 3 October 2015).

It was not long, therefore, before the centre of black British organising shifted from west London to south London, and as the 1970s drew to a close, it was Brixton that became synonymous with the black political movement.

#### 'The Great Insurrection': Brixton, South London

A lot of people who are not African Caribbean, in those days could not see or feel what we were going through. And it was the height of their Sus Laws. So the police didn't need no records, dem just need to just feel you going to tief<sup>29</sup> something, and they could just take you to court, and find you guilty of it. And it happened to me and it happened to my friends. It happened so many times to other people that they

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<sup>28</sup> Race Today - September/October 1977, pp.123-128, accessed Institute of Race Relations Archives

<sup>29</sup> to thieve, to steal

thought damn, I might as well do something ... Because more time y'know man dem wasn't afraid of the police. Man wasn't scared of police. We stood up to dem (Kwaku, Brixton Field Notes, 3 October 2015).

A proud, long-serving resident and activist in Brixton, Kwaku asserts that pre-emptive arrests in the 1970s/'80s, made with no evidence but merely suspicion that a crime might take place, arguably as a result of over-zealous and often racist policing, effectively criminalised those who had previously not committed illegal acts. This criminalisation was built on a series of racial stereotypes that included muggings – street robberies associated with African-Caribbean men which led to a 'moral panic' during the 1970s (Hall et al. 1978) (Chapter 2). Kwaku reveals that the racist policing was having a radicalising and alienating effect. Rather than disincentivising the criminalised acts that the press attributed to African Caribbeans (ibid.), police repression had the opposite effect, aggravating young people who already felt the law was rarely on their side.

In the mid-1960s, a new publication forced the British population outside black communities to accept, through official channels, that the police engaged in violent racist behaviour against African-Caribbean people. This watershed was brought about when *Nigger Hunting in England* was published in 1966. Its author, Joseph Hunt, a white member of the Brixton community, covered the use of dogs and other violence against black members of the public. The book focused on police officers who went looking for black people to harass, assault and/or frame for an offence. Building on this momentum, in August 1969 the United Coloured People's Association held a Black Power rally against police brutality in Brixton (Sivanandan 2008). Despite black resistance in Brixton and other parts of London in the 1960s, the quotidian, lived experiences of blacks in south London appeared to

change little over the decades that followed. This section traces the activism that went some way towards exposing racist violence and defending those most likely to be subjected to it.

State violence was coupled with hostilities from non-state actors, generally associated with far-right groups such as the National Front. Although there were numerous cases of racist assault, one in particular, in 1981, led to a national campaign:

Those kinds of attacks were commonplace back in those days. In that year also, the New Cross Massacre Action Committee mobilised some 15-20,000 people, and we marched from New Cross to Hyde Park to protest the massacre and how it had been handled by the authorities. It was a march for justice, the Black People's Day of Action (Kwesi-Johnson, Brixton Field Notes, 3 October 2015).

This account from activist-poet Linton Kwesi-Johnson was covered extensively in the pages of *Race Today*, to which Kwesi-Johnson was a regular contributor. The Black People's Day of Action forms part of a narrative that began when a sixteenth-birthday party in the home of a black family in New Cross (south London), caught fire. The survivors and members of the local community considered this to be more than an unfortunate, inexplicable accident, particularly given the prevalence of racially motivated arson attacks at this time (La Rose 2011). Thirteen people died in what was dubbed a 'massacre', and it surprised few in the black community when the police refused to investigate the fire as suspicious (Murray 1986). The British Black Panther Movement toured the country to rally the masses for a Day of Action. Children were brought out of school to spend the day learning

the politics of Black Power and workers went on strike in solidarity with those killed, culminating in the largest black-led demonstration in British history (Bunce & Field 2014) described by Kwesi-Johnson above. People from all over the country participated in this march, and a day of action is still held every year to commemorate the loss of life and to reflect on the challenges still faced over thirty years later. This largely peaceful demonstration, which demanded action from state institutions, did not lead to the government or police changing their position. Later that year, the non-violent resistance to these cases of overt and structural oppression would commingle with a more rebellious confrontation.

In the spring and summer of 1981, thirty urban areas of Britain erupted with popular uprisings (Bunyan 1981). One of the most significant provocations was 'Swamp 81' in Brixton, involving over a hundred plain-clothed police officers raiding homes and businesses, as well as stopping and searching anyone who looked like a street crime 'suspect' (Kettle & Hodges 1982). Police officers engaged in the Swamp 81 used 'sus' laws, and law which dated back to the nineteenth century originally intended to combat vagrancy, but now being used to stop, search, question and detain any individual whom the police suspected of engaging in criminal activity. Local activist, Devon Thomas, described the Swamp:

They started a ting in '81 called 'The Swamp', where they said black youth was drapsin<sup>30</sup> up people and tiefin<sup>31</sup> them and tings at the bus stop, and all type a tings. So they bring in a squad. And I remember, during that kind of time, my mother was the age of a lady. And she was down in Brixton with her shopping bag, and police [were even] stopping and searching her shopping bag once, about a

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<sup>30</sup> dragging at

<sup>31</sup> stealing

week before the flames went up. So we knew something was going on that was out of what we were used to (Thomas, Brixton Field Notes, 3 October 2015).

These everyday indignities, suffered by men and women, are part of the often-overlooked context to the Brixton uprisings. Racist criminalisation is often gendered as male, and this account demonstrates that women were also subject to the 'sus' laws and other forms of state violence (Mama 1993b). Many black people felt that aggravated policing had reached intolerable levels, as illustrated with reference to mothers in the community being subject to harassment. While the community suffered the repression of 'Swamp', the head of one local CID adopted a somewhat different perspective on the initiative: "more than 1,000 people were stopped and there were just over 100 arrests in the first four days ... It was a resounding success" (Race & Class 1981: 224). Predictably, the conflict between the civil liberties of Brixton's local community, and the commitment to harass, interrogate and detain by the local police force, culminated in direct collective confrontation. Days later, 100 black youths released an injured youngster who had been arrested and put in a police van. Devon Thomas wasn't far from this confrontation:

a young man had an altercation 'pon Railton Road, and he get stab. And when these people stab him, they [the police] draw him in a [police] car, and dem a question him while he a bleed. And the man who were hanging out on the line didn't like it. 'Im say: "Take 'im fi hospital". And they told him to "go away, go away". So they open the police car and take the boy outside, put him in a cab and sent him to King's College Hospital (Thomas, Brixton Field Notes, 3 October 2015).

Here, Thomas conveys the dehumanising nature of the police refusal to allow the young

man to receive medical attention. The young men who released him from custody may have saved his life, preventing him from bleeding to death in the police van. Like the mother being harassed above, criminalisation clouds the vulnerability of old age and the injury of those at the receiving end of 'sus' – the uprisings in this context are arguably an affirmation of the right to live. A twenty-minute battle against police with riot shields and dogs ensued. The next day, police patrolled in heavy numbers, and when a young black man was arrested and beaten by police outside a minicab station, young blacks from the local area attacked police vehicles and officers:

we heard a knock on the door, the boys said: "Come, something fi happen down on Railton Road!" So me locked me door, and me a run round to the brudda dem – Eric Knights, and a couple more boys. And we see six man pick up this Mini, and carry it into the road and just turn it over like it was a bail of straw. And as the petrol start pour out, there were people everywhere. It was like a war zone because people were just lickin down Railton Road. At the time, a whole heap of corrugated iron was around the place. So they just piled up the iron, bricks, bottle, it was like they designed the place especially for urban insurrection. So the police never know what dem a do. And the boys on the lines then decides to throw ... and then as the SPG<sup>32</sup> van come up the road, they jump out from behind the ting a rhaatid<sup>33</sup> the van. And the van skewed to the side of the road, jump out, look round, and we'd run an left it. And I thought, "Hang on a minute. Wasn't there more man that were coming round here?" And then I see nuff man come down the road, with crate and ting. And it was like everyone was in the spirit of the revolution. Everybody in the

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<sup>32</sup> Special Patrol Group (SPG), now called the Territorial Support Group, are specially trained officers who deal with violence and public order offences

<sup>33</sup> exclamation conveying the impact of a high velocity missile being thrown

same frame of mind at the same time (Thomas, Brixton Field Notes, 3 October 2015).

Here, Thomas reflects on the perception that the violence of the police had to be met with violence on the part of the local community. But as Fanon (1967) argues, violent uprisings are not simply a revolt against state repression, but a process of consciousness-raising. A sense of community and a united sense of purpose was forged in the face of state power that had created conditions of conflict. The political nature of these rebellions was conveyed through accounts like the one above, the analyses in the black radical press, and black cultural expression. It was Linton Kwesi-Johnson who dubbed the Brixton 'riots' a 'great insurrection', through his poem of the same name. Despite the perceived victory of the uprising, and the arguably macho nostalgia with which these somewhat chaotic yet in many ways co-ordinated rebellions are remembered by local activists, four years later further police violence rained down in black Britain's unofficial capital:

I was first alerted when I heard a noise ... which I now know was the breaking-in of the door. I opened my eyes, and I saw my mum walking towards the door ... then I heard another noise, and when I jumped up, I just saw, my mum was on the floor. She looked like she'd been pushed ... I stood up on the bed, and there was a policeman standing there with a gun in his hand, standing over my mum (Groce, Brixton Field Notes, 3 October 2015).

The above quote is from Lee Groce – he was eleven years old when police broke into his family's home in September 1985. Officers were allegedly searching for Lee's older brother, who was not at home. The police shot their mother Cherry Groce in the back as

she ran up the stairs in her nightdress, paralysing her from the waist down<sup>34</sup>. Whereas the rebellion against the violence of 'sus' is a communal response performed in the public arena of the street, this took place in the private sphere. As Chapter 2 argued, the patriarchal nature of state racism leads to its power being manifested across both spheres (Roberts 1997), and the police strategy of early-morning raids was arguably a violation of the sanctity of home life, an invasion of the private sphere. Like Kwaku's account above, we have a young man describing the abuse of his mother at the hands of state agents; although this example is more violent and extreme, they both highlight the often overlooked racial violence suffered by women.

While spontaneous uprisings emerged in response to the shooting of Cherry Groce, more organised forms of resistance were also employed, as Devon Thomas recalls:

I was chilling at my house, I was chair of the Brixton Defence Committee. It was formed in the '80s, we formed it in '81, and we kept on a ready footing, every time. I got a call from a colleague who worked at the law centre, so we'd go round there, and there was an operation that same night. And I lived in the Law Centre for the next week ... me and about another six guys, we lived in the Law Centre. We had to sleep on the floor and command the phones. There was nothing like mobile phone and ting – if you wanted to sort out things you had to be there (Thomas, Brixton Field Notes, 3 October 2015).

The Brixton Defence Committee, first established to defend young people arrested follow-

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<sup>34</sup> Lee Groce is now an anti-violence campaigner.

ing the uprisings in 1981, now turned their attention to Cherry Groce and her family. Although there was no overt racial language in the title of the organisation, Brixton's association with its black community was enough to communicate the message of anti-racism. With the support of activists associated with the British Black Panther Movement and the Race Today Collective, Brixton remained a focal point of black resistance in Britain. But Black Power in London was not confined to the south of the river; although it did not employ the language of Black Power overtly, Tottenham's African-Caribbean population were soon embroiled in the spirit of resistance.

#### "An Unnecessary Necessity": Tottenham, North London

While the overt violence and resistance following the shooting of Cherry Groce appeared to be confined to Brixton, these events reverberated in other black communities in London and beyond. Stafford Scott, co-founder of the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign in Tottenham explains:

When we in Tottenham, hear about a black sister, a black mother, being shot in her back as she's turned and running away, running up the stairs, we felt it in Tottenham. We may not have kicked off there like they kicked off here [in Brixton], but believe me we felt it, we talked about it. Everybody in our community heard about it, and we were enraged (Scott, Brixton Field Notes, 3 October 2015).

A week after Cherry Groce was shot, on 5 October 1985 police in Tottenham arrested Floyd Jarrett for what they claimed was a vehicle tax infringement. Scott recounted the

events of 1985 during a series of weekly protests outside the Old Bailey in 2014, while another Tottenham resident, Nicky Jacobs, was being tried for the murder of a police officer during the Broadwater Farm uprisings nearly 30 years before. (A number of Broadwater Farm residents were also present outside the court, including those wrongfully accused of killing police officer Keith Blakelock during the disturbances. Jacobs was eventually found innocent of all charges.)

There are conflicting histories of what took place after Floyd Jarrett's arrest; the following is a summary of Stafford Scott's account. Jarrett's arrest in 1985 was shortly after the rebellion in Brixton detailed above. Police confiscated, among other things, a set of keys to his mother's home. Under the pretext of searching for stolen property, the officers used the keys to enter the property, where Jarrett's mother and younger sister were living. During the unlawful search, Floyd's mother, Cynthia Jarrett, was pushed over by police and left on the floor. This further violation of the private sphere led to the second tragedy suffered by a black mother at the hands of the state in as many weeks – Cynthia Jarrett died of a heart attack.

In response, older members of the black community, including Bernie Grant, then leader of Haringey Council, led a peaceful march to the local Tottenham police station. It is worth noting that Grant, one of Britain's first African-Caribbean council leaders, was later MP for Tottenham from 1987 to 2000. He was known for his socialist politics and outspoken commitment to anti-racism and anti-imperialism (Ware & Back 2001: 2014-6). The demonstrators demanded the suspension of the officers and a full enquiry into the death of Cynthia Jarrett. When the protesters became tired and frustrated, the elders went to the local West Indian Centre to discuss what to do next. The younger people, however, decided to march

back to Tottenham Police Station.

When leaving Broadwater Farm the protesters saw the police waiting for them. Given the events in Brixton the previous week, Haringey Police were now ready for a head-on confrontation. Scott recalls seeing hundreds of riot police, armed with shields and batons, shouting: "Go back home you black bastards!" and other racist slurs. The unfortunate but predictable consequences of this type of police goading was violence. Bricks, bottles and other missiles were thrown at police as they battled on the estate for hours. Late in the evening, a building caught fire and the fire brigade were called. The young people agreed to allow the firefighters onto the estate, but warned that no police should come through with them. Rejecting these demands, a number of officers followed the firefighters in. The majority of the police officers had left the scene; one of the few remaining was PC Keith Blakelock, who was stabbed and died from his injuries. Over 200 police officers were injured in the Broadwater Farm uprising. The raid that resulted in the death of Cynthia Jarrett, followed by a provocation that led to a violent uprising, had now ended with a second death, that of a police officer.

The following day, Bernie Grant arranged for cleaners to come to Broadwater Farm and clear up the mess. The police feared a second night of conflict, and watched as every scrap of debris was disposed of. The clean-up was a success, and the young people remained peaceful the following evening. The police, determined to find the killer of PC Blakelock, did not respond in kind. They were, however, hampered by the lack of evidence following the clear-up, and by the lack of local witnesses given that they had stated that everyone was a potential suspect. The police raided over a hundred homes, taking arrestees to police stations all over London and often refusing them legal representation.

The estate was under police occupation for several months with, according to Bridges (1986), between 200 and 400 officers patrolling Broadwater Farm at any given time. One mother living on the estate told Race Today:

Doors were broken down, people beaten up, searches made and photographs taken. Phones have been cut off, or tampered with. We have learnt that the police question our visitors, and notes are made of people entering and leaving the estate ... The police question the residents. We were asked about our country of birth<sup>35</sup>.

This level of blanket violence and harassment against a specific community is almost unprecedented on the British mainland. It is however, reminiscent of colonial policies which razed entire villages to the ground following a violent uprising (Elkins 2005, McGovern 2015). As the Mangrove Nine argued in court (and as Chapter 2 illustrated), the migration of colonised peoples to Britain saw colonial practices transposed from former colonies, to the old centre of Empire. Boys as young as 14 were arrested in school grounds and taken to police stations for questioning. The police even targeted schools for children with Special Educational Needs. Race Today were told:

Children have been arrested and kept in detention ... Parents have been refused access to children, who are being moved to different institutions around the country<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> Race Today - January 1986, p. 13 accessed Institute of Race Relations Archives

<sup>36</sup> Race Today - January 1986, p. 13 accessed Institute of Race Relations Archives

Stafford Scott recalls having armed police raid his home, putting guns to the faces of his mother and younger sister. He was cuffed on the wrists and ankles, and carried by police while they punched him and used his head to open swinging doors. Thrown across the floor of the cell, his head was stopped from hitting the opposite wall by the boot of an officer who asked his superior for "Ten minutes with the black bastard". Fearing for his life, Scott was stripped naked and had bodily samples forcibly taken. Echoing the experiences of blacks who suffered violence at the hands of British colonial forces a generation previously (Patton 2004, McGovern 2015), his experience was by no means unique among his Broadwater Farm contemporaries<sup>37</sup>.

The Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign was soon set up to defend the young people subjected to this treatment. One of its primary roles was the defence of Winston Silcott, Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghupathi who were charged and eventually convicted with the murder of Keith Blakelock in 1985. Protests outside the Old Bailey, prison visits, writing letters and maintaining the profile of the case and campaign were all vitally important to those accused and others at risk. Gaining widespread support was difficult given descriptions in the press of Winston Silcott as a 'wild killer ape' and a 'dreadful Black visage' (Adams 1994). The racism that led to African-Caribbean people being criminalised was escalated, with animalistic comparisons attacking the humanity of Silcott and others. While the state instigated racial violence reminiscent of that in the colonies, the mainstream press drew on colonial narratives that framed people of African heritage as primitive primates.

Thanks to a popular movement led by the community, the three men who were charged with the murder of Keith Blakelock saw their convictions overturned in 1991. The court

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<sup>37</sup> Scott, Old Bailey Field Notes, 3 March 2014

ruled that the evidence was 'unsafe and unsatisfactory' after forensic evidence proved that parts of Winston Silcott's statement were not made by him. The conclusion, therefore, was that the statement had in fact been fabricated by the police (Rose 1992: 77–84). The year 1985 saw some of the biggest civil disturbances in Tottenham's history, leading to high-profile trials and miscarriages of justice overturned by grassroots resistance. Like Notting Hill in the 1960s and '70s, followed by Handsworth and Brixton in the 1980s, racialised struggles marked Tottenham indelibly. Direct confrontation to racial violence, as Fanon argues, is a necessary feature of the road to liberation. The Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign was more than an initiative to keep local residents out of prison, it was a statement that people in the area were organised and unwilling to concede or consent to multiple levels of state violence. In 2011, the Tottenham Defence Campaign was re-established by some of the same people who were active in 1985, continuing Tottenham's legacy as a space racialised as black.

### From Cooperation to Co-optation?

As the previous sections have shown, the period before the mid-1980s saw, through struggles against racial violence, spaces in London and Birmingham become racialised as black. As they became racial metonyms, localised campaigns built up networks of solidarity across the country. What also started in the 1980s, however, was a decline in black social movements (Tompson 1988, Shukra 1997, Kundnani 2007). Consensus is yet to be reached over why this decline took place, but a number of explanations have been suggested. Drawing on the conceptual arguments presented in the previous chapter, this section will illustrate how the logic of neoliberalism claims that meritocracy governs social outcomes, with racialised inequalities consequently blamed on the shortcomings of individuals

(Douglas 2012). Neoliberalisation has therefore led to anti-racist activism being channelled towards the delivery of public services or lobbying in the area of public policy, as explained below.

Following the urban rebellions in the early-to-mid-1980s, the government began discussing possible avenues for avoiding future uprisings. While many of the proposals involved police violence or harsher sentencing, the government also discussed softer approaches. Confidential discussions between the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and then Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, declassified in 2015, indicate that the government was

concerned that the pool of disaffected, mostly black, young people in the cities should not be allowed to increase, and that visible action should be taken to better the “life chances” of this very difficult group.<sup>38</sup>

The final three words of the above quotation are underlined in the original, signalling that the state considered the problem of urban revolt to be attributable to the young people involved, rather than the policing they resisted. One proposal in the confidential government correspondence was an ‘Inner City Initiative’ that would ‘encourage small black businesses’<sup>39</sup> in areas such as Tottenham and Brixton. Ministers and civil servants considered the ‘Black Business in Birmingham Initiative’ (ibid.) a model for black areas in London, and, as illustrated earlier in the chapter, black business-owners were often closely aligned with

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<sup>38</sup> REGIONAL POLICY. Inner cities policy and problems: regeneration of Liverpool and London; Docklands Urban Development Corporation; Docklands Light Railway and Canary Wharf; South Cardiff urban renewal: part 8, p. 179, 1986 Feb 04 – 1986 Nov 29, available at The National Archives, Kew, accessed 5 January 2016

<sup>39</sup> REGIONAL POLICY. Inner cities policy and problems: regeneration of Liverpool and London; Docklands Urban Development Corporation; Docklands Light Railway and Canary Wharf; South Cardiff urban renewal: part 8, p. 166, 1986 Feb 04 - 1986 Nov 29, available at The National Archives, Kew, accessed 5 January 2016

the state. The approach of the government therefore served two functions. First, as shown following the Handsworth uprising black business owners can be easily co-opted by the government and mobilised against black people who engage in civil unrest. A proliferation of black businesses could potentially make managing urban revolts easier, as the state would be more likely to have petit-bourgeois allies within black communities, which they could use as a proxy against the poor. Secondly, the Inner City Initiative served the ideological interests of the state. Rather than the state using tax revenue to generate public sector employment, neoliberalisation sees the private sector as the primary job creator. The role of the state under neoliberalism is to facilitate market growth by encouraging individuals to compete for waged labour or a share in the market through entrepreneurship (Larner 2000). Thus, poverty and unemployment is the fault of inefficient individuals falling behind in a competitive market, rather than a violent neoliberal state reproducing existing inequalities. This approach would further strengthen arguments that future rebellions have little to do with social injustice, and are instead the result of lazy or morally deficient individuals or communities.

It is important to note that, despite the neoliberal proposals of the government, few became concrete policies. This can be partly attributed to government agents who critiqued neoliberalism from the conservative right. In 1985, government advisor Oliver Letwin argued that state funding for black businesses would be wasted on 'Rastafarian arts and crafts workshops' and the 'disco and drug trade' (Travis 2015: npn). According to Letwin, '[l]ower-class unemployed white people had lived for years in appalling slums without a breakdown of public order on anything like the present scale' (ibid.), implying that violent unrest can be attributed to the 'bad moral attitudes' (ibid.) of black youths. Letwin has since apologised for his comments, conceding that they were 'badly worded' (ibid.). It is

important we take note of the phrasing of Letwin's statement; as scholars such as Goldberg (2009) point out, it is not socially acceptable to articulate racism overtly, as Letwin did in these internal correspondences. A more carefully worded articulation of racism, which perhaps used racialised language such as 'urban youth' or 'muggers' (Hall et al 1978), might have proved less of an embarrassment for Letwin, who at the time of writing serves as Prime Minister David Cameron's policy chief.

Another stumbling block neoliberal co-optation came up against were local councils. Whereas Birmingham City Council had been a willing partner in the government's Black Business in Birmingham Initiative, there were concerns in London, where some councils, 'most notably Southwark, are hostile and politically extreme to the extent of failing to co-operate with most government programmes'<sup>40</sup>. In order to overcome this problem, the Thatcher government set about restructuring local councils, removing much of their decision-making autonomy and putting these powers back into the hands of central government. This change facilitated neoliberalism by not only preventing more left-leaning councils from blocking government programmes, but also, as illustrated below, preventing councils from supporting radical grassroots organisations.

In the 1980s Margaret Thatcher's government centralised budgets and powers previously wielded by local councils, which reduced the financial resources available to grassroots community groups. This was particularly pertinent in London, with the break-up in 1986 of the Greater London Council, run by the socialist-oriented Ken Livingstone. Furthermore,

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<sup>40</sup> REGIONAL POLICY. Inner cities policy and problems: regeneration of Liverpool and London; Docklands Urban Development Corporation; Docklands Light Railway and Canary Wharf; South Cardiff urban renewal: part 8, p. 248, 1986 Feb 04 - 1986 Nov 29, available at The National Archives, Kew, accessed 5 January 2016

the establishment of the 'third sector' saw non-profit groups carrying out research, delivering welfare services or managing 'community relations' (Ambikaipaker 2015). This was part of a neoliberal project, whereby more democratically accountable councils and public sector organisations were replaced by charitable organisations. Grassroots initiatives, many of which were critical of the state, then tended to have any funding either cut or redirected towards service delivery. Neoliberalism thus attempts to incorporate the plurality of racial diversity into existing power structures, turning anti-racist critiques of the state into charities providing for vulnerable individuals.

Often carrying out progressive work such as employment discrimination cases, policy organisations such as the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) asserted their presence on the black political landscape in the 1980s. This disconnected the struggle for racial justice from communities by bureaucratising political strategies. It also blamed racism on individuals, implicitly arguing that in a meritocratic society all that is needed is a process for weeding out prejudiced individuals. Some historians went as far as arguing that these organisations were aiming to create a black class hierarchy parallel to the existing white class structures (Tompson 1988, Sivanandan 1985). Professionalising activists, incorporating them into the structures of the state, was thus an attempt to neoliberalise the anti-racist struggle itself.

The outcome of the neoliberalisation of anti-racism has been investigated by scholars more recently. For example, in 2001, small-scale organising was taking place in black communities in London following a number of deaths in police custody. The campaign was adopted by the National Assembly Against Racism (NAAR), who invited a high-profile representative from the Greater London Authority (GLA) to speak on the topic at their AGM.

Owing to the aforementioned erosion of local government funding and the professionalisation of anti-racist activism, neither NAAR nor the GLA was able to help the deaths in custody campaigns organise the kind of popular movement that had proved influential in the past. Moreover, there is little evidence that institutional or governmental leadership was requested or required by the grassroots organisers. This example also shows how, through neoliberal professionalisation, '[m]ost funding that is received goes towards paying the salary costs of staff, leaving relatively minimal amounts for campaign activity' (Back et al. 2010: 40–43). Activists-turned-professionals have made challenging the state difficult. Rather than being empowered by the electorate or the communities they serve, they are often funded and held accountable by the same state structures that produce racial injustice (Lloyd 2004: 63). This has led to the creation of a race equality 'industry', where certain organisers can climb the social-economic hierarchy. Rather than responding to needs at the community level, issues are taken on if they are likely to be 'high impact' – increasing media coverage, affecting policy and increasing the likelihood of attracting further funding (Back et al. 2010).

Even mainstream voices such as Sir Al Aynsley-Green, the former Children's Commissioner, rhetorically asked 'how organisations can retain the independence to be fiercely critical of government policy where necessary if a significant stream of funding comes from government, and particularly if they are directly involved in helping to implement that policy?' (Webber 2011: npn). Organisations that confronted state racism head-on, particularly around issues relating to immigration, employment, school exclusion and criminal justice, see their funding severely limited if they are unwilling to be incorporated into the machinery of central government. For example, migrants' rights groups in 2014 were obliged to campaign for improved conditions in immigration detention centres, rather than challenging

their existence (Tyler, Gill, Conlon & Oeppen 2014). This means that grassroots groups which articulate Black Power overtly do not have access to the new method of resource accumulation. This marginalisation is compounded by the creeping taboo of 'race' (Goldberg 2001), which is considered controversial unless framed within the strict parameters of policy reform or welfare provision.

The neoliberalisation of resource allocation has become increasingly problematic as individuals and groups with similar interests are obliged to compete for limited financial support, with restrictions on how such money can be deployed. Showing remarkable foresight regarding the encroachment of the state into black-led grassroots initiatives, Sivanandan said in 1983 that centralised state-funding of civil society was 'destroying ... the self-reliance and community cohesion that we had built up in the 1960s' (67). Through the control of how community groups spend money and utilise other resources, Sivanandan saw anti-racist movements being co-opted into 'a parallel power structure for black people, separate development, bantustans — a strategy to keep race issues from contaminating class issues' (ibid.). Diluting radical politics helped the state shift the political agenda of those sections of civil society most struggling for resources.

Groups offering services comparable to those provided by local government stand a better chance of surviving the neoliberal tide (Ambikaipaker 2015). This historical shift, it is argued here, is deeply connected to black struggle against the state today. Grassroots organisations which articulate Black Power overtly have dissolved: the Black Defence Committee, the Black Panther Movement and the Race Today Alliance are examples. On the other hand, groups such as Tottenham Defence Campaign or Newham Monitoring Project (Chapter 5), with similar politics but articulated through their association with a racialised

space, have remained active well into the post-2011 period. There are of course many factors involved in organisations breaking apart, remaining active or changing in form. Yet the shift from overt anti-racist language to spatialised racial metonyms is an under-researched topic, for which this chapter provides some context. In the chapters that follow, I explore the historical legacies of black resistance to policing, the spaces in which these struggles took place, and how they have been articulated post-2011.

## Conclusion

The rich histories of black resistance to policing in Britain have often been, in one way or another, a struggle over space. For over 100 years, black people have responded to racist attacks in the urban areas where they settled. Over time, these areas have become spaces which racism has racialised, and where more organised forms of resistance have proliferated. The overt racism that dominated racial discourses in Britain until the 1990s was pushed to the margins with the gains of anti-racist initiatives. The neoliberalisation of social justice and the politics of race, however, attempted to move anti-racism to policy organisations and deliverers of public services, while simultaneously policing the parameters within which race is discussed (Goldberg 2009).

While popular uprisings and court cases have caught the attention of the national press, such high-profile developments have relied on an organised grassroots undercurrent. Pressure groups scrutinise state institutions, independent media outlets disseminate information, and community defence campaigns challenge state repression following urban un-

rest. This chapter has documented just a few of the political groups, actions and campaigns that have led to spaces in London and Birmingham being racialised as black. Yet the association with space has historically always operated alongside more overt articulations of Black Power and anti-racism. It is at the grass roots that the unmistakable militancy of the movement has reinforced places racialised as black. These initiatives have provided the means for a coherent narrative, constructing what appear on the surface – for those with only a superficial understanding of the social and political context – as disparate and loosely connected rebellions.

Racialisation marked Handsworth, Notting Hill, Brixton and Tottenham indelibly, with these places becoming symbols of blackness. This chapter has outlined three overlapping processes through which this racialisation is constituted. First, grassroots organising is spatialised, and a central component of anti-racist movements. Areas with growing black populations have been subjected to racial violence, such as the far-right activism in small communities in Birmingham and the policing of The Mangrove restaurant in Notting Hill.

Through black struggles in these urban areas, whereby communities have rebelled against racist aggression, the areas in which they live have been racialised as black. The endurance of black communities in the face of racism has resulted in black populations growing in these areas, but these spaces have become marked by criminalisation. Black youth in particular, who struggle to find work, provide the state with an easily identifiable target for projecting the racist trope of drug-dealer or aggressive thief. The antagonism between black youth and the officers tasked with policing them led to the most widespread urban revolts on the British mainland in living memory, galvanising radical black organising at the grass roots.

Secondly, the shared memories of radical black social movements in the four localities covered in this chapter, and other spaces such as Broadwater Farm and the Mangrove, have led to them becoming metonyms for black resistance. Rather than social movements operating within the physical borders after which they are named, these places are used to articulate a trans-regional black politics, connecting different black communities in Britain. This black solidarity, formed between different areas in places such as London, and described by Stafford Scott as “legendary”, remains the central theme of radical black public events in post-2011 London. The first-hand accounts used in this chapter were recorded at gatherings during my field research – issues relating to racist policing were contextualised by the historical uprisings in Brixton, Tottenham and elsewhere. Indeed, the urban uprisings of the 1980s posed such a threat to the existing order that the state sought to co-opt their legacies, by attempting to incorporate black activists and groups into mainstream organisations and structures of power.

The third argument put forward in this chapter demonstrates how neoliberalisation has attempted to smother the flames of resistance through a combination of co-optation and resource re-allocation. Despite resistance from some local councils and community groups (as well as reactionary officials such as Oliver Letwin), the British government of the 1980s steamrolled neoliberal reforms across the voluntary and community sector. This process continued well into the 2000s under Labour, as activist groups were provided with a simple ultimatum: support government policy, or risk downsizing or even closure. Thus, despite the differing policies or ideologies of those in power, the outcome for black communities remains consistent: economic marginalisation, state violence and the repression of resistance movements (Keith 1993). In this socio-political climate many radical black organisations crumbled. Groups that articulated black power and state confrontation in an overt

manner have been neoliberalism's worst casualty, with almost none of these groups, such as The Race Today Collective, remaining active in the post-2011 period. This can be partly attributed to what Goldberg (2009) calls anti-racism, whereby it becomes taboo to mention race overtly.

Operating somewhat under the radar are groups identified through their association with a racialised space, such as Tottenham. While organisations that use racial metonyms often share the radical politics of groups with more overt positions on black liberation, the decline in the language of anti-racism and Black Power is certainly a defeat for radical black struggles in Britain. The impact of the use of racial metonyms will be analysed as this thesis develops. This chapter's appraisal of the historical roots of this shift in language is essential for assessing black resistance to policing in post-2011 London and Birmingham.

Radical anti-racist action and thought are still alive, struggling to rekindle a movement from the embers of previous decades. Remembering historical events is vital in understanding the current context of black resistance to police violence. This summary of the distinct yet intrinsically connected histories of just a few of Britain's black communities will aid our understanding of how and why newer forms of activism were formed, examined in later chapters of this thesis. The spaces that have become racialised through more recent black political movements play a key role in articulating racialised discourses, by both the institutions that produce and reproduce racism and the communities resisting it. These constitutions of space through grassroots organising can be constitutive of contemporary forms of organising – that is, the historical memory of anti-police activism can inform more recent attempts at organising. Moreover, it is in the growth and subsequent marginalisation of these histories that we can understand the context of post-2011 organising.

## Chapter 5

### Placing Race: New Struggles Against Police Violence

... And they said then that Tottenham, that Broadwater Farm, was a symbolic location. And the reason they've made it a symbolic location, is because it's the place we gave them a bloody good hiding. It's the place we stood up, and they fell down ... So since then, there has been a vendetta against the community of Broadwater Farm, and a vendetta against the community of Tottenham (Stafford Scott, Tottenham Field Notes, 7 February 2015).

#### Introduction

On 4 August 2011, Mark Duggan, a black man who called Broadwater Farm his home, was shot dead by police on Ferry Lane, Tottenham. Duggan's family were not informed; they found out about the killing when it was reported on the evening news. Organising a march to Tottenham Police Station, the local community demanded answers from a senior officer. (The police would later claim that Duggan had fired shots at officers, a story widely reproduced by the press; however, it emerged that Duggan was in fact unarmed when killed, posing no immediate threat.) The protesters outside the police station became agitated as their requests were ignored. A group of women led some demonstrators into the station itself, confronting the police directly. When one of the women was struck by an officer, tempers flared. An unaccompanied police vehicle had a brick thrown through its window, and the area erupted into civil unrest. For five days, towns and cities across the country saw thousands of people take to the streets, attacking police stations and commercial outlets, battling with riot police and appropriating high-value goods.

In a packed public meeting in Tottenham, in October 2011, attendees fiercely debated the issues and strategies required to challenge police violence. A voice at the back identified itself as “a black woman” and demanded to be heard. Wearing a baseball cap low on her face, and a long dark green anorak, she stood up and exclaimed: “we’re always on the back foot, we’re always firefighting, it’s like we just keep going from one crisis to the next. And between each crisis, silence, as if nothing’s happened.” Similar sentiments were often repeated by older activists at public meetings responding to a death or serious injury at the hands of police in London. Meagre resources, constant recurrence of police brutality cases and the protracted nature of campaigns can make the visionary work of building solutions and alternatives virtually impossible. Instances of police violence often recur in a specific geographical location, making place a consistent theme in this research. Those mobilised are therefore motivated more by instances in their local area than by police violence in general. This has the potential to fragment resistance further.

This spatialisation of racial violence, and resistance to it, leads to places becoming racialised, or an existing racialisation becoming further entrenched. In this chapter I seek to answer three key questions, all of which relate to the racialisation of space. First, how does the spatialisation of police violence shape how black communities organise and articulate resistance to this violence? Secondly, what is the role of gentrification in compounding claims by black communities over racialised places? Finally, what are the effects of racialised spatial metonyms on black community organising? This chapter builds on the historical context of the previous chapter, and develops the theorisation of race and space analysed in Chapter 2. I draw on semi-structured interviews, literature analysis and observations made as an active participant in some of the organisations and institutions analysed

(Chapter 3). What I argue is that black political entities resisting policing are increasingly centred on spatial signifiers – racialised spaces such as Tottenham – employing a metonymic anti-racism rather than more overt racialised language. There are profound implications for this shift in political organising, which must be explored to assess the impact, and potential impact, of black resistance to policing in post-2011 London.

In what follows, racialised spaces and places (such as Tottenham) are analysed as metonyms, used to articulate black resistance to police violence. I argue that racialised metonyms which have developed over decades of black struggle require significant attention from scholars today. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first examines how black struggle mobilises around space following a particular event. Here, the state response to the 2011 civil unrest, involving widespread repression of black communities and the spaces they inhabit, is used as a specific case study. Secondly, this chapter investigates how gentrification affects the materialities and demographics of spaces racialised as black in London. Using Brixton, Tottenham and Ladbroke Grove as case studies, this chapter analyses the role that policing plays in this process, enabling us better to understand racialised spaces as they are identified in this thesis. The third section analyses how mobilisation around racialised places provides opportunities to rebuild struggle, as well as the pitfalls of these spatialised racial metonyms.

### **Conceptualising Race and Space**

Race, as Chapter 2 argued, is not just socially constructed around optical signifiers, but must be seen historically in relation to the spaces racialised peoples occupy, or to the

(supposed) geographical locations of their heritage (Dobzhansky & Livingstone 1962, Goldberg 1993b, McKittrick 2011). In Britain, space and place have held particular significance in analysing racialisation in the post-war period (Leach 1973, Jackson 1987, Dwyer & Bressey 2008). The theorisation of the relationship between society and space in the UK has been developed by scholars to offer a better understanding of how racialisation is also (and increasingly) marked by a coded vocabulary. This linguistic shift employs racial meanings through terms that 'ostensibly have no racial content' (Keith 1995: 553), in other words racial metonyms. Broadly speaking, these cultural indicators are constructed around linguistic, artistic and spatial formations (Hall 1990).

One of the ways in which racialisation is reproduced across space is through state violence (Wacquant 2010). It is therefore unsurprising that many of the areas of contestation between black communities and the police have been over physical places. These include streets, community buildings and housing estates, in addition to symbolic spaces associated with black communities. This chapter analyses how spatialised symbols became racialised metonyms (Solomos & Back 1994), conveying racialised geographies which, as analysed in Chapter 2, have become particularly pertinent in the face of neoliberal gentrification:

[T]he restructuring of national and urban economies in advanced capitalist countries toward services, recreation and consumption ha[s] propelled gentrification from a comparatively marginal preoccupation in a certain niche of the real estate industry to the cutting edge of urban change (Smith 1996: 7).

These shifts in how some parts of the city are structured economically are also influenced by cultural and political inputs, which facilitate the participation of a range of individuals and groups living and working in the area, in addition to larger capitalist investors (Paton 2014). While this process generally involves an apparent celebration of multiculturalism on the part of all actors, this chapter will demonstrate that outcomes vary. Differing perceptions of what the racial landscape of an area should look like, leads to some individuals or groups being passively ignored or actively displaced (Jacobs 2002). Spatialised racial metonyms both therefore reflect the (perceived) histories of these spaces and seek to challenge or manipulate gentrification in the here and now. They are also employed to create new black political identities. These spatialised identities deal with the police violence that is the immediate reality of community members, as well as the actual or threatened displacement from the spaces in question. Scholarship that analyses how racialised spaces are used to articulate black resistance against policing thus reveals the ways in which these spaces have become a metonym for grassroots black struggle.

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### Our Immediate Reaction: Crisis, Resistance and Racialised Spaces

Following the civil unrest in August 2011 after the police killing of Mark Duggan, black communities quickly mobilised civil defence. Members of the judiciary had been instructed to deliver the harshest possible punishments for riot-related offences, and they openly declared their commitment to passing 'deterrent' sentences. This led to mothers receiving

custodial sentences for handling goods appropriated in the unrest, suspects as young as eleven appearing in court, and a man with a history of mental health issues dying in jail while he awaited sentencing for stealing a gingerbread man (Bowcott & Bates 2011). Nearly 4,000 people were arrested in the weeks and months that followed the disturbances (Guardian & LSE 2012), and many were concerned that they were witnessing the criminalisation of an entire generation of young people. Communities across the capital mobilised in response, and on a warm September evening, in a large community centre hall, a wide range of people gathered to defend Tottenham from state repression.

Although Tottenham has a history of black organising against the police (Chapter 4), it is important to understand that such places do not constitute homogeneity but rather 'places of negotiation' (Massey 2005: 6). Present at the meeting was a mixture of older black anti-racist activists, Pan-Africanists, Rastafarians, youth workers, concerned parents, Haringey residents and some local white trade unionists, socialists and anarchists. Despite their broad range of political backgrounds, attendees were discouraged from engaging in theoretical political discussions once inside the meeting. Speeches and debates over long-term strategies to overthrow white supremacy or capitalism were thus absent from the discussion. Rather, the immediate dangers of state repression were addressed by the organisers, Tottenham Defence Campaign (TDC). Over 200 people gathered anxiously to find out how they could best deal with the increasing intensity of stops, searches, questioning, arrests, raids and incarceration.

It was quickly established that providing free legal advice for Haringey residents (the London Borough where Tottenham is situated) was a priority of TDC. One of the key instru-



This meeting in 2011 echoes the one following the 1985 Broadwater Farm uprisings in Tottenham. Police violence 26 years earlier compelled the black community of Tottenham to form a defence campaign (Adams 1998) (Chapter 4). During this period, Tottenham became part of the 'Front Line' in the battle against police violence, along with other areas racialised as black such as Brixton and Notting Hill (Keith 1993). Longstanding community organiser Stafford Scott was part of both the 1985 and 2011 defence campaigns in Tottenham. He is worth quoting at length here:

When I say Tottenham's a Front Line, I don't mean Tottenham's a place where people come to sell drugs and do things like that. When I say it's the Front Line, I mean it's at the fore of a battle against this onslaught of this militaristic, racist police force. And the reason we're at the fore of that battle, is because we had to set up a defence campaign, because we had to rise up, because the police took the life of a black woman in Tottenham, and we stood up to them ... It's the place where they want to get but they can't. It's the place where PC Blakelock lost his life ... And ever since then, they've ensured that it remains a symbolic location (Stafford Scott, Tottenham Field Notes, 7 February 2015).

Here, we see a number of racial metonyms employed. While black resistance and policing are described as what both Scott and the British press refer to as the 'Frontline' (Cohen 2013a), Tottenham and Broadwater Farm are places racialised as black, a "symbolic location". Scott says they are "a place where they want to get, but can't" – in saying this he does not necessarily mean that the police cannot enter the physical place that is Tottenham and spaces of historical resistance within it such as Broadwater Farm. What he

means is that the police, and the state, cannot penetrate the spirit of rebellion felt by those on the 'Front Line'.

The dual nature of the Front Line became clear one chilly October evening in 2011 when around a dozen members of TDC were distributing leaflets in a Tottenham council housing complex. When we reassembled, we noticed a number of police vans and some teenagers who had just been searched. The young locals had not been given an adequate reason for the search, and were told they would need to go to the police station if they wanted a receipt, which they declined. When we spoke to the teenagers, they recounted the increase in searches and raids since the unrest in August. As the police vans doubled back, creeping past us slowly, the faces staring out at us from the moving vehicles felt like part of an occupation rather than a routine patrol. The experiences of such policing can thus mark places with a racial stamp, continually reproduced through state violence and resistance to it.

### **Racialised Space: Beyond Borders**

In McKittrick's (2011) work, we see reference to the slave plantation and the subsequent racial violence which led to areas in North America developing a 'black sense of place'. Goldberg (2001) reminds us that the materialities of racism differ across historical periods and geographical boundaries, yet the power relations that racism reproduces remain constant (Chapter 2). These two theoretical points were brought to life during exchanges at a public meeting organised by TDC called 'The Enduring Effects of Slavery and Institutional Racism'<sup>41</sup>. The event took place in October 2013, and the organisers said they had been

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<sup>41</sup> [www.tmg-uk.org/the-enduring-effects-of-slavery-and-institutional-racism/](http://www.tmg-uk.org/the-enduring-effects-of-slavery-and-institutional-racism/) accessed 3 May 2015

planning it since the civil unrest in 2011. They hoped it would better contextualise how black communities in Tottenham and beyond experienced racial violence.

Nearly 400 people attended the day-long meeting, about 90–95 per cent of whom were African or African Caribbean. There were a number of ‘cultural nationalists’ in African and African-style dress, representing organisations such as the All Africa People's Parliament. There were also members of the Nation of Islam, recognisable by the slick suits, sharp hair styles and bowties worn by the men, with dresses and headscarves for the women. About thirty young people attended, ranging in age from about 14 to 25, who had been reserved seating at the front of the room. The few white people may have been there by invitation; they included radical lawyers and activists who had supported TDC and similar organisations in the past.

The visiting speaker, Dr Joy Degruy, discussed the links between experiences of violence under colonisation and racial violence in Britain today. Although there has been a range of formalised scholarly responses to Degruy’s work, what was made clear at the meeting was that the collective experience of racial violence endured by Tottenham’s black community is part of a collective memory shared by members of other black communities in Britain. This was illustrated by contributors from Brixton and Newham, drawing parallels with the histories and experiences of the areas in which they live. An additional, more abstract sense of place was drawn upon at this meeting, however: the plantations of the colonial Caribbean, with activists likening police brutality today to the brutality of chattel enslavement.

These overlapping networks of social relations were cited to illustrate a symbolic, collective sense of place that transcends physical boundaries but is also rooted in real-life experiences of racial violence. Despite the large geographical disjuncture between Britain and its (former) colonies, the conceptual consistencies that reproduce racial violence were continually highlighted at the meeting. Similarly, the organisers urged those visiting to return to Tottenham in order to support their struggles, promising that “Tottenham” would respond in kind. The racialisation of Tottenham is therefore constructed through both colonial histories and recent experiences of police brutality. These are developed in relation to each other, as well as in relation to other spaces of police violence in contemporary Britain. The racialisation of these spaces is compounded by the histories of resistance and unrest such as the 1985 Broadwater Farm uprisings (Chapter 4) and the civil disturbances in August 2011.

### **Crime and the Metaphorology of Space**

While state violence is the primary focus of organisations such as TDC, conflict between different groups of young people was also an issue raised by many of the organisers I interviewed and interacted with. There is extensive literature on how racialised spaces are contested by young people through so-called turf or postcode wars (Watt 1998, Gyngell & Lewis 2006, Briggs 2010). Although my research focuses on the spatialities of state violence, analysing intracommunal violence is still useful. This is because the racialised discourses of ‘black-on-black’, gang<sup>42</sup> or serious youth violence are used as a justification for aggressive policing in black communities.

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<sup>42</sup> The ‘gang’ will be examined in more detail in Chapter 6

Tottenham in the London Borough of Haringey is often portrayed as a place in which violence is normalised. This racialised criminalisation is reproduced in media such as *The Guardian*, which uncritically quoted the Press Association (2014: npn): 'The police had been authorised to use section 60 powers, which allow random searches, in the Haringey area because of gangland violence'. This is reflected in police press statements, which cite 'gang tensions' (Moore 2011: npn) in explaining the use of such powers. One police approach to dealing with 'gang tensions' is deployed in the so-called Operation Shield, which has received widespread criticism from those engaged in black community organising.

So the war on Tottenham, and I say this because I read an article recently that tried to tell me that the days of the Front Line is over, but that article was written by someone who's never been on the Front Line in their life. They tell me that the days of the Front Line is over, but here they come again. Here they come again ... [Operation Shield is] 'the first project in the capital to go beyond individual members, to target gangs as a whole, and will see every known member of a gang penalised for a range of civil and criminal penalties, when one gang member commits a violent crime, such as a stabbing' [quoting from an unspecified text] ... and they're bringing it to Tottenham for what reason? They're bringing it to Tottenham for revenge. Because there's no other reason. They have no relationship with this community, and clearly by bringing this sort of thing into our back yard, they don't want a relationship with this community, unless it's on the Front Line (Stafford Scott, Tottenham Field Notes 7 February 2015: npn).

In contrast to the press, which criminalises this racialised space, Scott uses Tottenham as a metonym for a battleground against racist state violence. Tottenham therefore requires a

collective campaign of defence which goes beyond its physical boundaries. Drawing distinct divisions on opposing sides of the 'Front Line', Scott refers to the state, and specifically the police, as 'they', with 'our back yard' creating a spatial metonym for the racialised politics of Tottenham.

The majority of those who attended TDC events were people who identify as black. It was clear that this shared sense of anti-racist solidarity was an important component in the running of the campaign. At the very first meeting, participants not only put their names and contact details on a circulation list, but also disclosed whether or not they were from Tottenham. This appears to have been done to ensure that the campaign remained Tottenham-led, working class-led, and black-led. The latter two are socio-cultural characteristics associated with Tottenham and it is therefore likely that those identifying as local residents were also working-class members of the black community, since they are the largest ethnic group in the area (Haringey Council 2012). There seemed to be a sense of pride and 'neighbourhood nationalism' (Back 1996) about being from this place, which, in the face of racist violence, articulated a communal sense of defiance.

It could be argued that space is being essentialised in this context, with residence in Tottenham treated as a determining factor in the political identity and commitment of an individual. Even though a wide range of political identities came together to support TDC, Tottenham's local MP, David Lammy, showed no support for the campaign. There are clearly conflicting views among local residents as to how civil unrest and state violence should be addressed. Jason Nwansi, a Tottenham-based poet and rapper, performed during vigils organised by the family and supporters of Mark Duggan. Some time after the unrest in

2011, he recorded a poem that articulates the socio-political divisions within the black community:

Dear David Lammy, do you even have a tongue?  
Coz you're like a ghost in the town that I'm from.  
You carved an image for yourself as Tottenham's good old son,  
From the mean streets of Tottenham, to a backbench bum.  
Silent when it's time to fight for justice and what's true,  
And you're a million miles away from the modern-day Tottenham youth.<sup>43</sup>

Here, 'ghost' and 'miles away from the modern-day Tottenham youth' communicate the political disjuncture between David Lammy MP and Tottenham as a politicised entity. A political position which is considered to be uncritical of state violence is thus described as distant from the racialised places and peoples upon which such violence is carried out. In reality, of course, spaces racialised as black such as Tottenham constitute a set of 'changing and differential perspectives' (McKittrick 2011: 950) shaped by racial violence. These conflicting political approaches further complicate black resistance to policing, making long-term strategies for solutions all the more difficult. While reacting to a case of brutality can bring many sections of London's black communities together, constructing alternatives often brings to the surface political differences among individuals and groups. Institutional figures such as David Lammy are one example of this; these divisions will be revisited in the final section of this chapter.

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<sup>43</sup>'The Silence of the Lammy' [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRdrZUTRhGA&safe=active](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRdrZUTRhGA&safe=active) accessed 20 November 2014

## Racialisation of Place: Gentrification, Public Space and Policing

An important explanation given by black community organisations for the sense of ownership over somewhere like Tottenham, is gentrification. This section shows how, in addition to spatialised police racism and resistance, gentrification has strengthened the metonymic anti-racist message of black community organisations. Black communities are increasingly concerned about being pushed to areas outside London.

Brixton has traditionally been the unofficial capital of black Britain if you like, over the many years. But if you come to Brixton now you will see a process of gentrification taking place...which happens in inner-city areas [as] a consequence of economic policy and housing, schools and the local authority urban planning policies. This is one which has traditionally seen the breakup of black communities, working-class black communities, ever since the riots of 1981 (BARAC, Interview 2: 7 October 2013).

Many working class communities from inner London have been pushed into outer London areas by gentrification (Watt, Millington & Huq 2014). A number of the organisers I interviewed had first seen this process happen to parts of west London, such as Ladbroke Grove and Notting Hill, during the 1970s. This reflects the notion that gentrification is driven by neoliberal economic restructuring: public housing is privatised, rent hikes push working-class residents to the peripheral areas of the city, and 'in London's Brixton [gentrification] means bringing "back" more of the white middle classes' (Smith 2002: 445). However, this section will demonstrate that the unevenness of gentrification involves different types of remembering the black history of Tottenham or Ladbroke Grove. Those parts of

the city racialised as black see blackness claimed in differing, often conflicting ways, leading to forms of exclusion along political or class lines. Multiple interests within black communities themselves are therefore implicated in gentrification in differing ways, with some benefiting from the investment attracted by this neoliberal shift.

In Brixton, a 1993 scheme known as the 'Brixton City Challenge' proposed that 'wisely spent public funds could generate private investment through a trickle-down effect which would help to lift local populations out of their socio-economic misery' (Mavrommatis 2010: 571). Some groups in the area at the time echoed the quote which opened this section, claiming such schemes arise as a response to civil unrest (ibid.). The prospect of displacement becomes an additional issue around which black communities organise when defending racialised spaces – reclaiming public access to resources, including affordable homes, community centres and other civic spaces. It is a struggle for, and led by, working-class communities generally marginalised by neoliberalisation (Harvey 2008). Yet the effects of gentrification are often uneven, with some sections of the black population in Tottenham and Ladbroke Grove capitalising on how black history and culture are remembered, celebrated and institutionalised by this process.

The civil unrest that began in Tottenham after the 2011 police shooting of Mark Duggan was followed by a media uproar. This included proposals for the families of 'rioters' to have their housing benefits removed (Jones & Bowcott 2011), while the Prime Minister called for an 'all out war on gangs and gang violence' (David Cameron, in Helm 2012: npn). A result of this was widespread support for drastic changes to take place in Tottenham. The Mayor of London's *Independent Panel on Tottenham* published a report called *It Took Another*

*Riot*. The first recommendation proposed by the report's authors was 'A Dedicated Governance Structure for Regeneration' (2011: 3). The content of the report is indicated by its title, as 'the language of regeneration sugarcoats gentrification' (Smith 2002: 445), indicating a programme of social cleansing accompanied by a well-polished PR strategy.

A 'Tottenham Taskforce' comprised of senior civil servants and local politicians advised the council on the administration of the project, employing a neoliberal discourse from the outset: '[t]here will be more high quality housing with better housing choices. We will prioritise enterprise, growth and attracting new businesses to the area' (Haringey Council 2012b: 6). This focus was well-received by profit-making interests and, by 2014, £1 billion was produced to regenerate Tottenham. The bulk of this sum consisted of a £700 million investment from the private sector, with the Mayor of London's office underwriting a £500 million loan guarantee to private developers following the publication of a *Strategic Regeneration Framework* by a private consultancy company (Urban Strategies Inc. 2013). Although cultural indicators such as the heritage or multiculturalism of a given area see gentrification influenced by multiple agents (Mavrommatis 2010), this evidence suggests that the economic aspect of this process is led by large-scale capital investors and facilitated by the state (Lees 2000).

The gentrification of Tottenham is a classic example of demand being facilitated by financial investment, with the 'emphasis here being squarely on the primary role of capital (private or public) in fashioning the urban landscape' (Schaffer & Smith 1986: 350). Corporate press coverage from London's *Evening Standard* used the terms regeneration and gentrification interchangeably.

Tottenham still has a serious problem. It's not only its bad rep that has seen the gentrifying desire-line that has crept northwards from Shoreditch to Dalston and beyond falter at Tottenham then leapfrog towards Walthamstow. It is also because its very physicality – the historic DNA of Tottenham's layout – is working against it. The area is built along the arrow-straight High Road, part of the ferociously trafficked A10 (Bevan 2014: npn).

This coverage of the gentrification of Tottenham employs the term uncritically. The negative effects on the local population, such as a rapid increase in the cost of living, are overlooked, with the same cover story in London's biggest local newspaper sympathetically detailing the plans for Tottenham's main street:

If built, this High Road West scheme would have cafés and leisure facilities, and could join up with mews buildings one street back from the main road. The adjacent Love Lane Estate would need to be demolished to allow this new axis, with council tenants promised replacement homes at similar rents (although tenure issues elsewhere have not been settled) (ibid).

Here, we see the unevenness of gentrification affecting residents in the mews buildings and Love Lane Estate very differently, in which likely pitfalls for the latter group are a bracketed afterthought. Indeed, "[t]he city' is not an undifferentiated pool of abstractly equal individuals but rather comprises a stratified population whose experience of gentrification is highly differentiated' (Shaffer & Smith 1986: 349). Some residents benefit from regenerated housing, while others are rehoused elsewhere or simply displaced. Unlike people, neoliberal capital has no affective link with place, and therefore continually moves

to exploit new markets in different places (Harvey 2008). Perhaps in an attempt to address this biased reporting, the corporate press felt compelled to provide some acknowledgement of the views of Tottenham residents:

A lively, if scruffy indoor market is to be demolished, despite fierce local opposition, in favour of a generic 'gateway' shopping centre for the likes of Pizza Express and Costa Coffee (Bevan 2014: npn).

The coded racism used to describe the predominantly African, Caribbean, Latin-American and South-Asian market stalls invites a 'colonial gaze' towards the liveliness, while affirming the requirement of gentrification to civilise the 'scruff'. Both the separation of ethnically minoritised cultural spaces, and the process by which they are displaced, signify how 'racialised controls of colonial and imperial cities remain cogent features of contemporary cities' (Jacobs 2002: 31). The activists from Haringey Young People Empowered (HYPE), who were resisting racist policing and criminalisation, linked their political organising to the gentrification process:

So the [2011] riots, for me personally, was a passport for gentrification in the area. Part of the gentrification process of the area is the need to vilify someone, so obviously young people had to be vilified, and they were unaware of their rights, and the riots was an excuse for the police to abuse certain rights (HYPE, Interview 2: 4 February 2014).

Here, we see gentrification articulated as a process that displaces black communities, echoing an empire that ethnically cleansed colonial populations (Goldberg 1993b) (Chapter 2).

This reproduces the racialised coercion that consistently assaults the places which black communities use as metonyms for their struggles against police violence. Racial stigma is quite useful for the interests of capital, because it depresses the value of real estate and can be used to justify state subsidies for the 'regeneration' which brings in property renters and buyers who will close the rent gap (Smith 1996).

One consequence of the 2011 civil unrest was enforced rehousing away from their home area of those imprisoned for riot-related offences (Wilson 2015). As one HYPE activist explained:

These young people need to [be] made aware that this is still their home. And one of the strategies is that if you do end up being incarcerated they try to move you out of Haringey (HYPE, Interview 2: 4 February 2014).

Gentrification, rather than destroying the metonymy of racialised spaces, arguably reinforces collective memories of racial violence. Resistance to gentrification further entrenches the metonymic anti-racist message of HYPE, speaking to the experience of racist policing in the area and the prospect of racialised displacement. As Goldberg (1993) argues, imperial governments reproduce racialised marginalisation in their own centres. This historical continuity means that, as McKittrick (2011: 950) attests, displacement, or the threat of displacement, marks the black experience.

Tottenham is just one meaningful geographical locus through which racial violence is made visible. For the local community organisations investigated here, tracing this history

will remain significant, even as gentrification reproduces black displacement. The racialisation of Tottenham is thus reproduced by the neoliberal racism of gentrification, as well as by the overt racism of police violence, the demographics of the area and the anti-racist resistance of groups such as TDC and HYPE. The metonymic anti-racism of these groups is further cemented as activists link the experience of racist police violence in these areas to the very real prospect of gentrification-induced displacement. However, regeneration was capitalised on by some section of Tottenham's black community, who saw investment as an opportunity. The next section demonstrates how these shifting racialisations (Delaney 2002) illustrate the conflicting and consensual relationalities that constitute the reproduction of place (Massey 2005).

### **Access and Political Activity in Gentrified Public Spaces**

After my discussions with the activists in Tottenham, I recalled my experiences at the local Bernie Grant Arts Centre, which reinforced their concerns. The Bernie Grant Arts Centre, founded in 2007, is named after a radical African-Caribbean Member of Parliament from Tottenham who died in 2000. As discussed in Chapter 4, Grant supported young residents in their battles against police brutality in the 1980s. He became famous for using his seat in Westminster to call for reparations for descendants of those colonised by the British Empire. He is also well known for saying that the police 'got a bloody good hiding' (Philips 2000: npn) after the Broadwater Farm uprisings in 1985. According to its own publicity, the Bernie Grant Arts Centre was designed to '[r]emove barriers to participation in the arts [and] ... [a]ttract and develop new and existing participation from all communities'. Here, we see both Tottenham's black history and its multicultural present captured by liberal and left-wing individuals with a connection to Tottenham. Both black and white people involved

in the Centre mobilise the language of anti-racism in attempt to capture the identity of the area.

The Centre sits just off the bustling Tottenham High Road, set back from the traffic by a patch of grass and trees where young people from the local further education college often gather. I initially visited the Centre a year after it opened, as a volunteer for a youth project which aimed to improve the educational achievement of black boys. The first thing I noticed was that in an area between two of the Centre's buildings, I could hear a highly unpleasant high-pitched ringing noise. After speaking to members of staff, I discovered that it came from a device known as *Mosquito*; the sound is audible only to people under the age of about 25 (Merrill 2013). This was presumably because young people are associated with anti-social behaviour and, as Mitchell (2003: 53) reminds us, '[t]he exclusion of violence from public space has often been simply the exclusion of the 'unruly' – those who are *a priori* defined as illegitimate and thus threatening to the existing order'. Deterring 'unwanted' young people from loitering in this area seemed somewhat contradictory in a centre named after one of Tottenham youth's bravest advocates, which also claimed to be inclusive of all Tottenham's residents. This interpretation of Tottenham's black identity by the Bernie Grant Art Centre reflects their other stated mission, which is to '[b]e a catalyst for the regeneration of Tottenham'. As we have seen, this can entail reproducing a racialised displacement of sections of the black population which do not fit into this reimagining of black life in the area. Rather than campaigning against the proposed regeneration of the area, as HYPE and other activist groups have done, the Centre is an active participant in the gentrification process.

The second experience I had at the Centre occurred in the winter of 2011. Following the civil unrest of that year, which began in Tottenham, a play toured the country. Simply called *The Riots*, it used a script taken entirely from interviews with people who were affected by the civil disturbances. Working with TDC, I was distributing their flyers outside performances of the play which were taking place at the Centre. When we began speaking to people who had seen the performance, we were approached by members of staff, who asked us to leave. We assumed they thought we were from a commercial enterprise, so we explained that we were from TDC, and that in fact two of the main characters in the play were TDC organisers. This did not go down well with the staff, and they informed us that our behaviour was 'inappropriate'. While the Centre was established to remember the radical black history of Tottenham, 'oppositional places may be sanitised and depoliticised in their transit into officially sanctioned heritage' (Jacobs 2002: 35), replacing anti-racist activism with art and charitable work. The Centre appeared to be happy to profit from racial violence and consequential civil unrest by reproducing black community narratives in a controlled manner; however, as with many gentrified spaces (Mitchell 2003), community campaigns addressing structural oppression were not to be tolerated.

What this experience indicates is that the Bernie Grant Centre's management wanted to engage in issues relating to civil unrest and black organising only in a controlled environment within more politically conservative parameters. As in the case of the high-pitched noise between its buildings, it appeared that local young people who were not formally engaging with the Centre were seen to be impeding its 'substantial contribution to the social and economic regeneration' – a typical euphemism for gentrification (Smith 2002: 443). This marginalisation from public space, which is part of the neoliberal gentrification pro-

cess, included a celebration of Tottenham's black identity while excluding community campaigns against racism. This example shows how, through gentrification, 'local political processes [are] extended to residents with the expectation that they will make the correct choices ... manufacturing their aspiration to be more congruent with neoliberalism' (Paton 2014: 126). While some groups – such as those organising the Centre – capitalise on these urban shifts, resistance to it from groups like HYPE galvanises the metonymic anti-racism of black grassroots activism using racialised spaces as a political identity. In addition to the upheaval and displacement of housing, these examples show the more subtle aggressions that gentrification employs, which govern who can and cannot access public spaces.

Gentrification was a concern also voiced by older interviewees involved in black struggle in Ladbroke Grove/Notting Hill – an area that some described as having been subjected to a form of ethnic cleansing. I spoke to a number of the organisers, African-Caribbean people who talked about African spiritual systems and the legacies of colonialism and enslavement. They also spoke fondly about the rich history of the area, which they felt was slipping away. One interview took place in one of the few remaining social housing blocks in Ladbroke Grove. The flat itself was like a living museum of the area's black history, with pictures, books and printed cloth commemorating what felt like a by-gone era. These artefacts were brought to life by the activists as they recounted stories of the Rastas who first kicked in the door of the dilapidated Tabernacle. They told me how the former church was squatted and became a centre of African-Caribbean organising in west London, a milestone in a movement that established the Notting Hill Carnival, a symbol of resistance to racism (Chapter 4).

Obviously we are people in our late forties, we've been around for a while and one of the phenomena that has happened in London [is one] that I personally call social ethnic cleansing, of people in inner-city areas who traditionally came from migrant communities that had a history here from the 1940s and '50s and '60s. The areas that they moved into obviously were the least desirable areas: no dogs, no blacks, no Irish. And these people came in and made amenities and set up projects and made links and things were vibrant (One Voice CMP, Interview 1: 6 October 2013).

Although these activists could be accused of romanticising the past, there can be no doubt that black communities established influential socio-cultural movements during the period they describe. In the 1970s one of the focal points of the area was the above-mentioned Tabernacle, which was squatted and maintained by local black people. But financial mismanagement, increases in house prices and state-led gentrification eventually resulted in it being taken over by new, wealthier white residents (ibid.). In 2011, blacks in the area organised a campaign they called 'Reclaim The Tab', using 'Tab' (Tabernacle) as an anti-racist metonym. Challenging the liberal multiculturalism that they considered the new managers of The Tab to be exploiting, 'Reclaim The Tab' mobilised around an interpretation of the area's local history, claiming ownership of that history as well as of the building itself. The reception they received when attending an open meeting at the current incarnation of The Tabernacle was described as somewhat unwelcoming:

We ended up in a situation in 2011 where the community people like myself and other members of One Voice come into the Tabernacle, but it's now a white venue, a

*Notting Hill* venue [in an exaggerated upper-class English accent]. Full of the privileged sitting there and they almost looked terrified to see black faces, as if we don't belong here anymore (ibid).

While gentrification can alter the demographics of an area, the influx of middle-class people generally leads to 'social tectonics', whereby rich and poor live separate lives in the same neighbourhoods (Butler & Robson 2003). These 'tectonics' also run along racial lines, with this fragile social undercurrent coming to the surface in spaces of contestation such as The Tab.

Gentrification led to The Tab receiving high levels of investment, improving the quality of the building, but also pushing up prices for refreshments and hiring, in addition to a new management from which working-class African Caribbean activists felt excluded. Reclaim the Tab argued that they, and the section of the black community they represented, deserved access to the investment brought about by gentrification. They strengthen these claims by utilising the building's black history as a form of cultural capital. Indeed, 'the gentrification of the working-class subject is not a determined process...[and] can also provide a means for the working class to resist gentrification processes and reshape them for their own gains' (Paton 2014: 126). The organisers of Reclaim the Tab went on to found the West London Community Monitoring Project (CMP) in 2011 which addressed the aggressive policing that accompanied gentrification. The CMP was launched at The Tab, and the space remains one of the focal points from which the Notting Hill Carnival is organised.

While they were not able to wrestle power away from the management of The Tab, Reclaim The Tab/ West London CMP were able to benefit, to a degree, from some of the investment brought about by gentrification. However, if gentrification continues, many of the activists I spoke to feared that black communities in London will be engaged in a process of reclamation over ever smaller areas. As house prices (Montagnilo & Nagayasu 2011) and police repression increase, many activists fear the inner areas of London will be less accessible to the black communities struggling to establish, or re-establish, themselves.

Both the Reclaim the Tab and West London CMP campaigns emerged from Ladbroke Grove's black community, but employed racialised spatial metonyms to identify themselves. These 'black geographies are constantly subjected to decay, incarceration ... and displacement', (McKittrick 2011: 951) – a set of processes which, as we have seen, can be reproduced by gentrification. Again, one of the reasons given for this social upheaval is the breakup of black communities, particularly following violent revolts, adding depth to the significance of place serving as an anti-racist metonym.

In sum, the organisers concerned with gentrification located it in relation to its historical legacies, its impact on the immediate spatial environment, and how it is facilitated by state violence. While an outward looking, progressive sense of place helps us to understand how the area in which we live is connected to global capitalism (Chapter 2), a black sense of place also takes into consideration the intensity of violence and the consistency of upheaval experienced by black people. Unlike the overt nature of colonial displacement (Goldberg 2001), gentrification employs a softer, more gradual form of neoliberal violence. However, the investment that gentrification brought to the area was intermittently accessed by the grassroots organisations resisting policing. TDC activists had their interpretations of

the 2011 civil unrest depicted in a play at the Bernie Grant Centre, and West London CMP were able to use The Tab for some of their events - both groups also used these spaces to distribute information about their campaigns. Gentrification therefore sees not only larger-scale capital investment benefiting financially, but also upwardly mobile individuals and groups, both black and white, establishing and accessing urban infrastructure which draws on black history and anti-racist politics. Despite many activists disagreeing with how investment is directed, or the way in which black identities are deployed through spaces like the The Tab or Bernie Grant Centre, they have also pragmatically dipped into the resources these developments have made available. The uneven effects of gentrification can be seen historically in Ladbroke Grove, currently in Brixton and emerging in Tottenham.

Spatial shifts such as controlled access to public spaces are evident in areas of gentrification, yet the power of capital and the state in facilitating this process makes it difficult to challenge in a concrete way. Developing the consciousness of young people, by associating their local area, such as Haringey, with their socio-political (and racialised) identity, appears to be one way of developing an understanding of the socio-economic processes shaping their lived experiences. Most important is the role of state violence in facilitating gentrification. This is not because this is necessarily the most pertinent issue facing black people, but it is an effective mobilising tool, as the harassment and violence of the police are an immediate reality for those affected. Furthermore, the prospect of being displaced is a compelling political incentive for blacks to associate themselves with their local area. The political capital of racialised spaces, police violence and anti-gentrification activism has the cumulative effect of making spatialised anti-racist metonyms the primary articulation of black resistance to police violence in post-2011 London.

## Place and the Metaphorology of Anti-Racism

Using subtle, racially coded language – racial metonyms – has proved highly effective in silencing critiques of racism and challenges to its dominance (Castagno 2008). At the same time, delegitimising anti-racist movements and campaigns by, for instance, employing arguments in favour of ‘colour-blindness’, in fact fuels racism further (Goldberg 2009) (Chapter 2). But what about anti-racism? How has metonymic anti-racism been embraced or rejected, and what are the consequences of this? So far, this chapter has described the ways in which spatialised racial metonyms emerge, with a particular interest in how metonymic anti-racism now dominates names of campaigns and organisations resisting police violence. But do these changes in discourse matter? Do they have any material effect on resistance? Are there particular strengths and weakness that we should be concerned with? This section begins to develop answers to these questions.

Institutional race equality organisations that articulate the politics of race in their name or mission, such as Operation Black Vote (OBV) and Race on the Agenda (ROTA), have been established for over 15 years, and have faced some criticism from the right<sup>44</sup>. Institutionalised race equality groups often work closely with policy makers (Chapter 4) – OBV is specifically tasked with maintaining black voter turnout including mentoring, lobbying and ‘citizenship projects’ (OBV 2013). The cover photograph on the ‘What we do’ section of the OBV website is not an image of protest or community action, but of a conference centre, with a central figure addressing the audience from a podium (Figure 5.2). These reformist organisations are quite different from the confrontational approach to the ‘racist state’

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<sup>44</sup> [www.spiked-online.com/newsite/article/why-operation-black-vote-doesnt-get-my-vote/16699](http://www.spiked-online.com/newsite/article/why-operation-black-vote-doesnt-get-my-vote/16699) accessed 15 May 2015

(Keith 1993) and the protests and direct action of grassroots anti-racist movements; this is arguably why groups such as OBV have been able to avoid the pressure to drop words such as 'black' and 'race' from their names.

This institutionalisation and professionalisation of the black political movement has left few grassroots organisations standing (Shukra 1997). One such group is the Newham Monitoring Project (NMP), mentioned above in the context of their work with the Tottenham Defence Campaign (TDC) in the aftermath of the 2011 civil unrest. In contrast to OBV, NMP has on its home page an image of protest, a black person pointing and shouting with a placard reading 'No Justice, No Peace' (Figure 5.3). There is little indication from its name that NMP seeks to support community self-defence against racism (NMP & CARF 1991). However, like Tottenham, Newham's history as a space of racial violence directed at the African, African-Caribbean and South-Asian community has made it a racialised space. In addition, Newham is one of London's most ethnically diverse boroughs; its population is

Figure 5.3 (below): Cover photo on NMP website: [www.nmp.org.uk](http://www.nmp.org.uk)



over 18% African/African-Caribbean and 20% Bangladeshi or Pakistani (Newham 2010). This has led to local government schemes encouraging people in the borough to use English rather than African or South-Asian languages. One way of doing this, as the *Daily Mail* reported, was to have the local authority stop ‘the supply of foreign language newspapers to local libraries as part of its policy to promote integration’ (McDermott 2012: npn). It is clear that the barrier to racial harmony seen by the state – issues around bilingualism – is

Figure 5.2 (below) Cover photo of OBV website, <http://www.obv.org.uk/what-we-do>



Home News & Blogs About Us **What We Do** BME Politicians Info Centre Press

Home » What We Do » What we do



quite different from the barrier perceived by the Newham Monitoring Project – racism.

How have grassroots black struggles against policing responded to the neoliberalisation and institutionalisation of anti-racism, and the concomitant metonymising racism? Overall,

there has been a shift in the way these campaigns articulate their policies. Many organisations, old and new, have succumbed to institutionalisation. Others have remained independent; however, this often results in a loss of financial and other support, and exclusion from coverage in mainstream media.

Established organisations such as NMP have long used racialised space to articulate their association with race. Haringey Young People Empowered (HYPE), the Tottenham Defence Campaign (TDC), One Voice's Reclaim the Tab, and the West London Community Monitoring Project (CMP) are some of the newer organisations set up to address racist police violence. The histories of racialised spaces, combined with metonymic racisms, have led to a shift from explicitly racial organisations such as the Blacks Against State Harassment (BASH), the Black Panther Movement and the Black Defence Campaign, to the implicitly racial, adopting the coded language of racialised places such as Haringey, Tottenham or The Tabernacle.

Indeed, some groups reject the notion of being defined by race, while still acknowledging that their African heritage is the principal characteristic in identifying membership. By the time One Voice had established the West London Community Monitoring Project (CMP), people in the local area were familiar with the campaign group, and it had widened its remit to other issues (including policing). It therefore no longer needed to define itself explicitly through race, or even with a racialised space. Despite this, the politics of One Voice's CMP can be described as one of fairly militant Pan-Africanism and anti-capitalist black nationalism – yet they insist that their blackness/African-ness should be defined by their politics and actions, rather than by the label by which the group is identified. This collective

identity reinforces the notion of race as a social construct, which should be challenged without being reproduced.

There is an obvious problematic between attempting to do away with the labels of racialisation and continuing to recognise the role that racialisation plays in a racist society (Ware & Back 2001). In other words, anti-racism prescribes us

the pious ritual in which we always agree that 'race' is invented but are then required to defer to its embeddedness in the world and to accept that the demand for justice nevertheless requires us to enter the political arenas that it helps to mark out (Gilroy 2000: 52).

This is further complicated by the effort to remain committed to the principle of black self-organisation as an important component in challenging racism. Members of One Voice's CMP remained somewhat dismissive of white allies in anti-racist activism. Nonetheless, in other organisations, many of the activists I interviewed were engaged in anti-racist campaigns in which white people played important roles. The multiple contradictions in wanting to reject racialised labels while organising around the principle of black self-organisation are compounded by a dismissal of the role of white people in the anti-racist struggle, with its implications for participation in multiracial anti-racist campaigns. What appears to be at the crux of the issue is a firm recognition of the importance that positionality plays in anti-racist struggle. Yet the majority of activists acknowledge that those privileged or empowered by a system of white domination can still play an important role in challenging its hegemony.

While the name Reclaim the Tab, a spatialised anti-racist metonym, highlighted the anti-gentrification of a previously squatted space founded by the black community of Ladbroke Grove, changing its name to One Voice was not an indication of a less radical anti-racism. The shift away from racialised language depicts an organisation so sure in its politics, and so deeply rooted in the community, that anti-racism is implicit for the group's stakeholders – the 'metonymism' displayed in this example is therefore reserved for those already familiar with the organisation. For black individuals and communities, these racialised spaces are an indication of the politics of the organisations that use them. But these new forms of black struggle must be interrogated in order better to understand their function and effectiveness.

### **Concessions: A Victory for Neoliberalised Racial Discourses?**

As was discussed above, one of the most effective forms of mobilisation emerges when people are reacting to a highly visible, racialised event. Such events are often closely related to a specific geographical area; in the case of London, these correspond with the local areas, as one activist explained:

I originate from Peckham and it was there that I appealed to the local community and the organisation was formed out of the local community answering my appeal coming together (Campaign for Truth & Justice, Interview 1: 24 September 2013).

The black people who set up grassroots campaigns challenging state violence often live in areas with a relatively high black population, as in the above south London example. How-

ever, many other campaigns organise around place and space in a far more explicit manner. This is partly because 'people in a given locality understand [it] as having a particular history and as arousing emotional identifications, and [being] associated with particular groups and activities' (Watt & Stenson 1997: 252). Attempting to subvert the language of the racism that uses spaces to articulate race has many drawbacks. Reducing it to racially coded terms and phrases – thus demoting structural racism to a more localised problem – can reproduce neoliberalisation. As Angela Davis argues:

[The] path toward the complete elimination of racism is represented in the neoliberalist discourse of 'colour-blindness' and the assertion that equality can only be achieved when the law, as well as individual subjects, become blind to race. This approach, however, fails to apprehend the material and ideological work that race continues to do (2012: 123).

Some groups engaged in grassroots black activism, such as the Interim National Afrikan People's Parliament (iNAPP), organise protests against police racism, particularly brutality and deaths in custody, while remaining explicitly committed to black politics. The iNAPP's projects include legal defence committees and an iNAPP Youth Core which addresses issues relating to young people, such as policing. They organise an annual Black People's Day of Action in New Cross (south-east London), commemorating the original day of action which took place in 1981 (Chapter 4). The more recent manifestations of the Action culminate in a black-only event with speakers and discussions.

In 2014, the Black People's Day of Action included a presentation from a youth worker, poet and activist in his late 20s called ShakaRa. His dreadlocks were covered in bright red

cloth and his thirty-minute presentation was just as vivid. He spoke energetically and persuasively about black youth identity, as well as how racism is articulated through new forms of language. He listed words currently used to describe black youth: BME, urban, under-privileged and so on, as well as now largely obsolete terms such as 'yardie' (which I analyse in Chapter 6). He cited a poll that found that 76 per cent of black young people in the UK consider their primary identity to be British, which demonstrates a disjuncture from their African heritage and identity. He asked: "What is 'urban'?". His answer to this rhetorical question was: "A way of appreciating black culture without acknowledging it". This was an allusion to the many radio stations that employ terms such as urban; they feature black artists and presenters, but have white ownership and overwhelmingly white audiences (Pears 2013). ShakaRa went on to cite a 1997 speech by Tony Blair about serious youth violence, in which he called for a renaissance in our cities and a return to British values. Such values included "respect and tolerance to others", but he added "youngsters [must] stop thinking they can commit a crime, get a caution and carry on being a criminal"<sup>45</sup>. Blair's proposed solution was based on a value system associated with whiteness, the proposed remedy to the violence associated with blackness. Put simply, when African-Caribbean people arrived in the UK, saying you were from 'yard' meant you were from Jamaica. But 'yardie', someone from Jamaica, has now become a term synonymous with criminality.

ShakaRa's speech gives examples of how metonymic anti-racism can play into the hands of metonymic racism, by cloaking the centrality of racialised oppression when resisting state violence. Doing away with more overt racialised language can arguably distort black identities as well as our understanding of racism itself.

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<sup>45</sup> [www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=203](http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=203) accessed 2 January 2015

## Pragmatic Subversion?

Metonymic anti-racism can be useful for accessing mainstream institutions where necessary. It could also be argued that spatialised anti-racist metonyms help us to identify violence and upheaval, through remembering places such as The Tabernacle or Tottenham as sites of resistance. An extrapolation of this argument is that only when the potential allies of black community struggles have developed a level of consciousness which enables them to detect the racially coded language and the urgency of defending communities from state racism and police violence, will they be able to build genuine links of solidarity with the black struggle.

Metonymic anti-racism in fact forces anyone interested in building links of solidarity with black community struggle to interrogate thoroughly the subtle ways in which structural racism operates. This can provide a safeguard against those activists whose limited understanding of the issues can disrupt the functioning of a campaign. An example of this lack of understanding is articulated in a reflection posted on social media by a TDC organiser:

I'm really pleased with yesterday's event, but there was one blot on the evening for me. This happened at the end of the night when a white woman was on her way out and stopped to ask me why we had only focussed on the deaths of Black people at the meeting. I bit my tongue and said, "Maybe it's because this meeting is to remember those who lived in and around Tottenham and were killed by the police, I don't recall the police having murdered any white folks in Totty lately!" Then this white woman then said that this was divisive! This white woman is a so-called anti-

racist, anti-fascist SWP supporter! And SHE'S telling ME that Black people remembering their OWN people is divisive! (TDC Field Notes 2013b: npn)

Here, an organiser of a public meeting about black deaths in custody is using the racialised space of Tottenham to subvert an argument with someone antagonistic to the politics of TDC. What is implicit is that most of the attendees at this event on black deaths in custody understood the role that structural racism plays in how black people are policed. The overall strategy of metonymic anti-racism appeared to be effective, not least in dealing with the white person to whom the post refers. The writer uses Tottenham as a shield, metonymising anti-racism in order to deal quietly with people who are unwilling or unable to understand why black campaigns need to exist. Metonymic anti-racism can therefore be used to defend black-led activism subtly from attacks from 'so-called anti-racist anti-fascist' activists who accuse them of being 'divisive'.

Haringey Young People Empowered (HYPE) runs workshops on policing and intra-communal violence in multicultural schools in the north London borough after which it is named. Many of its members have politics that can be described as anti-capitalist and in line with the assumptions of critical race theory, which posits racism as embedded in the fabric of western society (Chapter 2). However, by associating their organisation with Haringey, they have been invited to run workshops in schools and receive funding from the local authority. Its members conceded that they would be unlikely to achieve such benefits if they were called 'Black Young People Empowered' or any other designation that reflected their relatively radical perspectives. One member of HYPE explained:

White is invisible, black is not invisible. They are the antithesis of each other ... white allows you to get away with stuff and allows you not to be scrutinised ... you have black on black crime, but never white on white crime ... you have whites who have an issue with black history month. But black history month is just the month where you use the bits of white history that white people left out (HYPE Interview 1: 22 October 2013).

By this logic, not referring directly to blackness or the politics of race gives the anti-racist politics of HYPE the sort of invisibility that whiteness enjoys. The invisibility of whiteness, normalised in our society, is a key element in the reproduction of its power (Ware & Back 2001). Therefore, by making the politics of anti-racism invisible, yet consciously incorporating it into the politics and actions they engage in, black community struggles can potentially mimic the contradictory power of whiteness. This is done by using invisibility as a source of power; normalising their anti-racist discourse can be more beneficial than labelling it as something that creates an impression of marginality or controversy.

One of the key differences between African-Caribbean communities (and to a lesser extent African communities), and communities of Asian heritage living in Britain, is the manner in which they can identify themselves through ethnic markers other than skin colour. Some black activists argued that they had to organise around race. Their language and religion are often a replica of those of their colonial masters: speaking English or practising Christianity reproduces the historical norm within British society. Independent linguistic or spiritual formations, such as creole or Rastafarianism, are considered by many in black communities as marginal or uncouth. The historical disjunctures created by the transatlantic

slave trade in various Caribbean islands have resulted in relatively little shared history beyond the trauma of enslavement. It perhaps therefore makes sense that black communities draw upon more contemporary symbols of black identity in Britain, which include black British-derived vernacular, cultural and spatial formations.

## Conclusion

The geographies of racialisation have always played an important role in articulating black community struggle, from the European quarters in the colonies to the ghettoised and socially marginalised black areas in the centres of Empire. Racialised spaces in British cities have been metonyms for black community/police conflict since at least the Notting Hill ‘riots’ of the 1950s. Black resistance to police violence, and more recently to gentrification, continually reproduces these racialised spaces. As anti-racist movements advanced, making it more difficult for the state, press and other institutions to use overt racist language, neoliberal colour-blindness gained traction (Davis 2007). The police and media outlets, knowing that particular areas are associated with blacks, use these places as racial metonyms, replacing overt racist language with a term associated with race – in this case, a racialised space (Keith 1993).

This chapter has argued that metonymic anti-racism now dominates the names of black grassroots organisations resisting policing in London. Linking state violence to neoliberal gentrification and the privatisation of public spaces, black struggles use the strong sense of community affiliation associated with racialised places: Tottenham (Defence Campaign), Newham (Monitoring Project), Haringey (Young People Empowered) or (Reclaim) The Tabernacle/West London (CMP). The social meanings of these spaces help to mobilise

people into organised resistance, compounded by the constant reference to space and place made by the activists cited in this investigation.

A black sense of place, defined by violence and upheaval – from the plantations of the Caribbean to the housing blocks of Broadwater Farm – illustrates the precarious relationship between blackness and space. The centrality of racial metonyms has led to spaces racialised as black transcending physical boundaries. This is a necessary development to avoid the essentialisation of space and place, particularly given the disruptions brought about by gentrification. Gentrification has failed to upset metonymic anti-racism for a number of key reasons. The uneven nature of urban development, and its inclusion of symbols of anti-racism such as Bernie Grant or Notting Hill Carnival means, in one way or another, the memory of black struggle is further-entrenched in these areas, even if many grassroots campaigns contest these particular interpretations. Rather than necessarily wiping out or integrating with existing social formations, gentrification leads to complex interaction of rich and poor, black and white, living interdependent socio-cultural (and political) lives (Jacobs 2002). The gentrification process, despite leading to increases in house prices and aggressive policing for black working class people, still strengthens an area's cultural perception as racialised as black. Indeed, with the influx of middle-class gentrifiers, displacement, or the possibility thereof, bolsters the mobilising power of racialised spaces. Spatialised metonymic anti-racism thus demonstrates some of the most galvanising articulations of black resistance to state violence in post-2011 London.

Scholars have long grappled with the contradiction of seeking recognition of existing racial inequalities without reproducing or essentialising race. What metonymic anti-racism sug-

gests is that those engaged in black struggle against the police are using spatialised political identities which are attempting to reconcile this paradox. In addition, these organisers show a pragmatic ingenuity, navigating the neoliberalised discourses that attempt to suppress overtly racialised language and effectively accessing resources as a result. As scholars and activists, it is vital that we recognise the ways in which anti-racism is being communicated, in order to further our attempts to re-establish anti-racist struggles as a central component of the progressive left in Britain and beyond. In the chapters that follow, I investigate further how space is used to articulate black resistance to policing, in addition to considering in greater detail the effect this has on grassroots activism itself.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Naming Names: The Racialised Body and Justice Campaigns**

[S]towaways, drifters, pimps, and drug dealers – whose procession extends into the present in the forms of muggers, illegal immigrants, black extremists and criminal Rastafarians (dreads). The black folk-devil has acquired greater power with each subsequent permutation (Gilroy 1982: 143).

#### **Introduction**

The August of 2011 saw the most widespread instance of civil revolts England seen in England for 30 years. Over 2,000 arrests were made (Bridges 2012) and countless raids, stops, searches and other instances of police violence and harassment ensued.

In the wake of the unrest, the opportunity for moral panic was grasped with both hands by the state and corporate media outlets. David Cameron (2011) identified a 'nihilistic gangster culture' with which he was determined to go to war. Using more overt bigotry, David Starkey assured middle England that any multiracialism they thought they observed during the disturbances was a simple case of the whites becoming black (BBC News 2011a).

The rise of the gangster, like the mugger and black extremist that came before, was helped along by equivalent moral crises across the Atlantic (Papachristos, Hureau & Braga 2013). It was not long before Britain's mainstream press cottoned on to a scare story ripe for exploitation, telling its law-abiding readers: 'These young gangsters have lost so many friends they've stopped going to their funerals ... With thousands more caught up in this culture of 'easy dying', we attend a secret summit of 'soldiers' to hear them talk about

weapons, jail and life in the ‘hood’” (Cohen 2013a: npn). A tone reminiscent of nineteenth century anthropologists stumbling across ‘primitive rituals’ in Africa’s ‘Dark Heart’ is reproduced without irony, with ‘gangs’ painted as more violent and numerous than any of the black folk-devils that preceded them. But what is the relationship between these moral panics projected onto dehumanised black bodies and police violence? And importantly, how have these racialised traits been challenged by black struggles against police violence in post-2011 London and Birmingham?

The racialised black body has long been subject to objectification, denigration and criminalisation in European intellectual thought and popular culture. While these discourses were used to justify enslavement and colonisation during the reign of the British Empire, such ideas are now also employed to legitimise state repression on British soil. Black folk-devils serve as racist metonyms, replacing overt racist language with terms associated with black people. This chapter critically analyses the historical continuity of this dehumanisation which racialises people, reducing them to a black body. I draw on the accounts of scholars such as Stuart Hall and bell hooks to inform post-2011 political rhetoric and media analysis. I go on to assess how the racialised body is defended, (re)humanised, and used as an anti-racist metonym by black communities resisting police violence. Two key questions are investigated in this chapter. The first explores how those killed by racial violence (often at the hands of the state) become racial metonyms. It asks what effect this has on the names of black grassroots campaigns and organisations, and their ability to mobilise support. The second question asks how the gendering of racialised bodies affects those victimised by police violence, and how black masculinities are exploited. But it also looks at those engaging in resistance itself, unpacking how women are taking the lead in

campaigns against police killings. I then argue that, in addition to racialised places, dehumanised black bodies subjected to racial violence (e.g. Mark Duggan) are rehumanised through black resistance to police violence, shaping political identities through a metonymic anti-racism that replaces overt racial language.

This chapter is divided into five sections, with the first introducing some conceptual thoughts on racialised and gendered bodies with reference to black resistance against state violence. The second looks further at how gender intersects with race, in the deployment of state violence on black communities. Hegemonic and subordinated masculinities are analysed in a context in which women play a central role in black resistance to police killings. In the third section, I develop the analysis of the previous section, to investigate how black community struggles attempt to *re*humanise and defend black bodies, following a death at the hands of the state.

The fourth section analyses how black bodies are racialised as collectives (rather than as individuals, as we saw in previous sections), by returning to the ‘moral panic’ around the ‘gang’, a racialised phenomenon peddled by sensational newspaper headlines and political rhetoric. In so doing, I bring together the theoretical analysis and evidence from the previous sections, developing a framework for understanding how black struggle against policing is articulated. The fifth section draws on historical case studies, concluding that racialised bodies have long been used as a metonym for black resistance. Using linguistic and literary evidence gathered through fieldwork, I argue that racialised metonyms now dominate the articulation of black community resistance to police violence in London and Birmingham, before analysing some of the implications of this shift.

## Conceptual Anatomy: Rethinking Racialised Bodies

Opening the chapter with the labels pinned to black bodies which essentialise, criminalise and dehumanise, this section begins to think about the attempts to reverse this process. It is through the reclaiming of the racialised body that many articulations of black resistance have been enacted. Some of the best-known examples have been in the US, in response to centuries of racial violence. Lynched black bodies in the Jim Crow South were deliberately left as exhibits to terrorise and intimidate – these performances illustrated the power white supremacy had over black people. This racial violence was also gendered, with African-American men who were accused of assaulting, speaking to or even looking at a white woman, being subject to public torture and execution. One of the best-documented instances of resistance to this racial violence involved the reclaiming of the mutilated body of Emmett Till, who was accused of whistling at a white woman (Whitfield 1991, Anderson 2015). This African-American adolescent was brutally murdered by white supremacists in Mississippi in 1955:

The widely disseminated image of Emmett Till's mutilated corpse rhetorically transformed the lynched black body from a symbol of unmitigated white power to one illustrating the ugliness of racial violence and the aggregate power of the black community. This reconfiguration was, in part, an effect of the black community's embracing and foregrounding Till's abject body as collective 'souvenir' rather than allowing it to be safely exiled from public life (Harold & DeLuca 2005: 263).

Emmett Till's mother insisted on an open casket, and photographs to be taken of the mutilated young boy. Through this act of resistance, his black body was not reduced to shame or defeat, but rendered hyper-visible – to African Americans, their allies resisting white supremacy, the individuals who carried out the violence, and the state structures that provided the killers with protection from retribution. The individual black body of Emmett Till represents a collective – he is racialised, dehumanised, and therefore subjected to racial violence. Conversely, that same collective – African Americans – used Emmett Till's racialised body to represent them in an act of resistance. The black body as a space of contestation, a 'sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist' (Massey 2005: 9), is a struggle that endures to this day. Despite racial violence manifesting itself in distinctive ways in different time periods and geographical locations, the logic of white supremacy remains constant (Goldberg 2001). Resistance to it therefore also foregrounds useful parallels, including how black communities in the US and UK reclaim bodies subjected to racial violence.

The best known campaign against racial violence in Britain is the one that pursues justice for Stephen Lawrence. Led by his mother Doreen, and assisted by a range of anti-racist activists and organisations, the campaign forced the government to acknowledge institutional racism in British policing and led to the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 (McPherson 1999). The Lawrence campaign highlighted the overt bigotry immediately before Stephen's racist murder in 1993 by a group of white youths in south London, and examined the ensuing police inaction and corruption to prove categorically the mechanics of institutional racism. Although there are glaring material differences between racial violence in the Jim Crow South and south London, in both cases state structures worked to protect the perpetrators from retribution, while family and community-led campaigns rehumanised the deceased as a symbol of resistance.

The legacy of the Stephen Lawrence Campaign – with regard to both the violent racist crime itself, and the corruption and institutional racism of London’s Metropolitan Police exposed by the inquiry into his death – have made Stephen’s name synonymous with the black struggle against both forms of racist violence. Stephen’s image is racialised not only as a victim of one of the most brutal forms of racism in Britain, but also as a symbol of black justice and resistance (Back 2010). The Stephen Lawrence Campaign was not simply a campaign of victims seeking recompense, but a movement of resistance which took on the most powerful state institutions, forcing them to concede defeat in the face of irrefutable evidence and widespread community support (Rollock 2009). The Stephen Lawrence Centre in Deptford, south London now hosts a range of anti-racist community projects, such as Shake! – an arts project where I have run a number of workshops on police stop and search and the legacies of colonialism<sup>46</sup>. Part of the Stephen Lawrence Trust's mission is to help young black students fund architecture degrees, as Stephen intended to go on to study architecture – an admirable academic aspiration that radically changed how his image was conceptualised. In other words, the campaign shows a human side to a young black man whose life was devalued by racism. Doreen Lawrence, Stephen’s mother, continues to use the Stephen Lawrence Trust as a platform to challenge racism in the police and elsewhere, including that found in Britain’s schools. As bell hooks attests:

Collectively, black people and our allies in struggle are empowered when we practice self-love as a revolutionary intervention that undermines practices of domination (hooks 1992: 20).

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<sup>46</sup> <http://voicesthatshake.blogspot.co.uk/p/events.html> accessed 14 June 2013

The campaign has elevated the conceptual image of Stephen Lawrence from a dehumanised black body to a symbol of black community struggle against white domination (Back 2010). It is through this lens that the myriad of other black-led campaigns and organisations with a similar pattern is analysed in this thesis.

Using this analysis of political identities, and understanding the racialised body as a space which is struggled over by competing groups (Tanner 2006), we can articulate politics in a manner that removes the (assumed) fixedness of political identities, and instead 'proposes a relational understanding of the world, and a politics which responds to that [understanding]' (Massey 2005:11). Space is an essential element of the political questions already being asked in this thesis, and the constant flux that space undergoes allows for ideas and articulations to be reformulated in a critical and productive manner. However, it is also important to remember that race is not essential, it is also in a constant state of flux, not least due to its interaction with time and space, and its intersection with class and gender. Stuart Hall (1990) is useful here, in explaining that new cultural and political identities are continually reproduced, shaping the ways in which Caribbean peoples – among the most creolised populations on the planet – are represented. Hall draws upon their histories, cultural influences and lived realities:

[f]ar from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will se-

cure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past (Hall 1990: 225).

This makes the racialised, gendered body a space that can easily and effectively become a racial metonym for black resistance to police violence. As the quote from Gilroy which opened this chapter attests, the black body has long been marked with the stamp of essential characteristics. The motives, thoughts and actions of black people (in this case black men) are explained, by the logic of white supremacy, as simply attributable to their racialised (and gendered) identity. It is therefore not only the (generally classed) racialised disproportionality of the criminal justice system that we are concerned with here, but how that racialised disproportionality is essentialised, making one or some individuals representative of all black people and thereby compounding the oppressive nature of racialisation. Subverting this racialised logic so that a body racialised as black becomes a metonym for black resistance is not new, but, as this thesis demonstrates, it is now one of the dominant articulations of black struggles against police violence in post-2011 London and Birmingham.

### Violence and the State: Subordinated Masculinities and their Intersections

One of the key features of patriarchy is physical power, maintained through structural or overt forms of violence. Indeed, 'male dominance is the foundation of any realistic theory of violence' (Heise 1998: 263), the most obvious examples being sexual assault or non-sexual domestic abuse. However, other performances exist which also require the lens of

feminist analysis. One of these is serious youth violence, often discussed by policy-makers and the press as a problem intrinsic to blacks (McMahon & Roberts 2008). Building on the analysis of gender in Chapter 2, this section argues that, in order to facilitate state violence, manifestations of masculinity racialised as black are deemed illegitimate and are criminalised by hegemonic, white supremacist masculinities, leading to the black male body becoming essentialised and dehumanised. In order to do this, I draw on interviews from a number of women involved in black resistance to police violence, in addition to the London Campaign Against Police and State Violence (LCAPSV), a radical grassroots organisation set up in south London in 2013. Building on this, the section goes on to discuss the role of women in black struggles against the police, critically analysing their role in resisting state violence.

Many of the spokespeople for black deaths in custody campaigns in Britain are women. As one female activist confirmed:

If you look at the family campaigns, I think the vast majority of them are led by black women and a lot of the time it is black mothers (BARAC, Interview 2, 7 October 2013).

Another female activist drew on black feminism to explain this pattern by talking about:

The gendered nature of work and labour, and the role of women, particularly within patriarchal societies where women tend to be confined to the domestic sphere. Although it hasn't totally happened like that for women with African-Caribbean heritage because of our history and certainly our recent history ... we always had to

work but there has still been that gendered division of labour. So it means that a lot of the responsibility for caring, for nurturing and supporting and for challenging and raising the alarm about what has been happening to men within our communities will be done by women (iNAPP, Interview 1, 26 November 2014).

Female relatives – mothers, daughters, sisters – are often the most vocal, high-profile organisers. The sisters of Sean Rigg (Marcia Rigg), Leon Patterson (Stephanie Bennett) and Christopher Alder (Janet Alder) are all the most vocal in their respective campaigns for justice. The mothers of Ricky Bishop (Doreen Jjuuko), Aselle Rodney (Susan Rodney) and of course Stephen Lawrence (Doreen Lawrence) have a similar profile. When black women lead resistance against police violence, we must understand this as resistance against both racism and patriarchy. Nonetheless, that does not necessarily mean that resistance to racist police violence is politically homogenous in its analysis of, and commitment to, black women's liberation, as another female activist explained:

There is a role for black feminist analysis. The issue being though, is if people within communities, black and white, would actually listen to that analysis. Because feminism is deeply marked as something that is negative. Black feminists here are a very small group (TDC, Interview 1, 14 November 2014).

Only one of my interviewees, a woman, said that black women's liberation was a central component of their campaigning:

A key focus of our campaign has been about the impact on black women and young black people. It is in our mission statements set out very clearly. These are concerns for black women (BARAC, Interview 1, 3 October 2013).

Although there are significant numbers of women leading these campaigns, there is certainly no uniformity within black communities on the role of women's liberation. Nonetheless, these deaths in custody campaigns do challenge the institutionalised forms of physical control employed by the state that maintain and reproduce its structures of patriarchal power.

Events during a picket outside a magistrates' court in south London go some way to illustrating the wider role of women in mediating and negotiating issues relating to subordinated masculinities within community groups as well as in challenging the institutions and practices of the state which reproduce patriarchy. Around a dozen people from the London Campaign Against Police and State Violence (LCAPSV) came to protest outside the court in early 2014, with banners, leaflets and a petition. Most entered the court when the proceedings began. The campaign was headed by the mother of a young black man who had been violently assaulted by police officers and subsequently charged with obstruction. Most people attending the protest were black (including the solicitor), although there was a significant number of white organisers working with the group in solidarity. Staying outside the court with some of the other activists, I collected signatures for the petition, talking to passers-by and handing out fliers. One man, an African Caribbean whom I will call Malcolm, had been in the dock that morning, and had received community service rather than a custodial sentence. He was drinking a beer by 10.30am, and was talking to us about his life. He had been homeless in London and been befriended by some travellers. They had

invited him to live at their campsite in Birmingham, where he found some paid work. He had lived with them happily ever since, and was very loyal to their culture and way of life. He then became quite emotional when talking about losing his parents and about occasions he had contemplated suicide, including that morning on the way to court<sup>47</sup>.

As a female solicitor walked past, saying to someone on the phone that she was on her way to meet her client, Malcolm said quite loudly “I’d like to be *her* client”. This took the group outside by surprise, given that Malcolm had just been in tears when talking about his recent suicide attempts. The only reaction he received from the group was a stony silence and looks of disapproval. After a while it became clear to Malcolm that his remarks were not supported by the rest of the group, and the conversation returned to his problems growing up, and his anger and frustration with the political system.

Around fifteen minutes later, a member of security walked briskly up to Malcolm, and squared up to him. He (rightly) challenged Malcolm directly about his comments to the lawyer, although he seemed to be unsure of their specifics. However, the security guard behaved in an aggressive manner, deliberately invading Malcolm’s personal space and wagging his finger in his face. Malcolm responded badly to this, quickly losing his temper. Taking off his rucksack and coat, he challenged the security guard to a fight. After an exchange of angry words, with other activists and myself trying to defuse the situation, the court police were called.

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<sup>47</sup> Mental health and disability also intersect with gender, race and class, although this chapter does not have the scope to analyse it in detail. See *Breaking the Circles of Fear: A review of the relationship between mental health services and African and Caribbean communities*, available at [www.centre-formentalhealth.org.uk/pdfs/breaking\\_the\\_circles\\_of\\_fear.pdf](http://www.centre-formentalhealth.org.uk/pdfs/breaking_the_circles_of_fear.pdf) accessed 20 August 2014

What happened next exemplifies the ways in which different manifestations of patriarchal power are either institutionalised, legitimised and hegemonic, or enacted by individuals, predominantly poor and/or downwardly racialised men, and therefore subordinate. The latter are regarded as immoral and thus tend to be criminalised.

While the whole conversation lasted approximately 15 minutes, I will reproduce two specific lines used by the police officer to reason with Malcolm:

“Trust me mate, Page 3 is my favourite bit of The Sun” and “Do you wanna be arrested? Do you wanna get locked up?”.

Here, we see two contrasting performances of patriarchal power. First, the street harassment of a woman by Malcolm – sexual power, and the proposition of a fist-fight – physical power. Secondly, the assertion by an arm of the British state that they "love Page 3 of *The Sun*" (the section of a newspaper which then showcased topless female models) – sexual power, and the proposition of arrest and detention – physical power.

We cannot say for certain whether the police officer in question actually liked *The Sun's* Page 3 or intended to arrest Malcolm. What we do know, however, is that his two performances of patriarchal power, sexual and physical, are regarded as legitimate, whereas the performance of patriarchal power exhibited by Malcolm is not. It is this dichotomy of patriarchal violence which places many oppressed men, particularly black men, into the realm of criminalisation (Richie 2012), further legitimising the hegemonic patriarchal violence of the state. Rather than performing their patriarchal power and fantasies through institutions such as police/prisons or fashion/pornography, or through access to capital, the avenues

accessible to subordinated masculinities are more likely to be criminalised. Racism, therefore, leads to patriarchy manifesting itself in ways that not only obscure the problematics of hegemonic masculinity, but also legitimise racial violence. As one female activist explained:

Under white supremacist patriarchy, capitalist patriarchy, men are victimised because they are forced to try to aspire to or emulate models of manhood and masculinity which are based on subjugation and are based on dominance, which is based on a fear ... They are denied the space to be able to truly feel and be sentient beings. To be beings that are able to reflect and analyse their own role and their position and their own contribution – and also challenge the notions of what masculinity is, and what manhood is, and what it means to be powerful. And so within this type of society manhood gets attributed to an external notion, such as how much money people have or what status they have ... and this in a way is actually quite disempowering to our men. They too often end up trying to live up to all this, that is ultimately dehumanising. And in the process they do not only dehumanise themselves, they dehumanise people who are meant to be their loved ones (iN-APP, Interview 1, 26 November 2014).

Taking this final point into consideration, it is also important to note that the police officer did not intervene on behalf of the female solicitor. He intervened because the court security guard had had his physical power challenged by Malcolm. By the time the police officer arrived in order to censure Malcolm for his alleged transgressions, the female solicitor had been reduced to one point in the arguments used by male security agent to reproach Malcolm.

After some time, the black mother who had organised the protest in support of her son, exited the court and witnessed the altercation between Malcolm and the police officer. After being apprised of the situation, she immediately came to the defence of Malcolm, who had clearly disrupted the protest. She took Malcolm aside and talked to him slowly, defusing the conflict between him and the police officer. Malcolm then resumed emotionally detailing his life narrative. The mother clearly had no intention of defending street harassment, or indeed any of the violence Malcolm had previously engaged in. What she did recognise, however, was that the power of state violence, through its security personnel, police and prisons, far outweighed Malcolm's power as an individual, working-class, criminalised man, racialised as black and suffering from mental health issues. The imperialist white supremacist patriarchal state relies on a monopoly on violence, and its machinery will respond to attempts at challenging this monopoly – both subordinated patriarchal violence (Malcolm's fight), and more liberatory forms of resistance (the family-led protest). The state claims to be protecting citizens, including black people, from violence and other danger, but as one female activist rhetorically asked the state during an interview:

Do you want a young black man to reach his full potential, or do you want a good nigger? (Justice for Ricky Bishop, Interview 1, 2 December 2014).

The question posed underpins the state's paradoxical monopoly of violence; black men are routinely victims of state violence, retrospectively justified by the failure to emulate an image of masculinity that is non-threatening to capitalist white supremacist patriarchal violence. It is this intersection of race, gender and class power that reproduces the disproport-

tionate levels of police violence experienced by black communities. Identifying the nuances between different manifestations of these structures of power is, as the cases in this chapter demonstrate, essential in resisting racism. It enables us to understand the importance of not reproducing patriarchy, in both its personal and structural manifestations, when organising against the repressive nature of the state.

### Rehumanising the Deceased: The Black Body as a Space of Resistance

Frantz Fanon (1967: 106) famously asserted that colonialism, and by extension racism, 'is not a thinking machine. It is violence in its natural state'. He went on to argue that colonised peoples become racialised others, which dehumanises them, reducing them to a racialised body, rationalising the violence enacted upon it by the logic of white supremacy. The continuation of this analysis is that black people will face disproportionate levels of state violence in European nations (and their former settler colonies, such as the US) that are notably still plagued by racism today (Goldberg 2001) (Chapter 2). According to the EHRC, African/African-Caribbean people are between four and twenty-six times more likely than whites to be stopped and searched by police in Britain (EHRC 2012). For many offences, such as those related to criminalised drugs, they are also more likely to be arrested, charged, found guilty and harshly sentenced (Eastwood, Shiner & Bear 2013: 13). On average since 1991, one person a week has died at the hands of police in Britain – unsurprisingly, black people are also overrepresented in these figures (Inquest 2014). Black people are also often neglected by police when they are victims of racial violence from non-state actors (Athwal & Burnett 2014). Through recognising historical continuities and

highlighting emergent trends, this section explores the use of racialised bodies in articulating black resistance against police violence, displayed through the names and images that grassroots black campaigns and organisations use to identify themselves.

Fanon's (1967, 1986) post-colonial analysis informs us that resistance to racism is the process by which racialised bodies victimised by racist state violence can be *rehumanised* – an approach reproduced by black activism in Britain today. Few, if any, UK-based campaigns specifically addressing racist police violence have overt racialised language in their title, but still communicate a racialised message through the names of black people subjected to racial violence. In what follows, I look at how the campaign group Justice4Mark (Duggan) builds on the aforementioned struggles for Emmett Till and Stephen Lawrence, by reclaiming Mark's physical image by, for example, exposing how his photograph is misrepresented by the press. I then compare this with the transatlantic Trayvon Martin Solidarity Campaign, in which campaigners reclaimed his physical embodiment by appropriating the aesthetic signifiers (the hoodie), which identified the young African American as a physical threat to his killer.

Mark Duggan was shot dead by the police in 2011. The aftermath of the killing saw the state propagate much misinformation, including that Duggan was a violent gangster linked to numerous murders (Martin 2013b), despite there being no evidence to support such claims (Stopes 2014). Both the police and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) told reporters that there had been an 'exchange of fire' (Bridges 2012: 4) between Duggan and the police. In fact, it was revealed that, in stark contrast to original police press releases, there was no evidence that Duggan was armed: in fact, a police officer had shot a fellow officer by accident (Vesagar 2011). It was the failure of the police to inform,

let alone engage with, Duggan's family after the killing that led to widespread civil unrest (Bridges 2012).

In spite of the strength of this display of opposition, police witnesses appeared relaxed during the 2013-14 inquiry into Duggan's death. The public gallery in the Royal Courts of Justice was filled with activists from a range of organisations. During the final days it was packed with Tottenham residents including rapper Wretch 32. During cross-examination, a police witness was asked to expand on the lessons learnt after what went wrong on the day of Mark's death. The officer paused, looked slightly confused, then shook his head and said:

Gone wrong? Well, from my understanding, the – it depends on how you see that because the operation was planned as expected (Inquest into the Death of Mark Duggan 2013: npn).

Here, the police witness confidently asserted that he considered the extrajudicial killing of a (black) suspect to be a legitimate outcome, even though there was no concrete evidence that the suspect was armed or dangerous in any other way. The apparently dismissive manner of the officer exemplifies the ways in which the loss of black life is articulated by the logic of white supremacy (hooks 1992). This killing of a man of African-Caribbean heritage must be contextualised, not just within the disproportionate numbers of black men killed at the hands of the police (Inquest 2014), but also in a historical context in which the black male is racialised through the legacies of colonialism and enslavement:

In this we find the idea of the slave as a dishonourable brute whose maniacal desires must be kept in check by his master's discipline, and whose words can be accepted only under torture ... Seeing the victim as the aggressor and as the 'white man's burden' is a classic instance of projection: at once a denial of one's own moral perversity and violence and a perfect excuse for them (Patterson, quoted in hooks 2004: 48).

Like the lynchings in the US South that led to the death of Emmett Till, the violence of these and other police officers is shrugged off not only as morally defensible, but also as a necessary 'burden' on police shoulders, in order to control the violence they claim to be imminent unless such action is undertaken. The recovery of a firearm was based on an

eye-witness account by a police officer, which mobile phone footage from a member of the public proved to be false. The gun that was recovered from a bush five metres from the scene did not have Duggan's fingerprints or DNA on it, and no wit-



Figure 6.1

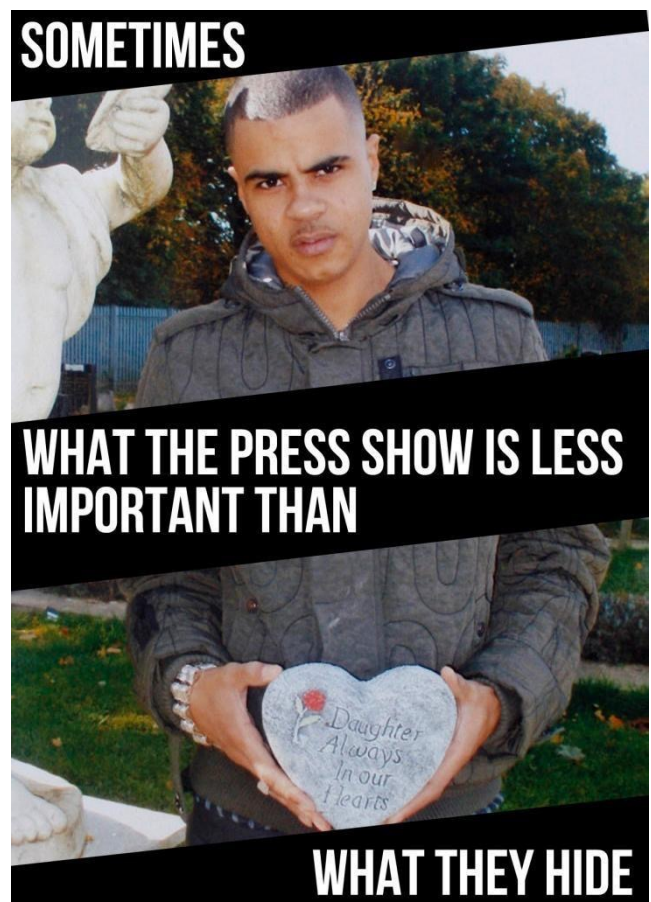
nesses could explain to the court how it got there. A number of other police witness accounts were described by the coroner as 'contradictory', including a sergeant 'directing officers to go and secure a gun which hadn't yet been found'. The coroner added: '[i]t is not a question of anybody being mistaken. It is something which is a direct contradiction here' (Cutler, quoted in Moore 2013: npn). Many of those involved in the campaign against the police found the discrepancies between police accounts and the physical evidence of the case startling. The police's apparent nonchalance in relaying to a

courtroom their view that Duggan's death was the most appropriate outcome in this situation says little for the inquest process (which operates within the parameters of an arm of the state) and its ability to hold the police to account for acts of violence.

This gendered and racialised framing is also reproduced by the press underneath headlines such as 'Mark Duggan, the man who lived by the gun' in the *Daily Mail* newspaper (Martin 2014: npn). This was challenged by Justice4Mark, the family- and community-led campaign which emerged as a response to the shooting. Figure 6.1 shows the photograph of Mark Duggan commonly used in the press – a man in a dark hooded jacket, staring seriously into the camera (Williams 2011; Taylor 2012; Rush 2013; Lancefield 2015). The physical image of this stony expression is contextualised only by the descriptions of Duggan as a 'gangster' and 'senior member of

notorious Tottenham ManDem' (Martin 2013b). Figure 6.2 is a flier produced by Justice4Mark, which shows another photograph of Duggan taken in the same place. This explains the solemn expression on his face – he is standing next to the grave of his daughter, who died when she was a small baby. He is holding a heart-shaped memorial stone which reads 'Daughter. Always in Our Hearts'. Campaigners were compelled to reclaim both the conceptual and physical image of Mark Duggan, both of which were subjected to racialised misrepresentation.

Figure 6.2



This new image does not fit with the stereotypes of black masculinity projected upon Duggan by the police and press, linking him to violent crime.

Justice4Mark attempts to counter this image by depicting a young black man able to explore and express difficult emotions of mourning and loss – the image of his body has now become an anti-racist metonym. Rather than bowing to the whims of hegemonic masculinity, Justice4Mark campaigners, led by women, boldly raise their fists and employ the slogan 'No Justice, No Peace'. In addition, they reframed the narrative of black masculinity, portraying the caring, loving family and community member they dearly miss, and for whom they seek justice. Only by understanding the intersections of race, class and gender in these struggles can we reproduce campaigns such as Justice4Mark, which gain widespread national support. The reclaiming of Mark Duggan's conceptual and physical image helped the campaign attain national headlines while refusing to compromise with a system that seeks to dehumanise victims of police violence.

While overlooking the importance of gender in racialised state violence, Fanon (1986) recognised the dehumanisation of those racialised as having 'black skin' as a global phenomenon. His campaigning spanned Africa, the Caribbean and Europe (Macey 2012), influencing the US Black Power Movement (Newton 2009). In 2012, the US-based campaign for Trayvon Martin – another campaign relating to a body racialised as black – received widespread international attention. Trayvon was shot and killed by George Zimmerman as a result of alleged racial profiling. Zimmerman (a volunteer neighbourhood watch captain) was not arrested following the shooting, having invoked Florida's 'Stand Your Ground' law, claiming that he was attacked by the hooded, yet unarmed teenager (Jones & Yansey 2012). Black communities across the US mobilised to challenge the circumstances that led

to his death, and the protection afforded to his killer by the criminal justice system. Activists wore hoodies, physically reproducing the racialised threat that Trayvon allegedly embodied. It has been argued that racial signifiers, such as the hoodie, are employed as metonyms of racism under neoliberalism, as Cowen and Siciliano (2011: 1529) explain:

Deepening circuits of commodification play a central role in enabling criminalisation to exert its force on arguably non-racist grounds. The commodification of hip-hop culture for example, parallels the increased outlawing of its aesthetic bodily markers, submitting the black male body to disciplinary practices in the name of security: 'hoodies' now constitute a security threat, banned in school districts and public spaces across North America and the UK.

In Britain, black communities also mobilised to demonstrate their anger at the killing of Trayvon Martin. Deaths in custody campaigns such as Justice for Smiley Culture, social justice groups such as BARAC (Black Activists Rising Against Cuts), and other community members organised a demonstration outside the US Embassy in central London in March 2012, also donning hoodies, reproducing en masse the physical embodiment of an alleged black threat. My point here is not to argue (as Cowen and Siciliano imply above), that 'hoodies' are necessarily employed as a racist metonym in the UK, but that in this context the hoodie was employed as a symbol of black resistance. The conceptual and physical images of Trayvon Martin were reproduced by activists as an anti-racist metonym.

The feeling of anger at an injustice for African Americans across the Atlantic was felt strongly in Britain, particularly for a teenage boy. Organisers saw Trayvon's death as a reflection of the same struggle against racist state violence in the UK. As one activist recounted:

People did connect what happened to Trayvon Martin with other deaths in custody at the hands of the state. It was a death of a black man that the state and the law wasn't responding to ... So [young black people] connected that to what was happening over here (BARAC Interview 2, 7 October 2013).

One of the organisers made a speech outside the US Embassy, taking the above analysis further as they spoke frankly about their feelings with regard to white supremacy. Starting with the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans, this representative from the campaign group Justice for Smiley Culture recounted the long history of racial violence experienced by people of African heritage. Drawing a historical continuity between chattel enslavement and racial violence today, the Trayvon Martin solidarity demonstration was without doubt far more than a reaction to an individual case, or a superficial condemnation of those who judge others by their attire. It is worth quoting bell hooks here again, as she eloquently asserts:

A fundamental task of black critical thinkers has been the struggle to break with the hegemonic modes of seeing, thinking, and being that block our capacity to see ourselves oppositionally, to imagine, describe, and invent ourselves in ways that are liberatory. Without this, how can we challenge and invite non-black allies and friends to dare to look at us differently, to dare to break their colonising gaze? (hooks 1992: 2).

By situating Trayvon's death in its historical and political context, activists were able to draw on people's personal feelings towards the needless death of a black teenager, and rehumanise his body as an anti-racist metonym.<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, by reproducing the physical signifiers associated with Trayvon Martin and the racial violence he was subjected to, activists were able to communicate their solidarity through powerful symbols. Like Fanon's (1986) 'coloured' doctor (Chapter 2), Stephen Lawrence, Mark Duggan, Trayvon Martin and other people racialised as black who have died at the hands of racially motivated violence, are individuals who represent the collective. But rather than these individuals being essentialised through their representation of the collective, they are rehumanised, becoming a symbol of metonymic anti-racism. As this section has shown, this process can involve recapturing the conceptual image, physical image and/or physical embodiment of the racialised black body. Superficially, we see political action in response to an individual case, sometimes thousands of miles away. Following a more profound analysis, as presented here, we can see the body employed as a metonym for the black struggle in Britain, and globally against racist violence, injustice and oppression.

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<sup>48</sup> Commentators located Trayvon's murder in the historical context of lynching: [www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/aug/25/mike-brown-shooting-jim-crow-lynchings-in-common](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/aug/25/mike-brown-shooting-jim-crow-lynchings-in-common) accessed 2 February 2015

## Bodies on the Ground: Collectives Racialised as Black

While individuals racialised as black, and often gendered as men, are criminalised and dehumanised by the logic of white supremacy, collections of black bodies are essentialised in a comparable manner. In Britain, racialised terms such as 'gang' have been used as racial metonyms in order both to reproduce and to resist racism. Another example is a term used by police until the late 1980s, in reference to people from, or presumed to be from, Jamaica:

'Yardies, the criminal gangs which originated in Jamaica, could establish no-go areas in British cities as a cover for their increasing cocaine trafficking, a police assessment says' (*The Times*, 8 February 1988, in Keith 1993: 214).

The term 'yardie' originally referred to someone from 'yard', which is African-Caribbean vernacular for home, that home being Jamaica, a space which is of course racialised as black. The above quotation shows how the police and the mainstream press criminalise black people with terms such as 'yardies' and 'gangs'. These are further examples of metonymic racism, where an overt racial term, such as black, is replaced by a term of a similar meaning. As second- and third-generation African-Caribbean men born in Britain replaced those who had migrated to Britain from the Caribbean itself, the label 'yardie' began to drift away from popular vernacular. Nonetheless, the term 'gang' has remained, and was compounded by equivalent moral panics around gangs in the US, where the term is also heavily racialised (Armaline, Vera Sanchez & Correia 2014). As the opening section of this chapter illustrated, this term made a resurgence in Britain following the 2011 English civil

unrest (Helm 2012: npn). The racialised nature of the 'gang' is stark, given both its historical usage and the way it is used by both the police and the press (Alexander 2008). This section looks at how the racialised metonyms for black bodies are reclaimed to articulate black resistance, using evidence from the Birmingham-based Liberation Squad and London's Haringey Young People Empowered (HYPE).

The Metropolitan police have had a number of 'gang' units, such as the 'Trident Gang Crime Command', which focused 'primarily on gun crime and homicide within the black community'<sup>49</sup> and was responsible for organising the killing of Mark Duggan. They often hold conferences in London's City Hall to discuss the need for new approaches, weapons and powers to repress those identified as gang members. One example of such police advocacy saw a £1 million annual fund to provide, among other extended police and judicial powers, 'dedicated gangs prosecutors' (City Hall 2014), in order to ensure that those accused were more likely to receive a conviction.

Similar units have been set up in other racially diverse areas such as Manchester. A recent study of Greater Manchester Police's own data on individuals identified as gang members reveals some interesting findings about the racialisation of the term 'gang'. The figures show that 89 per cent of those identified as a gang member by Greater Manchester Police were either Black or South Asian. These figures were compared with those identified as being involved in *serious youth violence*, which includes threat of violence, violence, discharging a firearm and other crimes that make up the criteria of 'gang' activity. The figures for this group of people reveal that 77 per cent of those involved in serious

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<sup>49</sup> <http://content.met.police.uk/Article/History-of-Trident/1400014986671/1400014986671> accessed 12 December 2015

Figure 6.3: The Evening Standard's Gangs of London (below)



youth violence are in fact white. Therefore, although the majority of violent crime was being carried out by white people, these were not the groups of people identified by police as being 'gangs' (Williams 2014). This racialisation of criminality and violence is again nothing new; as Fanon (1967) points out sarcastically, the 'men of evil repute' (39) occupy the villages and towns racialised as black in the colonies. The 'social category' of the 'gang' today, therefore, does not correlate with the perpetration of those offences that supposedly define gang activity. It is a term which, as suggested by the evidence presented here, is applied as a result of racialised logic, with profoundly racist consequences.

Although comparable studies are, at the time of writing, yet to be carried out in London, the press in Britain's capital has been a key agent in reproducing the racialisation of the 'gang.' As part of its 'Gangs of London' campaign, the *London Evening Standard* newspaper ran a series of headlines claiming: 'Turf wars among London's 250 gangs account for half of all shootings and a fifth of stabbings and have fuelled this epidemic of violence'

(Cohen 2013a: npn). These sensational stories were published in the same week as the aforementioned inquiry into the killing of Mark Duggan, who was also described as a gangster by both the police and press. Readers were told that 'these young gangsters have lost so many friends, they've stopped going to their funerals' (ibid.). This racialised metonymy of the 'gang', with similarly racialised images (Figure 6.3), serves to devalue black life. Here we see metonymic racism producing fear by associating black masculinity with criminalised violence (hooks 2004). However, like the activists and campaigns which rehumanise black individuals killed by police through metonymic anti-racism, black community struggle has also sought to reclaim the derogatory terms for collective black bodies.

One of the tools utilised in black communities' defence against the police is community monitoring. This preventative approach includes training workshops equipping community members with skills such as knowledge of the law, collection of evidence and legal contacts. One of the organisations engaged in this kind of work is Liberation Squad, based in England's second largest city, Birmingham. When members were asked about their name, and why they chose it along with their logo showing a black panther (Figure 6.4), they said that they loved the Black Panthers, and had created their own ten-point programme, much like that of the US Black Panther Party (Newton 2009). This programme includes demands for housing, employment, education, freedom from state violence and the right to self-defence. The term 'squad' is often used in African-Caribbean/black British vernacular to describe an official/semi-official group of people. Another example is Ruff Squad, a collective of MCs who make grime music – a genre born out of African-Caribbean musical traditions in the UK. Terms such as squad, as well as gang, are thus racialised as black (Ralphs, Smithson & Williams 2011), both by the logic of white supremacy and by the young black people who claim/reclaim these terms as a shared sense of identity. Liberation Squad are

in a sense putting up a mirror to the *London Evening Standard's* 'Gangs of London' articles, which were accompanied by images of racialised bodies (Figure 6.3)



Figure 6.4: Liberation Squad, Birmingham (above)

wearing hoodies – a graphic articulation of metonymic racism. Liberation Squad sought to reclaim the negativity associated with this racialised collective of black bodies, asserting that the terms:

squad, gang, the crew, that whole mentality, we want to change that mentality about it being negative through our actions. So we stuck with Liberation Squad because we wanted to change that kind of mentality' (Liberation Squad Interview 2, 1 February 2014).

This communicates a countervailing message of metonymic *anti*-racism. While Goldberg (2009) sees black people being recruited as spokespeople for racial metonyms (or what he calls anti-racialism), black people are using these linguistic formations to resist racial violence. Explaining how they wanted to appeal to their generation of young people, Liberation Squad organisers asserted:

Squad is more comfortable for them. It's more like, yeah man we get that. But again, it's just the name – it is the ideology behind it that is more important (Liberation Squad Interview 1, 1 February 2014).

Liberation Squad were firm in their determination not to be limited by race, while wanting people to know that race was important in the shaping of their politics. Their approach to language seeks to revolutionise the racialisation of a collective of black bodies into a positive, effective and radical organisation. They see these metonyms as merely a vessel for bigger ideas and actions, remaining committed to the liberation of everyone affected by state violence. Another organisation, Haringey Young People Empowered, also known as HYPE Gang, shared similar sentiments:

So we formed HYPE, and the aim of it really was for it to be a gang. We wanted it to be a gang, but the kind of gang where people had allegiances in a gang. And therefore rather [people would say], this man is from HYPE, he's safe but he's actually doing positive stuff – (HYPE Interview 1: 22 October 2013).

Again, what we see here is black resistance to police violence recapturing racialised terms for collections of black bodies, and attempting to use them in ways that challenge (rather than reproduce) racism. The language employed by HYPE Gang was littered with similar terms, such as a mini-conference they organised called *Street Politics*, using the racialised language of someone being 'street', but adding the word politics in an effort to interrogate critically the issues which young working class, disproportionately black, people face. Terms such as gang have been used to criminalise successive generations of black people living in Britain (Keith 1993, Watt & Stenson 1997, Williams 2014), and newspaper

campaigns such as the *London Evening Standard's* show how it can be used to communicate a racialised message. This form of metonymic racism is being subverted in particular by young people involved in black community struggle against the police. These organisations have attempted to reclaim these metonyms and to use them as a way to articulate their struggles – metonymic anti-racism.

### The Racialised Body and Metonymic Anti-Racism

Metonymic anti-racism presents an innovative and dynamic approach to black resistance to police violence. By playing metonymic racism at its own game, it cloaks the militant politics of anti-policing and black power, which is often repressed by the state and effectively denied access to public spaces, financial resources and mainstream institutions. But this newly dominant form of articulating black community struggle is accompanied by pitfalls. In relying on racialised metonyms, it can be argued that black communities are compromising the politics of anti-racism in a way that organisations of previous generations (such as the Black Panther Movement) did not. This poses some serious questions for metonymic anti-racism, since, like metonymic racism, it relies on terms that cloak the politics of race. Black communities may thus be falling into the trap of internalising the metonymic racism of neoliberalisation, thereby distorting the identities of people racialised as black in Britain. Furthermore, as Goldberg (2009) argues in his analysis of what he calls anti-racialism, the disarticulation of race hinders our ability to confront racism, in addition to negating our ability to intellectualise effectively the manner in which racism operates. Metonymic racism/anti-racism is, arguably, asking us 'to give up on the word, the concept, the

category, at most the categorising. But not, pointedly not, the conditions for which those terms stand' (ibid: 12). This metonymic language can create the impression that race is no longer a significant factor in the life outcomes of individuals, an assumption that runs contrary to the political convictions of those engaged in black resistance to police violence. Therefore, there is arguably a need for identification as black in order to build an effective collective resistance against white domination.

One black community organisation which engages in a range of issues is the Interim National African People's Parliament (iNAPP). Members of iNAPP's Legal and Constitutional Committee (which addresses issues relating to policing and criminal justice) articulate black politics overtly. iNAPP recognises that many members of Britain's black communities feel alienated by overt political statements that articulate Black Power politics. This becomes compounded when confronted by forms of cultural nationalism and Pan-Africanism, which reject many aspects of western political culture.

The system of global white supremacy creates hierarchies of knowledge which put African knowledge production below that of Europeans; as a consequence, overtly black or African political formations may be seen as inferior – an internalised racism (Fanon 1986). An example of this was recalled by a member of iNAPP, who talked about working for a section of the mental health service which catered to the needs of black service users. She noted that some black service users bypassed her in favour of white practitioners, whom they may have considered more professional than their black counterparts. An open recognition of racial inequality sometimes leaves black people feeling as if they are inferior rather than oppressed. The result of this is a perception that black organisations and campaigns seek to provide charity for the weak, rather than solidarity with the racially

subjugated. The feeling of powerlessness that black people experience in Britain is often projected onto organisations that explicitly represent black people. It was also put to me that black people may consider black organisations to be relatively powerless, regarding less explicitly racialised politics as being a more inviting solution to the problems they face (iNAPP Interview 1: 26 November 2014). The question that remains is whether metonymic anti-racism ignores, and therefore does not directly deal with, the feeling of black powerlessness. If this is the case, then there is the danger that the feelings of black powerlessness and inferiority are not being addressed with integrity by metonymic anti-racism.

One of the key features of racism under neoliberalism, with its shift from overt racist discrimination to a more subtle institutionalised racism, is that it has been able to cloak racism in a veil of deracialised language (see above). In adjusting to this new terrain, black community struggles can subvert this new system – they can access pockets of funding, receive positive coverage from the mainstream press and even engage with different levels of government, when it suits them. One black activist recalled a charity auction where wealthy members of society, almost exclusively white, networked with representatives from different community organisations and then bid to donate money to them. She noted that the group which worked to help black women with mental health problems received no grants from any of the individuals present, and wondered if the articulation of race contributed to this lack of interest, saying:

I think once you say black in the title I think people perceive it as being not about them and lobbying for them was being a threat to them (Justice 4 Trayvon, Interview 1, 14 March 2014).

Since it is the role of scholars engaged in action research to provide interventions in social movements (Chapter 3), I feel it would be unwise to dismiss a pattern of resistance which is being so widely reproduced. Metonymic anti-racism is not a political slogan like 'black power', but a pragmatic strategy. Groups of young people are reclaiming terms used to racialise their collectives – taking the language of the 'gang' and using it to connect to other young people, while subverting racialised discourses. Deaths in custody continue to be one of the key stimuli of mass black mobilisation, leading to national headlines, protest, legal campaigns and civil unrest. In each of these cases, the mobilisation has emerged principally from black communities, with the body of the deceased (their name and image) serving as a racialised signifier. The campaigns for justice following a black death are not simply about convicting those individuals responsible, but a reclaiming of a black body, dehumanised and discarded by white supremacy.

The names and images of racialised men such as Mark Duggan are used to reproduce racist stereotypes through metonymic racism. By repeating their names in resistance, and displaying images of them which do not reproduce the dehumanisation that white supremacy projects onto black men, campaigns for justice, disproportionately led by black women, can revolutionise the way society views, and treats, the lives of black people. The reclaiming of terms used to racialise a collective of bodies, or the names of individual black people who have died at the hands of the state, has led to metonymic anti-racism becoming the dominant articulation of resistance to state violence. These changes in the way resisting violence and dehumanisation of the black body is articulated should come as little surprise, for as Stuart Hall (1990: 235) reminds us, 'diaspora identities are those which are

constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference'.

While it is the role of scholars engaged in action research to provide interventions in social movements, I feel it would be unwise to dismiss a pattern of resistance which is being so widely reproduced. Metonymic anti-racism now dominates articulations of black resistance to police violence, despite the potential pitfalls identified above. The purpose of this research therefore, is to highlight the potential dangers, in the hope of maximising the momentum being galvanised by these campaigns at the time of writing. In so doing we can bring to the surface both the new racism, but importantly, the new anti-racisms, furthering our understanding of, and participation in, resistance. Metonymic anti-racism, in my view, poses more opportunities than threats, and the revolutionary politics of black power is still very much alive among those who use it as a strategic organising tool.

### Concluding Thoughts

Centuries after the invention of racial categorisation, the physical body continues to be one of the most commonly recognised spaces of racialisation. In Britain today, bodies racialised as black lead to dehumanisation, and are spaces through which both metonymic racism and metonymic anti-racism are produced. The moral panic around muggers or gangs, in addition to the dehumanisation of those killed in police custody, are a constant feature of Britain's racial landscape. The subordinated manifestations of black masculinity are repressed by the state's hegemonic masculinity, institutionalising violence, both structural and overt. These theoretical foundations aid us in our understanding of how black community struggle can effectively address the intersections of class, race and gender that shape

state violence and resistance to it. Those defending racialised bodies from police violence must contend with a white supremacist patriarchal violence that dehumanises people racialised as black in multiple ways.

Rather than attempting to legitimise black masculinity by mimicking its hegemonic equivalents, I argue that black men will become fully humanised only by dismantling patriarchal norms. Scholars such as Tate, who adopt a pro-feminist framework, argue that without incorporating a critique of patriarchy into our analysis of race and class, 'what we're struggling for is merely the end of white supremacy – and not the salvaging of its victims' (Tate, quoted in Neal 2006). In other words, by not taking into account the role of patriarchy in the oppression of all black people, we will reproduce those same gendered inequalities within our own anti-racist struggles. In order to avoid this, political identities must be reinvented, taking into consideration multiple manifestations of domination. The acknowledgment of the disproportionate number of women leading these campaigns is therefore vital in resisting this violent dehumanisation (Hill Collins 1998). As this chapter has shown, through metonymic anti-racism, black communities are attempting to reclaim and rehumanise these racialised bodies, and the discourses used to describe them.

Overall, the campaigns that I have described are among the most effective for articulating black community struggle, as the names of the deceased resonate with those committed to anti-racism. By countering racial stereotypes, activists rehumanise those killed, making their bodies spaces of resistance. Through connecting racialised bodies with the literature they produce, or the families they loved, grassroots black campaigners can reject the hegemonic masculinity of the state, projecting a new identity of their loved ones, or those with whom they stand in solidarity. While almost none of the campaigns covered in this chapter

have the word 'black' or any other overt racial indicator in their title, every organiser considered their campaign to be a part of a black struggle, and to be understood as such by those who show support and participate in acts of resistance. This metonymic anti-racism now dominates the articulation of black resistance to police violence; carefully analysing these campaigns in the ways outlined above engenders a more profound understanding of the relationships between police violence and consequent political organising and action.

## Chapter 7

### Regenerating Resistance, Reworking Solidarity

#### Introduction

You've all heard of Eric *Garner*, but how many of you youngers know about Joy *Gardner*?!

(UFFC, Black Lives Matter Solidarity Protest, Shepherd's Bush (West London), 3 December 2014)

In 2014, two mass political actions took place in London, in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States. The first of these two protests took place on a cold evening in late November; hundreds of activists, mainly young people, rallied outside the US Embassy in central London. One of the most powerful speeches was made by Marcia Rigg, sister of Sean Rigg, who died in Brixton Police Station in 2008. After chronicling the impediments to justice that the Justice for Sean Rigg Campaign has overcome and continues to battle, she blasted the press and politicians for lecturing activists on the importance of non-violence, and their criticism of the slogan 'No Justice, No Peace'. Marcia Rigg was met with cheers when she rhetorically asked the crowd: "How can there be peace when there is no justice?". From there, the protesters left the US Embassy and marched towards Bond Street. This busy commercial district was bustling with Christmas shoppers, and camera crews followed the demonstration as it shut down main roads, blocking traffic and disrupting one of London's biggest symbols of consumer capitalism. The second of these two protests took place at Westfield Shopping Centre, in Shepherd's Bush, and will be analysed in greater detail below.

This chapter analyses the ways in which radical grassroots black resistance to policing is enacted in practice. There are two broad areas I am interested in analysing. The first has to do with emergent tactics employed by activists in the neoliberal city and how they are changing. My second concern is with how the tactics used by activists resisting racist policing affect how solidarity is built and maintained, both within and outside black communities. In exploring these themes, this investigation asks three questions. First, how has protest against racial violence changed under post-industrial capitalism? In order to answer this question, I use the Black Lives Matter solidarity actions in London as case studies. Secondly, how has the female leadership, analysed in Chapter 6, affected gender politics within black struggles, and the state response to them? I use the UFFC Annual March Against Deaths in Custody as a case study, as well as the family campaign for Mark Duggan, which regularly participates in UFFC events. Thirdly, I return to the role of metonymic anti-racism in anti-racist struggles against policing. This final question asks: how do the tactics currently being used in anti-racist struggle against policing affect both internal solidarity between members, and external solidarity with other left-wing campaigns?

In order to contextualise black resistance to policing, this chapter begins by elaborating on the discussion of new social movement theories that I initiated in Chapter 2. Much of the most influential geographical literature in this field draws on the 'Right to the City' (Harvey 2008). Such notions are useful in the neoliberal context of the Global North, as they expand our definition of the proletariat. As such, they open the possibility of building links of solidarity among people working in services, transport and other post-industrial sectors. These workers produce capital in the city, and therefore have the potential to disrupt it. It is

in that context that I go on to explore examples of post-industrial social movements, focusing on the Occupy Movement in both the US and the UK. These new social movement theories will then be used to inform my examination of black resistance to policing. As part of this I explore the extent to which such theories are useful in understanding the class, race and gender dynamics of black struggle in Britain.

The post-industrial city provides the backdrop for an analysis of how black resistance is changing, drawing parallels with new social movements such as Occupy. This analysis includes the institutions that are targeted: spaces associated with both capital and the state. These solidarity actions target shopping districts and other spaces of capitalist consumption, rather than symbols of state institutions such as police stations. Westfield Shopping Centre in west London provides a specific case study, in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement. Here, we will see how racialised places in the United States serve as racial metonyms through their association with African-American social movements.

I then move on to the internal dynamics of grassroots black struggle, with a specific focus on the gendered nature of resistance to policing. Building on the analysis of female activism in Chapter 6, I use black feminism to analyse the role of women in deaths in custody campaigning in Britain. The different perspectives on what we can learn from the position of black women's activism are put forward, examining the impact of such activism in relation to patriarchy. In assessing the significance of these women-led campaigns, and the role played by patriarchy in state violence, I hope to develop a greater recognition of women in black community struggle.

Continuing the theoretical argument which underpins this thesis, I analyse metonymic anti-racism in the above contexts, and the opportunities and pitfalls this articulation of black struggle furnishes. This centres on an assessment of the impact that metonymic anti-racism has in building solidarity with left wing organisations outside black communities. I conclude by thinking about how new forms of political action resisting state violence can overlap, both conceptually and practically, with movements such as Occupy.

### Conceptual Groundings

‘Race’ is a floating signifier, Stuart Hall (1992) famously wrote, transforming as it shifts through time and across space. This means that the geographical context in which racialisation is reproduced can radically alter the manner in which it is manifested. Furthermore, as sites of contestation, spaces of racial transition are continually re-formed. This thesis is primarily concerned with how urban spaces in London and Birmingham are spaces of contestation, in regard to both conceptual ownership of these spaces and the physical occupation of them.

Urban Britain today is heavily racialised, developing ‘assumed levels of poverty and ‘roughness’, the racial, ethnic and religious make-up of an area, as well as stories of danger and memories of ‘racialised’ experiences’ (Clayton 2008: 258). For example, researchers have found that in areas of London associated with the African-Caribbean community, such as Sandringham Road in Hackney, the police articulate violence towards black communities as location-specific rather than race-specific (Keith 1993). This racialisation of space has been more readily articulated under neoliberalisation, replacing overt bigotry

with racialised discourses that deny overt racism while reproducing racial injustice (Goldberg 2009). Although often identified as something negative, these racial metonyms can also help us understand the ways black resistance to police violence is similarly spatialised.

Neoliberalism thus compels us to rethink continuities and recent trends in racialised oppressions and articulations. Chapter 2 discussed how emergent forms of resistance against neoliberalisation are often framed through the 'new social movements' discourse (Mouffe 1999, Harvey 2008, Swyngedouw 2011 Castells 2012). Social movements fall into a broad range of definitions; however, none of the activists interviewed in this research considered themselves to be part of a social movement. Movement-building was a core aim of many of the people who participated in this research, but these socio-political manifestations are better described using terms such as community organising, campaigning and struggle. Nonetheless, some of the literature on new social movements can still be useful in understanding the emergent activism analysed in this thesis. Chapter 2 analysed some of the strengths and weaknesses of such theories, and this chapter develops notions of the 'Right to the City'. This will enable us better to formulate ideas relating to direct action in spaces controlled by capital and the state. The gendered nature of resistance is also vital in understanding the role of patriarchy and female-led resistance to state violence, and how gender intersects with racialisation.

## **New Social Movements and the City**

One of the most influential developments in the literature on new social movements is the recognition of post-industrial centres of empire. Although this theory, popularised by Hardt and Negri (2000), is often applicable only to wealthy western nations (since the majority world still relies directly on agriculture and industry), it has had an enormous impact on the intellectual analysis of the spaces in which new social movements in Europe and North America operate. Within these post-industrial societies, large segments of the population become excluded from the labour market, as the service sector (which dominates the economy) is unable to absorb the labour surplus left by the capital flight to cheaper spaces of production in the Global South (ibid.).

Once a potential labour force has been excluded from industrial spaces, it has little stake in capital and the state. Its members therefore organise themselves into structures that are more reflective of everyday life (Hardt, Reyes & Zibechi 2012). This results in less state-centric, trade union-centric and hierarchical ways of organising, and more autonomous groups based on direct forms of democracy. One of the best examples of this is the Occupy Movement. Although such occupations are common in the Global South, particularly in Latin America (Motta 2010), scholarly interest increased when Occupy Wall Street, and a month later Occupy London Stock Exchange (LSX), were founded in 2011.

The intention of those involved in Occupy LSX was to demonstrate against the oppressive and crisis-ridden nature of capitalism, while building working democratic

and economic alternatives to it. Thousands of people pitched tents in London's financial district, and engaged in consensual decision-making rather than electoral and representative forms of democracy. Activists also developed working groups to rethink how the economy is structured, while organising the encampment through a system of participatory economics where work and resources are shared collectively (Halvorsen 2015). While there is very little literature on how race is implicated in Occupy LSX, chapters of Occupy in the US have been widely criticised as being white, middle-class spaces. The Washington Post published a piece titled 'Why African Americans aren't embracing Occupy Wall Street', while a New York-based African-American radio station host claimed: "Occupy Wall Street was started by whites, and is about their concerns and their plight" (Campbell 2011: 42).

It is important to point out that Occupy LSX was founded three months after the civil unrest which was sparked by the police killing of Mark Duggan, an unarmed man of African-Caribbean heritage. Three members of London's black community, including myself, were invited to Occupy LSX to talk about state repression following the disturbances. However, Occupy LSX did little to incorporate racial justice actively into the movement, adopting instead a more colour-blind critique of capitalism, austerity and state power. In the sections of this chapter which follow, I compare black resistance to police violence with Occupy, in addition to thinking about some of the barriers to building links of solidarity.

## **'Racial' Cities**

Urban social movements resisting neoliberalism have been analysed using theories that relate to the notion of the 'Right to the City' (Lefebvre 1991; Mitchell 2003; Purcell 2002; Harvey 2008; Attoh 2011). The original analysis of Lefebvre (1991) makes a distinction between representations of space, which are created by society to fit certain norms, such as public parks being for middle-class joggers rather than the homeless (Mitchell 2003), and representational spaces, which are sites of resistance to these social constructs (Lefebvre 1991). For Lefebvre, '[e]very society in history has shaped a distinctive social space that meets its intertwined requirements for economic production and social 'functioning'' (quoted in Arefi & Meyers 2003: 332). Therefore space is the product of competing ideas, achieved through grassroots politics.

Harvey (2008) has further developed the notion of the Right to the City, in arguing that urban-dwellers must reclaim the city's wealth and resources, including productive industries and social spaces. Building on this, Harvey (2012) argues that we must expand our conception of the proletariat to include not only factory workers but also people who work in domestic services, transport and catering. Although this call-to-arms has been criticised for being economically deterministic (see Chapter 2), 'political protests frequently gauge their effectiveness in terms of their ability to disrupt urban economies' (ibid: 118). Harvey uses examples of immigrant workers in Los Angeles and Chicago going on strike and shutting down these cities. Organising an entire city, therefore, would require industrial action from the non-traditional post-industrial proletariat, who are central to the production of the city. This must be

developed into broad coalitions between student activists, the underemployed, migrant workers and 'all those threatened by the totally unnecessary and draconian austerity politics' (ibid: 162) of the financial oligarchy.

What black-led resistance to policing demonstrates, however, is how Harvey's theory can be broadened. While city-dwellers may often identify with the sector or industry they work in, they also, as Harvey argues, identify with the city in which they work and live. People's affinity to the city can also be used as a mobilising tool by racial justice activism. In the following section, we will see how the economic flows that keep the city functioning can be disrupted by a new form of urban protest. Rather than post-industrial workers taking the lead, a coalition of young people resisting police violence can carry out equivalent political actions. Instead of withdrawing their labour, these activists, inspired by the US-based Black Lives Matter movement, use their bodies to temporarily disrupt capital flows, by targeting places such as shopping centres.

Additionally, seeing the city as a territory over which battles are fought helps us to understand how the urban landscape can be used as a weapon in popular struggle (ibid.). Unlike the Occupy Movement, which engaged in long-term actions in which democratic and economic alternatives could be conceptualised, black resistance to policing uses short, sharp bursts of disruption. This chapter argues that both of these campaigns utilise neoliberal urban spaces, turning them into spaces of radical activism. We must therefore see the neoliberalised city as part of what Polanyi (2001) calls a 'double movement' which creates barriers against political action, but also opens up fresh opportunities for resistance.

## Gendering Black Resistance

As Chapter 6 argued, women are the primary campaigners in almost every black death in custody campaign in Britain. Black women have long played a central role in explicitly black feminist and other black power struggles in Britain (Sudbury 2001). This political labour, at the grassroots level, must be contextualised by the role of black women as both caregivers and breadwinners. As one black woman activist explained:

[police violence] predominately happens to our men, although it does happen to our women and we know it is also [racially] disproportionate, and it is women who are often left holding the pieces together, and they are the ones left having to maintain the families and communities and homes and having to bring up the children, with minimal resources, oftentimes with broken family networks themselves (iNAPP, Interview 1, 26 November 2014).

Here, the roles of unpaid domestic labourer, waged labourer and political agent, with which black women are triply burdened, are contextualised in black struggle against policing. Racial violence creates an environment in which black women are compelled to defend black men from the state. This speaks to the analyses of African-American feminists, such as Michelle Wallace (1979), who fiercely critique the framing of the black woman as possessing

inordinate strength, with an ability for tolerating an unusual amount of misery and heavy, distasteful work. This woman does not have the same fears, weaknesses, and insecurities as other women, but believes herself to be and is, in fact, stronger emotionally than most men. Less of a woman in that she is less “feminine” and helpless, she is really *more* of a woman in that she is the embodiment of Mother Earth, the quintessential mother with infinite sexual, life-giving, and nurturing reserves. In other words, she is a superwoman (107).

The oppressions of capitalism and racism are thus compounded by both black and white patriarchy in the US and the UK (Mama 1993a). While white patriarchy is hegemonic (Chapter 6), it is also often assumed that the oppressed positionality that it engenders stimulates an almost super-human strength among black women. The projection of the notion that black women are inherently stronger, and therefore unsuited to the hegemonic gender role of homemaker, leads to the development of a number of stereotypes.

The trope of the ‘angry black woman’ is continually reproduced through popular culture and discourses in the West (Moynihan 1965, Hull, Scott, & Smith 1982, Roberts 1997). In Britain, these stereotypes are projected onto black women, framing them as both unfeminine and subhuman. This gendered racism is rooted in British colonial discourses serving to legitimise enslavement and other forms of colonial violence by framing black women as brutish and animalistic (Marshall 2004: 5). Sara Ahmed (2012) argues that, in Britain today, the very presence of a black female body is pre-read as a signifier of conflict. Therefore, ‘to speak out of anger as a black woman is then to confirm your position as a source of tension’ (214). While

the temperament of the black woman was essentialised historically to advocate formal colonisation, it is used today to silence, restrain and repress.

Despite these racialised, gendered and class oppressions, black women have played a long yet under-documented role in resistance to policing in Britain (Williams 1993). Owing to these multiple oppressions, they 'are a natural part of many different struggles, both as black women and as black people' (ibid: 162). Lorde (1984) argues that the anger of black women is not only legitimate, but also a productive device, both conceptually and practically, in resisting racism. Indeed, '[e]very woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being (127)'. The burdens of patriarchal racial capitalism make black women some of the most vulnerable people in British society (Mama 1993a, Mama 1993b). Yet, black feminists argue that this positionality makes them uniquely situated to construct a truly liberatory politics (Williams 1993, Hill Collins 2008). In the penultimate section of this chapter, I look at the conceptual contradictions of this position through an examination of the praxis of black resistance to police violence. I also analyse how the racism of patriarchy shapes how the state responds to black female leadership in deaths in custody campaigns.

### Disruption at the Point of Consumption: The Changing Face of Protest

Direct forms of protest against the police often involve organising in and around courts during a specific trial. Some activists I interviewed had defended black people in court whom

they considered to be wrongfully accused. Leaving the racialised spaces of black urban areas, these organisers aimed to occupy spaces racialised as white. In the court itself, they would refuse to stand for the judge, and in one instance read out a poem to the court about the nature of injustice (Justice for Ricky Bishop, Interview 1: 2 December 2013).

This ruptured the representation of this space, as

[n]ormatively, public space is where legitimate citizens take part in legitimately and visibly public activities and, in so doing, reaffirm their relationship to a state that defines those very boundaries (D'Arcus 2003: 723).

This can result in conflict, with arrests and, in some cases, charges of obstruction or damage to court buildings. At the Mark Duggan inquest, some activists blocked the busy road outside and chanted, accepting the resulting arrest. Filling up the galleries in courts is also a common, and often powerful, tactic:

[b]y taking control of particular spaces and making use of them for quite different ends than they are otherwise intended to serve, protests are transgressive: they momentarily shatter the bounds of normality of particular places (ibid: 9).

Many activists talked about the impact this had on the judiciary, and the importance of providing moral support for the accused. The very presence of black bodies in the room immediately racialised the space being occupied, altering the perceived power dynamics within the court.

This form of direct action increased dramatically in 2014, and extended beyond the spaces associated with the state and judiciary. In July of that year, Eric Garner, an African-American New Yorker, was confronted by police for selling single cigarettes. Police placed him in an illegal chokehold which killed him. The incident was recorded by a bystander, in which Garner repeatedly shouts “I can’t breathe” – the video<sup>50</sup> quickly went viral. Garner’s death was followed by a string of police killings of unarmed African Americans in August 2014 – John Crawford, Azelle Ford, Dante Parker, Armand Bennett and Mike Brown. Much of the resistance to these killings took place in Ferguson (where Mike Brown was killed), where the longest-running African-American occupations of the streets took place since the Civil Rights Movement.

On 3 December 2014, a grand jury found insufficient evidence to charge Eric Garner’s killers. In response, African-American communities organised widespread political actions, sparked by three black women who used the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on twitter. New York saw large demonstrations which culminated in ‘die-ins’ – protesters would lie in spaces of commerce such as Macy’s Department Store or Times Square (Yan, Ngo & Fuller 2014), disrupting capitalist consumption. This tactic gained momentum, and soon shopping centres across the US were being shut down through peaceful direct action that prevented people from shopping. These actions are somewhat different from the activism that African Americans had previously engaged in. During the 1960s and '70s African-American resistance to policing had involved demonstrations at city halls and court houses, such as the famous occupation of the California State Assembly by the Black

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<sup>50</sup> video available at [www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2014/dec/04/i-cant-breathe-eric-garner-chokehold-death-video](http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2014/dec/04/i-cant-breathe-eric-garner-chokehold-death-video) accessed 17 January 2015

Panthers in 1967 (Newton 2009). In 2014 this changed, as resistance shifted from focusing predominantly on City Halls and other state institutions, towards post-industrial spaces of commerce.

This activism was also somewhat different from the Occupy Movement which began in 2011. Occupy reclaimed symbols of capitalist power, in the hope of drawing attention to the injustices they represent while building a working, long-term vision of a post-capitalist future. Conversely, Black Lives Matter shut down capitalist consumption for short periods of time to protest police racism and violence. Both movements target post-industrial symbols of capitalism, and it is in this economic context that Harvey (2012) proposes we re-define the proletariat to include those working in post-industrial service sector jobs. Black Lives Matter expanded the proletariat to include all black people, whose lives matter less in the eyes of the state and who are therefore subjected to racial violence. Black people's relationship with the racial state in the context of the city was thus the impetus for shutting down urban capital flows, rather than Harvey's assumption of resistance emerging from labour's association with the city. This point is expanded upon below, in light of similar protests in London.

In November and December 2014, protests took place in the UK in solidarity with those resisting police brutality in the US, and also to draw attention to racist police violence in Britain. The first, 'Flood the Embassy'<sup>51</sup>, in solidarity with Ferguson, took place on 26 November outside the US Embassy in central London. It began as a fairly predictable rally, in which activists such as Carole Duggan, the aunt of Mark Duggan, gave speeches about

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<sup>51</sup> Details of the protest can be found here [www.facebook.com/events/312433102293366/](http://www.facebook.com/events/312433102293366/) accessed 19 January 2015

policing in Britain. They were supported by community organisations that defend black communities from the police, such as London Campaign Against Police and State Violence and Newham Monitoring Project. Other organisations also spoke, including BARAC (Black Activists Rising Against Cuts), the London Black Revolutionaries and the NUS Black Students Campaign. Although none of the latter organisations had previously focused specifically on policing, the actions in the US galvanised widespread support among Britain's black communities, as exemplified by these groups.

After a couple of hours of speeches, the organisers of the rally announced a march. The route was from the US Embassy in the direction of Oxford Circus, through one of the busiest shopping districts in London, full of tourists and Christmas shoppers (RT News 2014). Blocking the roads, the protesters marched down Bond Street, preventing delivery trucks and buses from passing, and grabbing the attention of the public as they shouted "Down with white supremacy", "We can't breathe" and "Black Lives Matter". Like their counterparts in the US, these protesters confronted the centres of power, caught the attention of the press and public, and temporarily blocked the flow of capital.

A couple of weeks later, on 10 December, another demonstration was called, this time at London's biggest shopping centre, Westfield, in Shepherd's Bush. Titled 'We Will Breathe', this protest involved a die-in inside the shopping centre itself (Vale 2014). Hundreds of protesters gathered in and outside the enormous building, while Westfield security panicked. It was clear that Westfield was determined to keep shops open and continue turning a profit for itself and its franchisees; however, it was near-impossible to tell protesters apart from other members of the public. While some protesters staged a die-in inside, oth-

ers blocked the busy roads outside. When different parts of the protest eventually converged outside Westfield, they were addressed by UK black deaths in custody campaigners. Addressing the crowd, one UFFC representative shared the story of Joy Gardner, a student from Jamaica killed by police during an immigration raid on her home in Haringey, in 1993. Gardner suffocated to death after 13 ft (4 metres) of tape were strapped around her head by the officers, covering her mouth and nose (Athwal & Bourne 2012). These speeches connected younger activists, angered by the racism against African-Americans being covered by the British press, with cases of police violence in Britain which many were less familiar with. This protest was more than a solidarity action for African-Americans, it was a mobilising tool bringing more people into the deaths in custody campaigns in Britain.

Following the rally outside, protesters moved back into Westfield, past the security who were standing powerless in front of the main entrance, and proceeded to chant, occupy and block the spaces where people were attempting to shop. Westfield was completely shut down for the evening, losing customers, revenue and profit. Although the protest had been peaceful, police vans and officers in riot gear were waiting outside, and 76 arrests were made (Channel 4 News 10 December 2014). Speaking to older activists some time later, I was told that there was some confusion as to why Westfield Shopping Centre was targeted as part of resistance to police violence. However, the hundreds who attended, the widespread media coverage and desperate attempts by police to repress the protest spoke volumes about its impact. Below, I outline three reasons for this emergent political tactic.

First, neoliberalisation has led to an increase in privatised spaces – in particular commercial shopping districts – that serve as the focal points of many cities. These easily identifiable yet privately owned spaces are more familiar than the investment banks targeted by Occupy. This is compounded by the race, class and gender dynamics of activism, whereby financial districts are dominated by wealthy white men. The young, often black, activists engaged in Black Lives Matter actions regularly frequent shopping centres at weekends and evenings. In other words, Black Lives Matter went to the spaces where black people already are, whereas Occupy organised with the expectation that people would come to them. It is also important to mention that in the US context, Occupy Oakland and Occupy the Hood were established by racially minoritised activists working in their own communities. They officially severed ties with Occupy Wall Street, citing its ‘racism’ as a ‘hindrance to forward progress’ (Campbell 2011: 46). This adds further weight to the argument that Occupy is unsuited to campaigning for racial justice.

Secondly, as a space of high-density commerce, shutting down a shopping district is likely to attract far more public and media attention than other forms of protest. Political actions that were different from the normal A–B march to predictable buildings caught the eye of the press. Yet, while Occupy caught headlines initially, it made the news only when further direct actions emerged. Demonstrating outside a government office or police station in response to police violence is very common, and rarely considered newsworthy. Such actions generally put protesters in contact with bureaucrats or elites working in wealthier parts of the city. Protesting in a shopping centre, on the other hand, puts activists face-to-face with everyday people, the people they wish to convey a message to and potentially build links of solidarity with.

The third explanation is the most compelling. In a capitalist democracy, capital influences (and often dictates) political decision-making (Carey & Lohrey 1995). In previous decades people therefore organised through trade unions, disrupting capital flows in an effort to force through political (as well as economic) demands (Daniels & McIlroy 2009). One example is the Grunwick Strike of 1976-78 in Willesden, north London (see also Chapter 2), where South Asian women battled police to have their trade union recognised, a struggle closely linked to racial justice in the UK more generally (Sivanandan 2008: 151-5, Phizackley & Miles 2012). One effect of neoliberalisation in the 1980s and beyond was the flight of capital. Industrial centres of production in North America and Western Europe migrated to the Global South – South and East Asia in particular. Neoliberal reforms also led to the weakening of trade union power, making it more difficult to co-ordinate strikes (Harvey 2005). Labour among the working class became de-industrialised, with a shift to the service sector, such as catering and call-centres, where work was more atomised and precarious (Hardt & Negri 2000).

The power of ordinary people in the Global North to pursue political demands had thus been severely eroded. However, the barriers to unsettling capital at the point of production (in factories etc.) did not mean that it could not be disrupted elsewhere. Harvey (2012), therefore argues that post-industrial workers, such as cleaners and taxi-drivers, must organise to shut down a city. He goes on to remind us:

In the same way that, in military operations, the choice and shaping of the terrain of action plays an important role in determining who wins, so it is with popular protests and political movements in urban settings (2012: 17).

While identifying the centrality of disrupting capital flows in cities, Harvey's conception of the post-industrial proletariat requires further expansion. Capital, in Black Lives Matter actions, is not disrupted by workers withdrawing their labour. Black Lives Matter mainly involves people using their bodies to disrupt spaces of consumption. This new form of strike does not require links of solidarity between workers in different industries to fight against capital. It mobilises solidarity among young, mainly racially minoritised people in order to fight against racial violence. Both capital and the state are treated as a unified, and almost indistinguishable, unit.

What emerged in the movements of 2014 was a set of political actions that disrupted capital flows at the point of consumption. Production may have migrated to the Global South, but North America and Western Europe are still the primary consumers, and it is at this juncture in capital's search for profit and growth that activists struck. Although work had been made atomised and precarious, consumption had been centralised, making it a prime target for protest. In other words, neoliberalism created a 'double movement' (Polanyi 2001), in which one space of capital disruption became inaccessible, but at the same time a new one emerged.

The Westfield action, and others like it, display the power that protesters still have in disrupting capital flows in post-industrial Western societies. Of the 76 arrests, all but one of the charges of violent disorder were dropped; one teenager was found guilty of assault, and given a non-custodial sentence. Without glamourising direct confrontation with police and the violence that activists often endure as a result, the response of the state illustrates the threat that disruptions at the point of consumption pose to the maintenance of social order. If this new form of resistance continues, it will centre on the requirement to disrupt

capital when challenging state violence (which to some may appear unconnected), by focusing on the role of capital in shaping the politics of the city.

### Intersecting Struggles: Female Voices in Action

But you see, the women, when their children or their husbands are in this situation, then really and truly who else is left? They have got to stand up because if they don't then no one else will. And there is one thing with women, that it doesn't matter how old your children become they are still your children. And you just cannot sit back and see the wrong that is being done to them and ignore it, you just *cannot* do that. And it is not that we are more passionate, but we are more durable. And we endure a lot (LCAPSV, Interview 1: 30 March 2014).

The battle between black communities and the police is often framed through the male experience which highlights black men as the primary subjects/victims of policing (Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer 1998, Brunson & Miller 2006, Chaney & Robertson 2013). Nonetheless, the previous section highlighted the fact that the US Black Lives Matter movement was founded by three African-American women, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullers and Opal Tometi. Furthermore, the solidarity actions in London centred on speeches made by women such as Marcia Rigg and Carol Duggan. Indeed, women are the leading campaigners in almost every black death in custody campaign in the UK (Chapter 6). Yet, as the first section of this chapter argued, the political struggles endured by black women can be both liberatory (Lorde 1984) and a burden (Wallace 1979).

Does the leadership of women in black deaths in custody campaigns reproduce pre-existing gender roles of black women as primary caregiver, breadwinner *and* political actor?

How does the state respond to women playing such a significant role in resisting police violence? This section begins answering these questions in order better to understand the nature of black community struggles against police violence today, and how they are enacted and articulated by the women who lead them.

The killing of young men such as Mike Brown or Trayvon Martin in the US and Mark Duggan or Ricky Bishop in the UK, was described by many black people as ‘open-season on black men’ – this implies a hunt, potentially by both state and non-state actors. Black women are also victimised by state violence, and it could be argued that the focus on men plays down the impact racial violence has on black women (Mama 1993b: 137-8). This issue was taken up by the ‘Say Her Name’ campaign, which raised awareness about female victims of racial violence. One of the most high-profile cases was African-American Sandra Bland, who was pulled over by police for a signalling offence in Texas, and later found hanged in a police cell. In December 2015, a grand jury decided not to indict any officers for the death of Bland (Smith 2015). Despite these campaigns, and the acknowledgment that women victimised by racial violence are less visible than men, the focus on black men was echoed by the activists I interviewed, reflected in their networks of campaigns challenging deaths in custody.

The United Friends and Families Campaign (UFFC) is one of the largest grassroots organisations in the struggle for justice regarding deaths at the hands of the state. It is made up of a range of campaigns, including Justice4Mark, Justice for Sean Rigg, Justice for Ricky Bishop and Justice for Smiley Culture. Unlike almost any other grassroots initiative outside

the feminist movement, the principal actors, organisers and spokespeople for the campaigns that make up UFFC are black women – generally the relatives of those who have died at the hands of the state. This is evident in press conferences, protests and the information they disseminate. A number of differing, yet often overlapping, explanations have been given for this pattern of gendered organising power.

When asked about the gendered nature of deaths in custody campaigns, many women drew on their experience as mothers. Some female organisers of the Trayvon Martin Solidarity demonstration explained how they felt an affinity with Trayvon's parents:

I felt very strongly about ... just something about his face because it reminded me of family members. He didn't look too dissimilar from my children (Trayvon Martin Solidarity, Interview 2, 22 October 2013).

This woman went on to explain that, knowing how young men of African heritage are treated by the state, she fears for her young son's safety when he goes out, adding

This kid was one of our kids, and it doesn't matter where we are, it just seems like the black male is [treated like] a threat across the world, and I'm just fed up with it (Trayvon Martin Solidarity, Interview 2, 22 October 2013).

Such an explanation invokes notions of the black family under siege across state borders. The tone of her response also signifies frustration, yet this discontent does not lead to inertia. As Audre Lorde (1984) argues, black female anger at injustice is a positive attribute, indeed '[a]ny discussion among women about racism must include the recognition and the

use of anger' (127). Rather than attempting to deflect racist stereotypes about the 'angry black woman' by adopting the appearance of contentment (Ahmed 2012), black women are channelling this emotional energy into political solidarity.

This maternal connection was voiced by other female activists, including a founding member of London Campaign Against Police and State Violence (LCAPSV). She explained the circumstances from which the group emerged:

It was my son, my eldest son actually. He was using a public phone box in the area that he lives in Camberwell, and the police felt like they had the right to go and search him ... So they keep doing this to him and they beat him up over at Borough High Street before. He has had a lot of problems with the police. And when I heard what they did to him ... and [he] says, 'Mum this is going to be my life from now on', I really got mad. I got mad (LCAPSV, Interview 1, 30 March 2014).

This focus on family reflects the localised nature of black resistance to policing. Unlike Occupy, which identifies a macro-issue (the global financial crisis), a space which symbolises its power (London Stock Exchange), and then compels those affected to come to them, LCAPSV operates somewhat differently. These activists start with a focus on family (a son) and a community (Camberwell/London), and they enter or remain in these spaces of contestation. As the previous two chapters indicated, it is from these spaces that they contextualise these campaigns, since the names and places serve as metonyms for resistance to national/international structures of racial violence. Furthermore, we again see outrage being an impetus for resistance. We must therefore understand such emotion as fuelling the organising of grassroots campaigns. Lorde (1984: 124-133) compels women to

subvert the 'angry black woman' image, deflecting it back both at the racism that produces such stereotypes and the state violence that motivates these feelings.

Some activists within UFFC talked about how the role of mothers and other female family members can be used strategically. Gaining support from outside the black community as a mother has proved hugely successful, particularly in the case of Doreen Lawrence, mother of Stephen Lawrence (Chapter 6). It can serve as a shield against attempts by the press or police to smear such campaigns by labelling them as politically militant (Ellison 2014: 211-5). It is more difficult to portray someone as standing on the periphery of popular sentiments when that individual is a mother simply seeking an explanation for the death of her child.

It is important to note that focusing on an individual case does not mean that deaths in custody campaigns are limiting themselves to justice for specific individuals. The radical activists who associate themselves with these family-led campaigns indicate that the simple questions posed by a grieving mother can have wide, systemic implications. One female organiser analysed how structural racism affects black men. She used this to explain why she thought women played such an important role in black community struggles against policing:

I think that you know maybe [racism towards black men] has got something to do with it, the sense that we haven't been profiled as our men are being profiled. We have been able to walk relatively safely without being watched, without being profiled, without being harassed, without being stalked [by the police] (One Voice Interview 3, 5 March 2014).

This statement does not intend, by any means, to negate the experiences of violence and harassment that women experience in their daily lives, including those enacted by agents of the state. Yet it recognises the particular manner in which black men are subject to racial violence, and how this evokes a sense of solidarity in black women (Williams 1993: 161, hooks 2004: xv).

It should not, however, be assumed that the police, press or wider society is restrained when dealing with the female relatives of those killed by the state. Indeed, the role of the 'angry black woman' was first constructed to legitimise colonial violence towards black women (Marshall 2005). Today, such tropes can be employed implicitly by institutions policing female activism. In 2011, the annual March Against Deaths in Custody, organised by UFFC, demonstrated in Whitehall. Every year, the families of those killed pin a letter to the Prime Minister on the gates of Downing Street, with a list of demands. For some reason, on this occasion, protesters were refused access to the gates – this may be linked to the killing of Mark Duggan earlier that year and the resulting civil unrest and police repression. In response to this refusal by police, many of the organisers decided to sit down in front of Downing Street in protest. Without warning, hundreds of police officers emerged from surrounding buildings, and began to close in on the protest, forming a 'kettle'. The mother of Ricky Bishop, a young man who died in Brixton police station (south London) in 2008, was dragged across the pavement by police in front of me.

This shocking assault, reminiscent of the grainy protest footage of the US civil rights movement, where African-American women were routinely assaulted by police, was perpetrated

without hesitation by the Metropolitan Police that day. The apparent dichotomy of a grieving mother pleading for democratic accountability and the violent response of the state, is unpacked by McKittrick (2000) when she explains

the black woman is thrown into a seemingly static *and* paradoxical place — she is both outside modernity (disenfranchised, speechless, irrational, (un)definable, all flesh), and inside modernity (thus signifying what proper modern subjects are: not her, not black, not black and female) ... This (dis)placement of black femininity rests on modern classification systems which arrange, violently and not, social difference, class distinctions, behavioural patterns, and so on (226).

Neither her gender, nor her position as the mother of a person killed in police custody, appeared to shield Ricky's mother from assault. The contradictory spaces allowed her to articulate modern notions of justice and democracy, while simultaneously having those notions rejected. In order to understand the violence executed by the state that day, it must be contextualised in how black women are both racialised and gendered, and the oppositional social spheres they must navigate when engaging in protest.

When the press are able to shift public opinion away from sympathy and towards contempt, as they did with the killing of Mark Duggan in 2011 (Chapter 6), they also feel at ease attacking and degrading female family members. Duggan was described by police as one of the 48 most violent criminals in Europe (BBC 2013), and as a gangster by much of the mainstream press – a label which remains unsubstantiated (Stopes 2014). The child of an African-Caribbean father and a white mother, Duggan received all the stereotypes a man with two black parents could have expected. Mark Duggan's father died in the months

following Mark's death, and Mark's white aunt, Carol Duggan, became the primary spokesperson for his justice campaign. One editorial described her as 'a cross between Ali G and Liam Gallagher of Oasis. Manc meets Jafaican' (Littlejohn 2014). Invocations of Ali G, a character invented by Sacha Baron Cohen, a Jewish comedian who parodies working-class African-Caribbean culture, and Liam Gallagher, a white singer from a working-class background who is associated with drug taking and violence, constitute a racialised, classist denigration of Mark Duggan's aunt. Owing to her association with black communities, she is described as Jafaican (a fake Jamaican), making the attack on the Duggan campaign as a whole a crude, patronising intersection of patriarchy, racism and classism.

Struggles against deaths in custody are deeply marked by the intersections of race, gender and class. While it can compound the oppression experienced by women (Crenshaw 1993), this positionality can be drawn on as a source of strength. The prominence of women in justice campaigns was therefore explained by their resilience as political actors. One activist said:

by virtue of being black women, we have had to reckon with various forms of oppression at one time. And not only in terms of oppression against us and our own people, but in terms of our family members who often are also men, and so we had to learn how to straddle various levels. So we couldn't just be a woman. We couldn't just be black. We couldn't just be poor. We couldn't just be any one thing, we had to develop a methodology, an organising methodology and we have had to develop an analysis which takes into consideration multiple sites of oppression (iNAPP, Interview 1, 26 November 2014).

The multiple oppressions that black women face, she argued, result in the development of a determination which is not seen as often in the characteristics of black men – an analysis echoed by black feminist scholars in both Britain (Williams 1993) and the US (Hill Collins 1998). Many of the activists I interviewed said that black women have always been the backbone of black struggle, and it must be conceded that women often occupy positions of power and visibility only when the men run out of energy or interest. One Birmingham-based male campaigner hinted at the problem of male egos:

most of the campaigners that I know, that I can actually sit in the same room with for more than two minutes without wanting to rip their heads off, are women (Justice for Mikey Powell, Interview 1, 9 October 2014).

He went on to explain how these male egos are an impediment to being strategic with police interaction:

So I think that yeah, women have got a really important role to play because they tend to be more measured in their thinking about how we go about defending ourselves from the police. They won't just march, they want to have dialogue [too]. I mean the Rigg sisters convinced Hogan<sup>52</sup> to part with £2.4 million to put cameras in police vans in central London. A character like — , and as much as I love him to bits, [he] would never do that because they would just get into a room with [the police] and tell them that they are effing cunts, in fact they won't even go into a room with them. So I think that women are incredibly important in this struggle and have always been throughout history (ibid.).

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<sup>52</sup> Bernard Hogan-Howe, head of the Metropolitan Police 2011 to time of writing

Building on this, one female organiser drew upon the anger felt when the police kill a member of the community:

I think women want to use that anger progressively. Sometimes men might feel that anger and want to, kind of like, turn their back ... and think there's no point (HYPE, Interview 3, 4 February 2014).

Here we see possibly fragile male egos lacking the patience to struggle through meetings with police, court hearings, paperwork and other unglamorous but often necessary tasks. The notion of anger is once again raised as a positive black female attribute, which Lorde (1984) describes as 'a powerful source of energy serving progress and change' (127). Yet such an approach to female anger has been critiqued by black feminists. Rather than this political work being necessarily liberatory, we also see the notion of the black 'super-woman' uncritically invoked to justify unpaid female labour (Wallace 1979). Doreen, the mother of Stephen Lawrence, had to wait two decades to see some of her son's killers behind bars and she continues to campaign for a more equitable justice system. The sisters of Sean Rigg pored over the documents in relation to Sean's death, finding inconsistencies that were missed by lawyers and institutions such as the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). Much of this work is tedious, beset with bureaucratic barriers and attracting limited public support, especially in the early stages of campaigning. We therefore see a tension around the extent to which we should understand the gendered nature of this resistance as a signifier of female leadership (Lorde 1984) or of an unequal distribution of labour (Wallace 1979).

Few movements can claim women as the primary voices in their struggle, and it is important that we unpack how these justice campaigns operate, and what, in particular, dominant men can learn from the gendered nature of resistance. Despite the presence of black women in black community struggles against police violence, there is still a long way to go:

[T]here definitely is a huge [gender] gap ... in the writing that is done or who is talking to who and what is being taken seriously within the black community. It is interesting the meeting that I attended on Joy Gardner and Mark Duggan because the most prominent speaker there was Joy Gardner's mum and it was her voice that is carried forward and that people engaged with (TDC, Interview 1, 14 November 2014).

The role of black feminism, black womanism or black women's liberation remains somewhat ambiguous among many of the activists I interviewed. Indeed, when asked about the number of women in deaths in custody campaigns, one organiser solemnly responded

because the men are dead ... [pause] ... it wasn't a conscious decision, it was just a reality (UFFC, Interview 1, 15 January 2014).

Although we could argue that this response is an oversimplification, it is difficult to deny the salience of such an assertion. While some black feminists may argue that this is a necessary (Hill Collins 1998, Lorde 1984) structure of organising, others say it is simply an excuse to offload more work upon black women (Wallace 1979). Whatever our interpretation, we must begin to construct alternatives that have the potential to bring about an environment in which state killings are not tolerated. It is therefore imperative to grasp the effects

of patriarchy on both the oppression of black communities by the police and on the methods of resistance employed in challenging it.

While some activists were firm in their understanding of, and commitment to, the politics of women's liberation, it is unclear to what extent such sentiments are widespread within black organising against police violence. The role of women can be interpreted as emotional, strategic, liberatory or an unjust burden, illustrating the plurality that exists within these campaigns; there is no reason why the role of women should always be viewed through the same theoretical lens. However, every activist I interviewed, regardless of gender, celebrated the central role that women play at every level of organising. Female leadership should be an integral component of any form of defence from the police, as the state is central in the reproduction of male power. Identifying the practical reality of this leadership is the vital first step in developing the conceptual links between women's liberation and resistance to state violence.

### The Practicalities of Metonymic Anti-Racist Resistance

The names of events or groups examined in this chapter, dedicated to resisting racist policing, seldom employ overt racial language. More commonly, they relate to racialised bodies – those who have died at the hands of police, such as Mark Duggan or Ricky Bishop, and in solidarity with African Americans such as Eric Garner or Trayvon Martin. Other racial metonyms employed in black struggles against policing are spaces that become racialised as black when associated with a specific issue or campaign. These include the West London Community Monitoring Project (CMP)

(Chapter 5), the London Campaign Against Police & State Violence (LCAPSV), and initiatives in solidarity with racialised spaces abroad such as Ferguson, Missouri.

Figure 8.1



West London and London as a whole are large, racially diverse areas and as such tend not to be racialised as black. However the association of these spaces with black-led, grassroots, anti-police actions communicates a message of antiracist solidarity with a wide or indefinite geographical remit. LCAPSV is now very much a multiracial organisation, but the majority of its casework still involves the black communities of south London. Their campaign literature consistently makes reference to the racism of police brutality, and their logo is a black arm blocking a white arm carrying a police baton (Figure 8.1).

One of the potential pitfalls of metonymic anti-racism is that left-wing organisations, dominated by white people, are confused as to how to build allegiances with black community struggles. For example, a large number of white activists attended a meeting in March 2014 called Tottenham Rights (organised by Tottenham Defence Campaign, Chapter 5). The meeting centred on the legacy of the 1985 Broadwater Farm uprisings, in which hundreds of young black people were harassed, assaulted and, often unlawfully, imprisoned. The uprisings had begun after the police killed two older black women in London over the course of a fortnight (Chapter 4). This is one of the few episodes in which state violence towards black women (rather than men) is central. According to one of the organisers: “Not only was there open season on black youth, but now the open season was on black women. It was now

open season on black mothers”. Despite this radical assertion, the politics of radical anti-racism or black power were never overtly articulated in the name of the public meeting or of the groups that organised it.

One of the first questions from the audience was from a white woman who was representing two groups, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Unite Against Fascism (UAF) – groups generally regarded as white-controlled by the activists I interviewed. She stated that racism affects all of us negatively: “black, white, worker, trade unionist”. The meaning of this was unclear, as she did not elaborate, but she went on to urge the audience to attend a forthcoming UAF demonstration against two far-right groups, the English Defence League and UKIP. The organisers and audience effectively ignored the contribution, but the analysis made by iNAPP (interim National African Peoples Party) during their 2014 Black People’s Day of Action (Chapter 5) is interesting in this context: “I see texts going around telling black people to vote Labour to keep the BNP (British National Party) out – but the BNP have never been in power, and haven’t created the situation we’re in”. This reference to another far-right organisation explains how the far right can often be a distraction from state racism, the main source of racist violence (Goldberg 2001, Bell 2004). (iNAPP worked in solidarity with Tottenham Rights, attending their weekly pickets and drawing attention to Tottenham Rights campaigns at iNAPP events).

The standpoint of black people, and their experiences of structural racism, means that in black community struggles there is more of a focus on institutions than on far-right organisations. With the structural nature of racism being cloaked by anti-racist metonyms rather than articulated through the language of black power, white

people on the left may have trouble understanding how and why anti-racist resistance takes the forms it does. They therefore feel entitled to inform black people not only about how racism operates, but also about how they should resist it. This can often feel patronising for activists involved in black resistance to police violence, jeopardising potential links of solidarity.

Some activists I interviewed were very blunt in echoing this analysis, simply saying that much of the white-dominated left doesn't understand structural racism "because they're not black" (UFFC, Interview 2, 22 November 2014). By articulating anti-racism through metonyms, the structural nature of white domination can go undetected. People racialised as white may therefore misunderstand the role of institutions and the state in reproducing racism, and the positionality of people who are racialised as white in this context. This of course does not mean that white people

cannot, and do not, make vital contributions to anti-racist struggles. However, genuine links of solidarity must take into account the role that different forms of racialisa-



Figure 8.2: Anti- -state racism protests in central London

tion play in a white-dominated society. This confusion and inability to decode the racialised language employed by many black community campaigns is exemplified by demographic differences between protests against state racism and protests against the far right.

Black-led protests against state racism tend to be majority black, whereas those against the far right are almost always majority white, with the exception of protests on the doorstep of racially minoritised communities such as those in Whitechapel, east London (UAF 2010). Two sets of images illustrate this point by contrasting

demonstrations in central London challenging state racism (Figure 8.2), and challenging the far right (Figure 8.3). Despite central London locations being targeted by both anti-fascist groups and other campaigns such as Occupy, protests against police violence have by far the largest black presence. This adds further weight to the power of racial metonyms of the names of those killed by the state, as they are evidently a powerful mobilising tool for black activism.

My intention is not to negate the importance of organising against the far right,



Figure 8.3: Anti-Fascist and Anti-Far-Right protests in Central London (above)

which poses a violent threat to racially minoritised communities, queer people, and the country as a whole. For example, post-9/11 Britain has seen the rise of street-based anti-Muslim racism (Kundnani 2007). Yet, state racism has now become one

of the main focuses of protest by African and African-Caribbean communities, who are struggling to organise around issues that are sometimes harder to detect and articulate (Sniderman et al. 1991), in comparison with the overt racism of organisations such as the English Defence League. As a result, much of the highest-profile organising against the far-right appears to be occupied by white-dominated groups. Black activists appear ambivalent, critical or even dismissive of the left's capacity to build genuine links of solidarity with black communities.

White left organisations mentioned by many of my interviewees, such as Unite Against Fascism or The Socialist Workers' Party, are not without fault in their inability to detect the new ways in which black community campaigns are articulating their struggles. There are many white activists who work alongside, and contribute greatly to, black resistance to state racism. It is arguably the failure of white left organisations to recognise structural racism that has left them unaware of how racism operates and of the radical activism still alive in black communities. As one activist of South Asian heritage explained:

Yes, the [far-right] English Defence League are an issue in the way they've tried to take over town centres, but it is the police [that is the problem]. And I think the key differences don't really add up [for the white left]. The thing is they don't have the day-to-day. If fascists come once a month or every year down to the town, I still have to worry every day about fascism – and it's from the police and it's from the state (UFFC, Interview 2, 22 November 2014).

Racism is therefore misunderstood as simply the 'nasty name calling' of the far right, rather than a power structure woven into the fabric of society (Chapter 2). This misunderstanding is prevalent in the hierarchical left, such as the Socialist Workers' Party, which has a relatively static policy on racism, divorced from the communities with which they claim to want links of solidarity. This frustration was articulated by Stafford Scott, founder of Tottenham Rights, in response to an anti-fascist demonstration in central London:

I don't know how many of you guys were around in the '70s. I was, and I can confidently say that the anti-fascist movement has not moved forward since then! Instead of patting yourselves on the back for allowing 58 comrades to be arrested whilst the BNP were left unscathed, you should be asking yourself why there aren't more Black and Brown people involved in the anti-fascist movement? I know that your answer will probably be along the usual patronising and paternalistic lines that we have heard over and over and over. Truth is you cannot muster large numbers of Black and Brown people to your ranks, as your focus is on fascism whilst we are prioritising the battle against institutionalised racism and imperialism! You're not there on a day-to-day basis, although racism is our everyday reality! (Scott 2013a)

Here, Scott's point is clear: that much of the anti-racism led by white activists does not resonate with black communities. Racism in that context is treated as a peripheral extreme, rather than as a power structure perpetuated by the state (Gillborn 2005). The anti-fascist movement, and other campaigns such as Occupy, do not engage thoroughly with the way in which racism functions, making them politically

divorced from black community struggles. Black people on both sides of the Atlantic have active solidarity campaigns in relation to Ferguson or Mike Brown, and white-dominated campaigns are building transnational connections through the Occupy Movement. Yet white- and black-led campaigns in the same city still struggle to build tangible links of solidarity. Identifying metonymic anti-racism and structural racism, and how the latter is intrinsically linked to other structures of power, is imperative if activists are to begin to build more broad-based coalitions.

### Conclusion

This chapter has analysed some of the most high-profile campaigns resisting racist policing in Britain post-2011. While UFFC is the biggest coalition of deaths in custody campaigns in the UK, the Black Lives Matter protests in London were some of the most popular mobilisations on the issue in recent years. The praxis of these campaigns therefore provides us with an opportunity to learn from their successes, and pose questions about their limitations. It could be argued that the female leadership in black deaths in custody campaigns represents an oppressive distribution of labour, charging mainly black women with disproportionate amounts of domestic, waged and political labour. However, I would respond that this is an oversimplification. The women involved in these struggles are not contributing to them in order merely to survive under racist patriarchal capitalism. The political work examined in this thesis is also a meaningful form of resistance to the current systems of power, challenging the hegemony of the state.

Resisting state power of this nature is about dignity in the short term and liberation in the long term, and it is therefore paramount that activists and academics actively acknowledge, appreciate and take direction from the gendered nature of black resistance to policing. With women at the forefront of such organising, we are better positioned to undermine the process by which they are rendered invisible. Such visibility can create stronger links of solidarity between activists, as female voices are essential in joining the dots between racism, capitalism and patriarchy, and in understanding how they produce violence through state machinery.

There can be little doubt that metonymic anti-racism has cast itself as one of the most effective tools for mobilising resistance to racial violence. This chapter has shown how places and people as spatialised concepts articulate meaningful political messages. These metonymic articulations are displacing more overt articulations of radical black struggle. Yet, it is clear that there is much work to be done if metonymic anti-racism is to cross over into other campaigns that do not centre structural racism in their frame of analysis. Potential allies, such as Occupy or much of the anti-fascist movement, require more explicit direction if they are to understand the position of black resistance to policing. Activists who are sympathetic to the demands of black power, and to its analysis of the structural nature of racism, therefore need to understand the positions held by activists in organisations such as LCAPSV and UFFC. I believe that the onus is on those genuinely interested in solidarity to attend the public meetings, rallies and other political events organised by black-led campaigns against policing. It is only through such active engagement that the level of understanding necessary for solidarity can be achieved between

groups that may have overlapping goals, but unequal socio-political power in a society defined by racial injustice.

Emergent forms of black resistance to policing are actively illustrating the structural nature of racial violence through their political praxis. Targeting symbols of capitalism and spaces of capitalist consumption, Black Lives Matter in the US and its solidarity actions in the UK have made an important step forward. Rather than focusing our attention on a particular state agent, police station or institution, they target the system as a whole. Disrupting capital at the point of consumption compels us to ask the question: what has post-industrial capital got to do with racial violence today? This simple, but vital, question has the potential to bolster the conceptual links between neoliberal capitalism and neoliberal racism. Seeking to answer this question also has the potential to build valuable practical alliances. If black struggles against state violence and anti-capitalist struggles against neoliberalism both see disruption to capital flows as an effective political tactic, then there is no reason why such actions should not converge. If these alliances then take into consideration the racialised inequalities that mark them as different, these disruptions to capitalism can help all those involved to move forward.

This chapter has used the grounded empiricism of political praxis to draw broad, and perhaps bold, possibilities. The racial metonyms that dominate black resistance to policing in the UK generally look back, at historical spaces of contestation and bodies marked by racial violence. Yet it is vital that we also use this opportunity to look forward, to the potentialities that these ways of organising present. These new

features of black struggles against policing have produced two important intersections in their action and thought. The first intersection is with post-industrial capital, and how despite appearing separate from racial violence, it is intrinsically connected. The first sections of this chapter outlined the links between capitalism and racism with reference to disruptions at points of consumption, drawing on these connections to inform methods of resistance suited to neoliberal consumer capitalism. The second intersection is with gender, and how the patriarchal nature of state violence is being resisted by women leading deaths in custody campaigns. Identifying women as victims of racial violence, and centring women as political agents resisting state racism, like the UK Black Lives Matter actions in London, uses methods of resistance to convey the interconnectedness of systemic oppressions. Combining these two intersections, the women who address crowds at protests engaging in disruptions at points of consumption embody an understanding of state violence that encompasses race, class and gender.

In attempting to draw robust conceptual links between issues often considered only nominally related, I intend for us to think practically about struggles where political action is seeing a great deal of overlap. Identifying the possibilities of linking often disparate movements of resistance is a vital component of any scholarship which intends to make a meaningful contribution to grassroots activism. While fundamental positions on the oppressive nature of capital and the state are a starting point for solidarity, incorporating an understanding of how capitalism, racism and patriarchy are deployed by institutions of power is the only way we can broaden collective forms of resistance to them.

## **Chapter 8: Conclusion: The Fire This Time**

'Britain's Black Power movement is in danger of being written out of history' (Bunce and Field 2014: 1), claim the biographers of Darcus Howe, one of Britain's most prolific African-Caribbean activists. Indeed, organisations such as the British Black Panthers or publications such as *Race Today* are not widely discussed among younger people interested in racial justice today. When places of learning and British popular culture recognise anti-racism, they generally focus on the US black freedom struggles or South Africa's anti-apartheid movement, which can eclipse the radical black politics that has taken place in Britain and its other former colonies (Warmington 2014). But while these histories of black radicalism may not be widely known, the reverberations of these movements are being felt in the present. This thesis has argued that the political action taking place in black communities is one of the best ways to investigate these legacies, and in so doing we can better understand emergent struggles for racial justice.

Anti-racist activism in Britain has a long history of interacting with black radicalism in South Africa and the United States, including the visits made to the UK by Malcolm X in 1965 and the British anti-apartheid solidarity campaigns in the latter half of the twentieth century.

These traditions continue today, with black resistance to policing drawing heavily on African-American struggles, such as the black panther used in Liberation Squad's logo (Chapter 6), and the Black Lives Matter actions in London in 2014 (Chapter 7). Yet despite the influence of social movements in the United States, black struggles against policing in Britain tend to keep the focus of their campaigns on issues and cases closer to home. However, the families and other activists representing UK deaths in custody campaigns are generally present at protests in solidarity with African-American campaigns, while ensuring

that these high-profile US cases do not distract activists from holding the British state, and its police forces, to account.

This thesis has contextualised the 2011 civil unrest in England within the three high-profile deaths that year at the hands of police – Smiley Culture, Kingsley Burrell and Mark Duggan. The civil unrest, for all the damage that may have resulted from it, gave rise to the huge attention that the Duggan case was given by the press, politicians and the public. There can be no doubt that this revolt was part of something bigger than social media-generated consumerism, as represented by media and political pundits (Howie 2011, Littlejohn 2011) and by some academics (Harvey 2011, Sivanandan 2011). This thesis has focused on demonstrating how activists from a range of age-groups, including young people, are engaged in anti-racist political action and thought, rooted in black communities and committed to radical social change. My investigation of black political organising of this nature will allow us better to contextualise our understanding of both civil unrest and state violence in twenty-first century Britain.

### **Methodologies: A Reflection**

Attempting to dismantle the division between researcher and subject has long informed my thinking, as critical pedagogy shaped my approach to the youth work and activism that led to this doctoral study. Action research provided this investigation with the dynamism to engage with the individuals, organisations, events and actions necessary to provide a series of case-studies which cover these wide-ranging socio-political phenomena. Importantly, I was also able to ascertain what kind of active participation is useful to struggles against racism – analysing legal documents for the organisation, making contacts, co-organising

events, attending and being a legal observer at protests are some of the activities I engaged in during my time in the field. It could be argued that such an approach distorts the distance that a researcher should maintain in relation to the phenomena they are analysing. However, without actively participating, researching activism can be superficial, lacking the engagement with day-to-day issues, interpersonal relationships and state repression which aids our understanding of the topic. As some of my interviewees argued, non-participation of academics, particularly in the long-term, can lead to resentment between grassroots activists and institutionalised scholars. It would arguably be unethical for an academic to extract information from grassroots struggles without contributing something in return, or to feign objectivity with regard to the deeply serious, and at times disturbing, issues they are addressing.

Many of the radical campaigns against police racism I investigated and participated in before and during my field research fell outside the constraints of this thesis. These include: Newham Monitoring Project's Community Monitoring during the 2012 Olympics in east London; Tottenham Right's weekly protests for Nicky Jacobs (Chapter 4); Birmingham Strong's social media projects; a direct-action collective formed in 2015 called Black Dissidents; and the justice campaigns for Smiley Culture, Kingsley Burrell, Mikey Powell and others who have died at the hands of the state. Nonetheless, I identified and analysed case studies which were either garnered at mass mobilisations (such as those for Mark Duggan), or appeared to be under-researched (such as TDC). Tottenham Rights and NMP work closely with TDC, while Birmingham Strong and the deaths in custody justice campaigns are closely aligned with UFFC. Black dissidents were also heavily involved in the Black Lives Matter solidarity actions analysed in Chapter 7. Thus, many of the organisations that were not directly investigated in this thesis converged with the cases which were

analysed in detail.

This thesis has demonstrated that state violence against black people is historically rooted in, and intrinsically tied up with, neoliberalism in a variety of forms including gentrification, post-industrial capitalist consumption and racialised metonymic discourses. Limiting my focus to anti-police activism means that radical black organising in relation to other issues such as housing, education, immigration and anti-imperialism remains under-examined.

The last two are particularly pertinent, given the ways in which they are linked to the recent upsurge in anti-Muslim racisms (Kundnani 2014), which this thesis did not have the scope to investigate. Nonetheless, by illuminating some of the activism challenging policing in African-Caribbean communities, I have been able to provide a conceptual consistency which draws on historical continuities, influential theories and emergent trends. In so doing, I have drawn upon other issues of racial injustice that inevitably intersect with police racism.

This research would be strengthened by equivalent studies in other parts of Britain. Investigations in other urban areas such as Manchester, or on campaigns following a death at the hands of the state in smaller cities and towns such as Hull (Justice for Christopher Alder) or Luton (Justice for Leon Briggs), would be a welcome addition to the available literature. In so doing, researchers could focus on a specific organisation in depth, while still assessing the ways in which it coalesces with other campaigns and wider issues. It would be useful to analyse the extent to which space is mobilised in areas that do not have a well-known history of radical black action, or how anti-racist solidarity is mobilised in areas with relatively small black populations. This research would be strengthened by a commitment to activist scholarship which participates in these campaigns, better situating it alongside the rich catalogue of anti-racist activist scholarship drawn upon in this thesis (Sivanandan

1984, Gilroy 1987a, Hall 1990, Keith 1993).

## **Resistance Revisited**

It is through observing a broad range of radical black grassroots campaigns against state power that my main research question was formulated: How are black communities resisting police violence in London and Birmingham post-2011? While a popular movement against racism may not exist as it did in previous decades, I am unconvinced by the defeatism articulated by some analyses of neoliberalisation:

black activists who were hostile towards the state in the 1970s have now accommodated to mainstream structures and politics. Their objectives today are to develop policies and practices ... rather than fundamental social change (Shukra 1997: 239).

Policy organisations, equality and diversity consultants, and other state-led and neoliberalised anti-racisms may be the most visible forms of activism in Britain today. However, this does not mean that this is the only anti-racist work being done, and as my fieldwork has confirmed, resistance to policing makes antagonism with the state inevitable. As the cases of Stephen Lawrence and Mark Duggan demonstrate, different arms of the state mutually support each other in the face of a death in custody, particularly one that leads to protest or civil unrest. It is also an over-simplification to create a grassroots/institutional dichotomy, as the necessity of waged labour means that many radical thinkers and activists find themselves working in charitable or policy organisations. This neoliberal shift in race equality work means that more radical activism is unpaid, and must be carried out outside normal

working hours for many of the organisers I interviewed.

My field research led me to investigate grassroots initiatives that knocked on doors providing legal and civil defence, and deaths in custody campaigns that reached the highest courts in the nation. I attended protests which peacefully marched to Downing Street, and others that shut down commercial shopping districts and were violently repressed by police. The activists I interviewed ranged from advocates of black power, pan-Africanism, black nationalism and radical socialism, to concerned youth workers and family or community members who do not explicitly subscribe to a radical political philosophy. While these mobilisations are not as numerous as those of the past, the same could be said of equivalent campaigns in the United States. Yet in 2014, North America saw some of the biggest and longest black-led street occupations since the civil rights movement, taking many by surprise. This new African-American movement, broadly identified as Black Lives Matter, has galvanised solidarity organising and actions in Britain. It is vital, therefore, that activists and scholars continue to examine and analyse what is taking place, in order better to understand and actively contribute to the growth of these struggles for radical change.

### **Objective One: Neoliberalism and Anti-Racism**

Of the four core objectives of this thesis, the first was to analyse how the neoliberalisation of race has changed the way anti-racism is articulated. Scholars such as Goldberg (2001) argue that racialised neoliberal discourses are wholly negative, constructing a divide between the old anti-racism on the one hand and neoliberal anti-racialism (a.k.a. racial metonyms) on the other. According to this view anti-racism takes a stand against an imposed injustice, whereas anti-racialism simply challenges a concept, label or categorisation. This

thesis has shown that this is a false dichotomy, as the overwhelming majority of organisations involved in radical black resistance to policing in London and Birmingham are militantly anti-racist, while also using racial metonyms (a.k.a. anti-racism) to identify themselves. One way of doing the latter is by mobilising symbols; while the press may deploy images of dark hooded figures to racialise crime as black, organisations such as LCAPSV use an image showing a white hand wielding a baton being blocked by a darker hand. Combining such an image with the message of resisting state violence conveys a radical black political agenda without explicitly articulating it.

Symbols relating to radical black struggle are often combined with metonyms that reinforce this message. The very notion of grassroots anti-police organising is so heavily tied up with radical black action, that black-led groups such as the West London Community Monitoring Project are content with the name that they use, and the way it communicates their socio-political position. Other organisations have used different metonyms to articulate black struggle, which often draw on historical memories of areas associated with radical black action (such as Tottenham) or people (such as Mark Duggan). While neoliberalism has developed new articulations of racism by using metonymic racism, black resistance to policing in London and Birmingham has also seen changes in the language it uses, resulting in the dominance of metonymic anti-racism. Reclaiming the racialised language associated with space and using it for self-identification are helping those engaged in black community struggle to operate, to an extent, under the radar. Functioning in an environment in which the more militant anti-racism of the past is treated with increasing skepticism by the mainstream, has resulted in black communities muting their anti-racism on the surface, while maintaining much of the militancy at their core.

Neoliberalisation has also co-opted and commodified racial identities; for example, black cultures are identified as 'urban' and used to sell, among other things, properties in gentrifying neighbourhoods. Yet, while the allure of cosmopolitan spaces in the city can help attract investors, the regeneration required is often facilitated by state violence towards racially minoritised peoples. This can include changes to state housing provision, and increases in police presence on the streets along with the antagonism that emerges from the stops, searches and other state powers. Responding to this, activists are mobilising the collective memories of black struggle in areas such as Ladbroke Grove, Brixton and Tottenham, which are being socially cleansed by gentrification. Despite the community resistance taking place in London, gentrification shows little sign of slowing down (Lees 2012). The intersecting power of capital and the state, which brings together police violence and gentrification, is reflected in changing forms of resistance. Activists resisting policing are incorporating critiques of gentrification into their organising, and as these urban frontiers push ever deeper into black communities, it is vital that we continue to identify and analyse how these struggles develop. The issue of housing is particularly relevant to this thesis, owing to its focus on space and place, both of which shape racial violence and black resistance.

## **Objective Two: Race and Space**

The second objective of this thesis was to examine the contradictory relationships between race and space, and between the state and those resisting it, with an emphasis on the latter. Critically interrogating how race and space are conceptualised, and analysing the historical significance of spaces racialised as black in England's two largest cities, enabled me to develop these ideas. Many of the organisations examined in this thesis are identified

by places: Tottenham Defence Campaign or London Campaign Against Police and State Violence. Nowhere in the names of these organisations is overt racial, or anti-racist, language employed, yet these are some of the best-known and highest-profile grassroots organisations engaged in black resistance to policing in Britain. While there is nothing new about racialised places being used to articulate radical black struggle, organisations and campaigns resisting policing which use overt racial language have almost completely disappeared. It is this displacement which signals a departure from historical articulations of black resistance to policing.

### **Objective Three: The Racialised Body**

My third objective was to assess how the body is a site of contestation between the racial state and radical black struggles. In addition to places racialised as black, black bodies are also employed as anti-racist metonyms, such as Justice for Mark Duggan or Justice for Ricky Bishop. Not only are bodies racialised, they are also gendered, and subordinated masculinities that are criminalised by the state lead to dehumanising images of black men that legitimise state violence. Resisting this dehumanisation requires a dismantling of the racialised and gendered tropes that identify those subjected to state violence as deviant. The Duggan campaign produced humanised images of Mark, countering the stereotype of the gangster created by politicians and the press. Trayvon Martin solidarity campaigners performed the physicality of an allegedly threatening hooded jumper, by wearing similar clothing en masse at protest rallies. Rehumanising the collective memory, image or physical embodiment of an individual has provided a popular, and often moving, method of achieving this. Today, alongside racialised places, bodies racialised as black are mobilised

as organisational and campaign nomenclatures. As such, the use of racialised places and bodies as anti-racist metonyms should be critically reflected upon together.

### **The Body and the Place: Spaces of Metonymic Anti-Racism**

It is vital that we highlight the potential problems posed by the spatialised metonymic anti-racisms that mobilise racialised places and bodies to articulate resistance to policing.

These stumbling blocks can be broadly identified in three ways: concessions to neoliberal discourses, a disarticulation of a clear political vision and an ambiguous political position. It could be argued that activists committed to black resistance should be uncompromising in how they communicate their position, and that metonymic anti-racism is not a subversion of, but a co-optation by, neoliberalism. If the aim of neoliberalising anti-racism is, as Goldberg (2001) argues, to reduce the extent to which we feel comfortable using overt racial language, then arguably the rise of metonymic anti-racism is an indicator of neoliberal success. One of the reasons neoliberalism seeks to erase overt racial language from popular discourses, is to create the impression of a post-racial or colour-blind society (ibid.). Racial metonyms arguably disarticulate radical black politics; the latter may still guide the political position of activists inside an organisation, but the former can potentially lead to organisers losing sight of such political aims. There is the danger that the goal of systemic change will be displaced by a specific issue, location or case. Such disarticulations of race can also have external ramifications, as the metonymic communication of black solidarity may be obvious to some, but less comprehensible to others. These potential drawbacks require both activists and scholars to remain vigilant, maintaining the awareness and momentum of metonymic anti-racism, which also bears a number of important strengths.

Anti-racist and decolonial work has always been pragmatic in the language used to articulate these struggles. While acknowledging the problematics in using the language of the colonisers – in the nation states constructed by colonisation (Fanon 1967) and the racialised categorisations constructed by racism (Lloyd 2002) – such social phenomena can still be mobilised in resistance. One of the best-known examples of this is the reclaiming of ‘black’ as an identity, transforming it from a term of ridicule to a signifier of emancipation. This led to the creation of slogans such as Black Power, Black Liberation (Hamilton & Carmichael 1992) or Black is Beautiful (hooks 1992). Taking this into account, it is perhaps unsurprising that black activists in Britain are claiming racial metonyms as their own, taking these veiled slurs and reformulating them into an identity which is unifying, empowering and simultaneously subversive.

Michael Keith (2006) reminds us that ‘[t]he metaphors we live by are not escapes from reality as much as a means through which reality is rendered comprehensible’ (70), and I would argue that such an assertion includes metonyms. Metonymic anti-racism, the use of associated terms and symbols which replace more overt racial language, does not bury the reality of racism, as Goldberg (2001) argues, but is instead a way of making anti-racism intelligible by drawing on spaces of resistance. Metonyms rely on a relationship between the source and the target. An effectively deployed anti-racist metonym is therefore not politically ambiguous, but effectively engages in an exchange and agreement of ideas about what anti-racist resistance to policing means, where it takes place and what is being defended. Metonyms are used in literature and other forms of communication to convey more profound meanings and can, like other literary devices, make words come to life (Dirven & Pörings 2002). In other words, metonyms are therefore not a disarticulation, but

*a re-articulation*. Just as writers use metonyms to engage a reader, anti-racist activists can deploy metonyms to engage with supporters of their campaigns and struggles against the police.

The relationship between source and target necessary for a metonym to be effective, can also be useful in instances in which a metonym is deployed upon a target who is unable to uncover its hidden meaning. Radical black activists have in this way been able to garner more favourable media coverage, engagement with the state, or streams of funding when it suits them. As we have seen in this thesis, TDC has dealt with criticism for its focus on black deaths in police custody, by pointing out that it is black people in Tottenham who are dying at the hands of the state (Chapter 6). Thus, 'Tottenham' can be received as an explicit articulation of the issues being faced in a defined geographical area to a target that does not have the relationship with the source necessary for the anti-racist metonymy to be effective. Similarly, a campaign for Mark Duggan can have a similar effect, shielding a campaign already smeared by the press with racial stereotypes of gangsterism and violence, from accusations of political militancy which can potentially damage wider public perceptions. Just as 'the realist author metonymically digresses from the plot to the atmosphere and from the characters to the setting in space and time' (Jakobson 2002: 43), the metonym of Mark Duggan or TDC digresses to the context of state racism and to the history of resistance in Tottenham and Broadwater Farm. There can be no doubt that these campaigns are anti-racist struggles against the state, and the literature they produce and discussions at public gatherings exemplify their effective deployment of anti-racist metonyms (Chapter 5).

Black activists have long used places of historical black struggle as a political identity, but this thesis has demonstrated that metonymic anti-racism now dominates articulations of black resistance to policing, replacing the more overt articulations of radical black politics which were more often used to identify anti-racist movements in the past. While some scholars consign radical black politics to a bygone era, spatialised racial metonyms today are an attempt to re-ignite the collective political consciousness that the neoliberal state has done its utmost to extinguish. Replacing the overt articulation of the anti-racist struggle against policing with racial metonyms does not make it a struggle that isn't there, but a struggle almost exclusively rearticulated through those metonyms - in other words, a struggle that has no name. Tottenham, Brixton and Ladbroke Grove are about more than riots, crime and Carnival; they are sites of black rebellion, community organising and radical thought. By focusing the spotlight on spaces of historical African-Caribbean resistance, activists are highlighting continuities that affect the present. It is the responsibility of critical race scholars to identify and bolster activism of this kind, and while optimism is not always an attribute of the left, it is vital that the strengths of radical political actions are recognised and developed.

#### **Objective Four: Practicalities of Struggle**

As its fourth and final core aim, this thesis has identified and analysed the methods used to further the aims of those engaged in black resistance to policing. Some of the most high-profile campaigns take place through court hearings and inquiries. The former are generally cases against an individual, such as LCAPSV's support for a young man charged with obstruction after being violently assaulted by two officers in south London. The latter are more often investigations into a death at the hands of the state, such as that

of Mark Duggan. While Chapter 5 found that the court system is often ineffective in achieving justice for those subjected to state violence, it is still a useful tool for retrieving the facts of the case, interrogating aggressors and gaining public support.

My intention is not to discern the most effective tactic, as multiple avenues of resistance are necessary in challenging state racism. But I have devoted significant attention to the approach of Black Lives Matter, in what I term *disruption at the point of consumption* (Chapter 7). This form of direct action, which involves shutting down shopping centres, links state violence with capitalism, opening up a number of potentialities. Disruption at the point of consumption warrants focus from multiple vantage points, from solidarity with movements such as Occupy to co-ordinated action with labour struggles at other parts of the supply chain, particularly those in production and transit in the Global South. As such, it is certainly in need of further investigation.

Disruptions at points of consumption and metonymic anti-racism distort popular notions of anti-racism. The former refuses to differentiate between symbols of consumer capitalism and state institutions – articulating an antagonism with state racism through a direct confrontation with capital is the clearest possible performance of this. While neoliberalism has attempted to create the impression that markets are somehow separate from the state (Harvey 2008), Black Lives Matter actions have dragged consumer capitalism back into the spotlight. Metonymic anti-racism is distinctive in that, in some ways, it challenges racism without reifying race. A contradiction that this thesis identified in its introduction, is speaking of race while being aware that the concept of race must be done away with if we are to dismantle racism. Metonymic anti-racism has the potential to begin doing this, yet ongoing investigations into the rise of this articulation of black struggle will be required in

order to assess further the validity of such a proposition.

Post-2011 resistance to the policing of black communities has subverted not only the conceptual spatialities of neoliberal racism, but also its material spatialities. Activists resist everyday police harassment with community monitoring, challenge patriarchal state violence with female-led campaigns and confront the hegemony of neoliberal capitalism by disrupting spaces of consumption. The creativity, pragmatism and foresight of these emergent struggles have built on the movements of the past, and attempt to reposition them to better suit the neoliberal terrain upon which they are currently situated. Reclaiming and subverting the coded racialised language of neoliberalism is now a widespread tactic employed in black resistance to police violence. These campaigns identify with racialised spaces – both places and bodies – which neoliberalism seeks to atomise by detaching them from wider issues of structural racial discrimination. Making concessions to neoliberalism in a way that can alienate those not fluent in the coded language of veiled racism is not without its dangers. Yet this pragmatic approach by black communities to rebuilding what was destroyed by Margaret Thatcher and the neoliberal policies that followed, must be understood by scholars and activists alike, if we are to build an accurate picture of the geographies of race in Britain today.

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