Race, motherhood, and multiculturalism: the making of female identities in the British inner city, c. 1970-1990

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Jessica M. B. White

School of Arts, Languages and Cultures

Contents

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Abbreviations

AIU	Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Archive
BAFC	Black Audio and Film Collective
BCA	Black Cultural Archives
BI	Bishopsgate Institute
BL	British Library
BUFP	Black Unity and Freedom Party
BPM	Black Parents Movement (GPI)
BV	Bishopsgate Voices (BV)
BWFYA	Broadwater Farm Youth Association
BWG	Brixton Black Women's Group
BWMA	Black Women's Mutual Aid
CBS	Camden Black Sisters
CC	Carnival Collection (AIU)
DAD	Dadzie Papers of Stella Dadzie (BCA)
DYROM	Do You Remember Olive Morris? Oral History Project (LA)
EE	Elouise Edwards Collection (AIU)
FAN	Feminist Archive North
FWA	Family Welfare Association
GLC	Greater London Council
GMC	Greater Manchester County Archives, Manchester Central Library
GPI	George Padmore Institute
HAG	Housing Action Group
HHA	Hidden Histories Archive
HSE	Haringey Search Rooms
HTPP	Hulme Tenants Participation Project (GMC)
LA	Lambeth Archives
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LRA	John La Rose Collection (GPI)
MBC	Manchester BME Communities (AIU)

MBWC	Moss Side Black Women's Co-operative
MGC	Manor Gardens Centre (LMA)
MSPA	Moss Side People's Association
MWP	Manchester Women's Paper (FAN)
OWAAD	Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent
PPA	Pre-school Playgroups Association
RC	Runnymede Collection (BCA)
ROH	Roots Oral History Project (AIU)
RTN	Reclaim the Night
SAA	Sisterhood and After: the Women's Liberation Oral History Project (BL)
SBS	Southall Black Sisters
UCPA	United Coloured People's Association
UBWAG	United Black Women's Action Group
WAE	Women & Education (FAN)
WDOHP	Woodberry Down Oral History Project (HHA)
WLM	Women's Liberation Movement
WPCA	Whittington Park Community Association (BI)

Abstract

This thesis recovers the lives and identities of women who lived in Britain's inner cities in the late twentieth century. Building on a variety of source material, including oral history testimony, personal memoir, and grassroots publications, it looks closely at the experiences of women of colour who came to be concentrated in Britain's inner cities, but whose lives have evaded historical interrogation. This thesis also explores representations of inner-city women in the tabloid press, drawing on Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' to tease out the connections between race, inner-city womanhood, and national identity in the late twentieth century. It argues that, far from being one-dimensional recipients of social and geographical misfortune, inner-city women had multi-faceted identities made up of personal, inter-personal, and transnational experiences, which transcended the environmental and temporal realities in which they lived. Chapter 1 reflects on how women's experience of motherhood adapted to urban changes in the late-twentieth century, and how ethnicity played a role in determining these experiences. It argues that while the inner city provided opportunities for personal and community development to mothers, these opportunities were not always available to Black women, who had to look elsewhere for companionship. Chapter Two in turn closely examines Black women's centres and groups in urban areas during the 1970s and 1980s, exploring how they provided women with the space and time to nurture their personal experiences of sexism and racism, achieve a sense of self-sufficiency, and celebrate their heritage. Chapter 3 uses the British Caribbean carnival to examine the way in which Black women's identities were affected by state-aided project of 'multiculturalism'. It argues that while carnival processions and costumes enabled Black women to project a positive image of Black womanhood and the Black community, the tabloid press often overwrote these assertive forms of identity work. Chapter 4 continues this analysis of media forms, by examining the representations of Black womanhood in the tabloid press following the Broadwater Farm Disturbances of 1985. It demonstrates that while British national identity was channelled through the gendered and racialised depictions of both Black and white women, inner-city Black residents used their own form of cultural expression to challenge and contort these hegemonic representations. Overall, this thesis makes significant contributions to the study of race and gender in late twentieth-century Britain.

Declaration

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application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university of other institute

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Introduction

In the introduction to his 1994 biography of Jamaican-born community activist Dolly Kiffin, commissioned by Kiffin herself, writer Paul Williams wrote:

Through the press, the general public have often read of a quite different character [of Kiffin] - a black power radical, a firebrand urging on black youth to riot and even to kill. For the *Evening Standard* she was 'the mercurial matriarch of Broadwater Farm' and for the *Sunday Telegraph* 'a political Godmother who runs Broadwater Farm in Tammany Hall style'. The *Mail on Sunday* said more libellous things. So who is the real Dolly Kiffin? What drove her to become a voice for her community?...And what has her story to tell to those most concerned with the crucial tasks of inner-city regeneration?[1]

Kiffin was head of the Broadwater Farm Youth Association (BWFYA), which she set up in the late 1970s to tackle unemployment on the Broadwater Farm Estate in Tottenham, north London. She was also subject to hostile press attention in the wake of the Broadwater Farm Disturbances in 1985, following which the press accused Kiffin of siphoning off BWFYA funds to finance her family. Subsequently the press continued to hound her, amid ongoing claims about her mishandling of the accounts of the BWFYA. Writing almost fifteen years after Kiffin had started to address the social problems in her local area, Williams's description of the activist drew attention to the various ways in which the British press had demonised Kiffin via an overtly racialised image relating to her alleged associations with crime and urban decay. And yet, Williams made clear that his biography, informed by the personal testimony of Kiffin, was a challenge to this image. The real Kiffin, he asserted, was

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[1] Paul Williams, *Keeper of the Dream: The Story of Dolly Kiffin of Broadwater Farm* (London: International Community Talk Publishing, 1994), p. 1.

unknowable, or at least remarkably different to the figure conjured up by the mainstream media. While not all women experienced the kind of unwanted press attention and police hostility on the scale Kiffin did, her treatment embodies the challenging circumstances inner-city women faced in late twentieth-century Britain. As a published riposte to the press representations of Kiffin's life, her biography is a unique example of several strategies of survival that women deployed to adapt to the political and cultural stigmatisation of Britain's inner cities. As a collaboration between author and subject in which Kiffin's voice was foregrounded in the text, the biography is also is indicative of the modes of inner-city female self-fashioning in the late twentieth century, with which this study is concerned.

This thesis illuminates the stories of women like Kiffin who lived in Britain's inner cities in the late twentieth century. By the 1970s, urban regeneration, colonial and post-colonial migration, and deindustrialisation had intersected to transform the social and physical make-up of Britain's former Victorian slums.[2] As ethnic minorities became increasingly concentrated in Britain's inner most urban areas, 'inner-cities' emerged as 'racialised spaces', associated with crime, economic stagnation, and poverty.[3] Since rising to notoriety in the late twentieth century as the locus for racist polemic and government protocol, the inner city has garnered the attention of urban historians who have been keen to chart its geographical and political history.[4] Furthermore, there is also now a small but burgeoning interest in charting the lived experience of inner-city inhabitants, developed by

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[2] James Rhodes and Laurence Brown, 'The Rise and Fall of the "Inner City": Race, Space and Urban Policy in Postwar England', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45 (2019), 3243–59.
[3] George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), chap. 1; See also Rhodes and Brown, 'The Rise and Fall', p. 3259.
[4] Ibid.; Otto Saumarez Smith, 'Action for Cities: The Thatcher Government and Inner-City Policy', *Urban History*, 47 (2020), 274–91; Otto Saumarez Smith, 'The Inner City Crisis and the End of Urban Modernism in 1970s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 27 (2016), 578–98; Laurence Brown and Niall Cunningham, 'The Inner Geographies of a Migrant Gateway: Mapping the Built Environment and the Dynamics of Caribbean Mobility in Manchester, 1951–2011', *Social Science History*, 40 (2016), 93–120; Alistair Kefford, 'Disruption, Destruction and the Creation of "the Inner Cities": The Impact of Urban Renewal on Industry, 1945–1980', *Urban History*, 44 (2017), 492–515.

Kieran Connell, Judith Walkowitz, and Sam Caslin.[5] While these social histories have paid

close attention to the themes of race and gender separately, none has looked extensively at the

intersections of the two.[6] This study makes an original contribution to this growing field. It

not only includes the uncharted experiences of Black women alongside those of white

women, but also largely centres their experiences as racialised women in post-war Britain.[7] In

turn, this thesis offers a rich and complex analysis of race and gender in late twentieth-

century Britain. From the 1970s, inner-city women developed a number of initiatives,

including childcare organisations, tenants' associations, and women's centres, to meet their

collective need for emotional and practical support. They also developed different cultural

mechanisms that drew from the politics and culture of the global Black diaspora, such as

carnival costumes, dance groups, and local newsletters, which served as outlets for

articulating their personalities and experiences. I argue that these strategies for survival

allowed women to forge assertive, autonomous, and transnational modes of self that centred

their individual experiences of living as marginalised citizens in a post-imperial and post-

industrial Britain.

The extract from Kiffin's biography above is also demonstrative of how newspaper

representations of inner-city women often contradicted these assertive forms of identity work.

These representations were present across all brows of the press, but largely within the

popular right-leaning tabloids. This study explores these depictions, building upon Benedict

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[5] Kieran Connell, *Black Handsworth : Race in 1980s Britain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019); Simon Peplow, *Race and Riots in Thatcher's Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019); Michael Romyn, 'The Heygate: Community Life in an Inner-City Estate, 1974–2011', *History Workshop Journal*, 81 (2016), 197–230; Michael Romyn, *London's Aylesbury Estate : An Oral History of the 'Concrete Jungle'* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); Samantha Caslin, *Save the Womanhood! Vice, Urban Immorality and Social Control in Liverpool, c. 1900-1976* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018); Judith R Walkowitz, 'Feminism and the Politics of Prostitution in King's Cross in the 1980s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 30 (2019), 231–63.
[6] While Kieran Connell addresses some aspect of Black women's experience of Handsworth, he acknowledges his bias towards the male experience, see Connell, *Black Handsworth*, p. 12.
[7] From herein, the term 'Black', unless quoted from another source, refers to those individuals of African and Caribbean descent. It differs from the contemporary use of the term 'Black', which was used as a collective term to signify the shared experience of people of both Black and South Asian descent.

Anderson's notion that newspapers produce 'imagined communities' to tease out the connections between race, inner-city womanhood, and national identity in the late twentieth century. Anderson developed his theory as a way to understand how nations and national identities are socially constructed. He suggested that the development of the vernacular press, the postal system, and railway lines worked together to construct imagined communities.[8] These modern developments made it possible for individuals to imagine others elsewhere, doing, reading, eating, and experiencing the exact same things as them, creating a sense of belonging to a larger social community that extended beyond the immediate physical environment. Meanwhile, this shared language, the stories in the newspapers, and the railway line, all intersected to delineate the imagined boundaries to that space. Communities, 'nations', and national identities are not built up from the ground, but instead are culturally constructed through a collective psyche, and newspapers play a role in this formation. For instance, Kennetta Hammond Perry has argued that in the wake of rising racial tensions in Britain from the late 1950s, the press was keen to present Britain as a stable and harmonious multiracial nation, and to perpetuate what she has called the 'mystique of British anti-racism'.[9]

This thesis builds on Perry's concept to argue that newspaper representations of inner-city women, particularly Black women, allowed the popular press to capture momentary glimpses of a multicultural and harmonious nation in the 1980s. However, I want to complicate Perry's argument to suggest that this idealised image of multiracial Britain was extremely uneven. 'Multiculturalism' was only celebrated in cultural discourse if it was temporary, such as when occurring at isolated events, and when it did not come into conflict

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[8] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* (London: Verso, 2006), pp. 25–37.

[9] Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London Is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship and the Politics of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), chap. 3.

with the criminal justice system or challenge British 'values', including the notion of Britain as the crucible of modern policing and justice. Exploring both internal and external perspectives of the inner city, this study offers both a social and cultural history of urban womanhood in late twentieth-century Britain.

The rise and fall of the British inner city: a case study approach

Recent approaches to Britain's late twentieth-century urban history have tended to examine central government policy, with scholars such as Otto Saumarez Smith exploring Westminster's bid to tackle the blight, poverty, and crime associated with inner-city areas. [10] Such analyses have overlooked the idiosyncrasies of Britain's different inner cities. This thesis takes a microhistory approach, centring the lives of women who lived in Moss Side and Hulme in Manchester and Tottenham in London as both cities underwent physical, demographic, and economic change to understand some of the topics and themes associated with inner-city living. It builds on similar studies by Lynn Abrams et al., Michael Romyn, and Kieran Connell, who have all used a case study approach in their histories of urban Britain.[11] Writing in the context of micro-studies in the history of crime, David Nash and Anne-Marie Kilday have argued that microstudies allow the historian to perceive 'the individual in the historical past coping with their own encounter with forms of legal apparatus'.[12] In a similar manner, a microstudy of inner-city residents can offer insight into

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[10] Smith, 'The Inner City Crisis'; Smith, 'Action for Cities'; Rhodes and Brown, 'Rise and Fall'; Denis Dillon, Bryan Fanning, and Graham Haughton, *Lessons for the Big Society: Planning, Regeneration and the Politics of Community Participation: Planning, Regeneration and the Politics of Community Participation* (Farnham: Taylor & Francis Group, 2011).
[11] Lynn Abrams, Ade Kearns, and others, *Glasgow : High-Rise Homes, Estates and Communities in the Post-War Period* (London: Routledge, 2020); Romyn, *London's Aylesbury Estate*; Connell, *Black Handsworth*.
[12] David S. Nash and Anne-Marie Kilday, 'Introduction', in *Law, Crime and Deviance since 1700: Micro-Studies in the History of Crime*, ed. by David S. Nash and Anne-Marie Kilday (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), pp. 1–16 (p. 5).

how they engaged with the state's inner-city policies in the 1970s and 1980s, from urban planning initiatives to increased policing measures. Moreover, Nash and Kilday have also suggested that microhistories are useful in testing some of the generalisations that are applied to historical writing. In the context of post-war Britain, overarching processes such as 'deindustrialisation' or 'neoliberalism' have been used to describe change over time, but rarely have historians using these terms examined how these processes were experienced 'on the ground'.[13] A comparative microhistory of Manchester and north London can help insert a personal perspective into some of the broad frameworks that have shaped the history of Britain's inner cities.

Inner cities were successors to the slums of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As Sam Wetherell has demonstrated, from the beginning of the twentieth century, consecutive governments and urban planners believed that by removing the overcrowded neighbourhoods of Britain's Victorian industrial neighbourhoods and erecting new modern housing, they could eradicate the disease and vice associated with urban living, producing a healthier working population.[14] Following the Second World War, both Labour and Conservative governments doubled down in their efforts to generate more housing after the Blitz had damaged just over four million homes.[15] In Manchester, over half of the city's housing stock

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[13] For deindustrialisation, see Jim Tomlinson, 'De-Industrialization Not Decline: A New Meta-Narrative for Post-War British History', *Twentieth Century British History*, 27 (2016), 76–99; For 'neoliberalism', see James Vernon, 'Heathrow and the Making of Neoliberal Britain', *Past & Present*, 2021 <https://doi-org.manchester.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/pastj/gtaa022>; Some microstudies are being done on looking at the lived experience deindustrialisation, see Matt Beebee, 'Navigating Deindustrialization in 1970s Britain: The Closure of Bilston Steel Works and the Politics of Work, Place, and Belonging', *Labour History Review*, 85 (2020), 253–83.
[14] Sam Wetherell, *Foundations: How the Built Environment Made Twentieth-Century Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), pp. 78–85.
[15] Benjamin Jones, *The Working Class in Mid-Twentieth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 92; For a survey of post-war housing policy, see John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing, 1815-1970* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles Ltd, 1978); Alison Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture: The History of a Social Experiment* (London: Routledge, 2001); Peter Taylor and Roger Prestwich, *Introduction to Regional and Urban Policy in the United Kingdom* (London: Longman Group, 1990).

was selected for clearance between 1965 and 1972.[16] Most of these homes were in the neighbouring wards of Moss Side and Hulme, nestled south of Manchester's city centre and home to the city's industrial working classes since the nineteenth century. Similarly, Tottenham, which forms the east side of the London Borough of Haringey in north London, had also been home to workers in the various local industries since the nineteenth century, and there had been long been a concentration of lower income households in the area.[17] It was in both these areas where local authorities directed some of the county's most ambitious social housing initiatives. In Hulme, the Hulme Crescents — four large inter-connected housing blocks — were completed in 1971, and in Moss Side, the District Centre Maisonettes opened in 1971 and the Alexandra Park Estate was completed in 1972. In Tottenham, the Broadwater Farm Estate, was completed in 1973, housing some 3,000 residents.

Inspired by modernist movements in Europe, the architects of Britain's new homes opted for streamlined and simplistic designs, which offered all the amenities of modern living, such as private toilets, and extra bathrooms and bedrooms for larger families.[18] Unlike the squat terraced houses of industrial neighbourhoods, post-war homes were built high to accommodate concentrated living in urban areas. In Tottenham, the Broadwater Farm Estate, or 'The Farm', consisted of twelve blocks, all built off the ground to account for flooding from the local River Moselle, holding around 1063 properties.[19] Moss Side and Hulme's formulaic rows of homes, so often associated with industrial Britain, were replaced with the Hulme Crescents' 'streets in the sky', balconies and walkways elevated from the traffic on the ground. Tower blocks like the Crescents and 'the Farm' soon defined the skylines of

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[16] Brown and Cunningham, 'The Inner Geographies', p. 99; For a history of housing policy in Manchester, see Peter Shapely, *The Politics of Housing: Power, Consumers and Urban Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 28–48.
[17] Dillon, Fanning, and Haughton, *Lessons for the Big Society*, p. 5.
[18] For example, Ravetz, *Council Housing, Council Housing and Culture: The History of a Social Experiment,* p. 96.
[19] Lord Gifford, *The Broadwater Farm Inquiry* (London: Karia Press, 1986), p. 14.

cities such as London, Manchester, and Glasgow, and large-scale housing estates were a regular feature of British urban life.[20]

Tottenham, Moss Side, and Hulme were associated with having a high concentration of Black residents following the influx of migrants from the Caribbean, African and the Indian subcontinent into Britain's cities following the Second World War.[21] While it was already home to a small community of Black workers numbering a few thousand, Manchester's migrant population surged as workers came to fill the labour shortage, with its Caribbean immigrant population rising to 14,000 by 1966.[22] Most of these workers came to settle and purchase cheap homes in Moss Side. By the 1950s, the area became an important migrant gateway, serving as a safe and affordable location for Caribbean migrants looking to settle and work in Manchester's textile and clothing sectors, or to reunite with family members who had migrated in the decades prior. Moss Side soon accounted for about sixty per cent of the city's Caribbean population, which had a thriving community with its own economic infrastructures, including specialised African Caribbean food shops, hair salons and barbers, and clothes shops. Following the demolition of around 5,000 of Moss Side's terraced homes in the 1970s, explored in Chapter One, the council rehoused most of the Caribbean occupants of these homes on the new Alexandra Park Estate, or the Hulme Crescents, turning many of the homeowners in the area into tenants of the state. By 1978, 59 per cent of Manchester's Caribbean population lived in council housing.[23]

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[20] For Glasgow, see Abrams, Kearns, and others, *Glasgow*.

[21] For the history of migration to Britain, see Perry, *London is the Place for Me*; See also Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home: Gender, 'race' and National Identity, 1945-64* (London: UCL Press, 1998); Linda McDowell, *Migrant Women's Voices: Talking about Life and Work in the UK since 1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Peter Fryer, *Staying Power* (London: Pluto Press, 2018); David Olusoga, *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (London: Macmillan, 2016); Lorna Chessum, *From Immigrants to Ethnic Minority : Making Black Community in Britain* (London: Routledge, 2017).

[22] Brown and Cunningham, 'The Inner Geographies', p. 100.

[23] Ibid., p. 114.

Like Moss Side, Tottenham's Black community grew steadily following the Second World War, but it was following the change in the status of social housing and growing deindustrialisation that they became concentrated in the area. From the 1970s, the cultural status of social housing was waning as consecutive governments incentivised homeownership through discounts on the purchase of council homes.[24] This led to the residualisation of housing estates in Britain's densely populated urban areas, whereby social housing, rather than being seen as a provision to all who wanted it, became an 'ambulance service' for those who could not find housing elsewhere.[25] On Broadwater Farm, a survey found that in 1980, 70 per cent of its lettings were to homeless families, who were refused a second offer to live in better quality housing.[26] As a result, many Black migrant families in need of housing, and without the capacity to purchase a home, were likely to be housed on urban, high-density estates. For instance, on the Broadwater Farm in 1981, 42 per cent of households were African Caribbean, and 49 per cent were white.[27] Furthermore, many of these housing estates were falling into disrepair as the state failed to maintain them. A study carried out by a local welfare centre in Moss Side found that in the District Centre Maisonettes, 41 per cent of maisonettes had bugs, 32 per cent had beetles, and 83 per cent had mice.[28] The changing role of social housing led to a reduction in its status, investment, scale, and quality.

The residualisation of social housing was matched by the restructuring of Britain's employment landscape as it shifted towards a service-based economy. Competition from cheaper foreign imports devastated the manufacturing industries, particularly the printing and automobile sectors that had been the lifeblood of many inner urbans areas. This process of

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[24] See also Sam Wetherell, '"Redlining" the British City', *Renewal*, 28 (2020), 81–90.
[25] For an overview of residualisation, see Jones, *The Working Class,* pp. 96–110.
[26] Lord Gifford, *The Broadwater Farm Inquiry,* p. 22.
[27] Wetherell, '"Redlining" the British City', p. 85.
[28] Family Advice Centre, *The FAC Book: A History of the Moss Side Family Advice Centre* (Manchester: Youth Development Trust, 1981), p. 11.

deindustrialisation sucked the more mobile workers from Britain's inner cities to the suburbs, leaving behind de-skilled racialised minorities and precarious workers, unable to participate in the knowledge-driven economies that came to dominate cities like London. Mass unemployment followed. Unemployment was high on the Broadwater Farm Estate, with only around 31 per cent of residents in employment, with most residents on very low incomes in 19 in 1986.[29] Similarly, in the 1981 Census, 36.4 per cent of men in Moss Side were unemployed, compared to 14 per cent in the Greater Manchester county, and 16 per cent of households were headed by unskilled workers, compared to 6 per cent in the county.[30] Britain's inner urban areas came to be populated by the most vulnerable and marginalised people in society, most of whom were housed in dilapidated flats and homes falling into disrepair, and some of whom resorted to petty crime for survival. Crucially, as John Solomos noted, the rapid demographic transformation of inner cities following the years of post-war immigration led to the racialisation of these issues of unemployment, housing, and law and order, with the Black population in Britain viewed by policy-makers as the source of these problems.[31]

It was out of the ashes of the post-war reconstruction that the 'inner city', as a racialised political and cultural construct, was born. When Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1979, she stated 'we must do something about those inner cities', feeding the rhetoric of the 'inner city' as internal enemy that needed to be removed.[32] And yet, while the term 'inner city' was, and still is, used to describe and connote a range of (largely negative)

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[29] Lord Gifford, *The Broadwater Farm Inquiry,* p. 155. Almost all of those surveyed earned under £8,000 per annum.
[30] Rosemary Mellor, 'Manchester's Inner City: The Management of the Periphery', in *Restructuring Capital: Recession and Reorganisation in Industrial Society*, ed. by Howard Newby and others (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1985), pp. 105–23 (p. 113).
[31] John Solomos, *Black Youth, Racism and the State: The Politics of Ideology and Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 44.
[32] Michael Romyn, '"London Badlands": The Inner City Represented, Regenerated', *The London Journal*, 44 (2019), 133–50 (p. 143).

meanings, it is necessary to take the term seriously, outside of scare quotes, and understand how the cultural and political treatment of Britain's inner cities affected the lives of those individuals who lived in them.[33] The British inner city has received increasing historical attention, but most of the existing scholarship draws on official census data, cabinet reports, and newspaper articles. Within those narratives that do look away from policy, such as those by Tim Barker or Simon Peplow, there is a tendency to focus on the wave of uprisings against rising police violence that took place in 1981 and 1985, emphasising the notion that inner-city areas constantly lived in a state of recalcitrance.[34]

And yet, recent research by historians such as Michel Romyn and Kieran Connell has used oral history records, photography, and grassroots publications to outline how new forms of social life and political activism accompanied the societal exclusion and racism that marked the inner city.[35] Popular accounts have also shown the inner city as a cornucopia of plenty, rather than plight. Dan Hancox's *Inner City Pressure: the Story of Grime* has explored the rise of Britain's grime music scene in inner east London, charting how the inner city in the 1990s produced community and forms of resistance.[36] Furthermore, as the opening to this thesis demonstrates, for like Kiffin, the term 'inner city' was a leitmotif that was invoked to discuss broader issues regarding urban regeneration, community cohesion, and resistance to the state. Avis Blakeley, a white woman who grew up in Hulme during the slum demolition programme, remembered in one oral history interview from 2019: 'Slum clearance started in the sixties. Inner city living [sic] was two up two down. When I was a kid nobody shut their

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[33] Romyn, '"London Badlands": The Inner City Represented, Regenerated', p. 139.
[34] Tim Barker, *In the Shadow of the SPG : The 1970s : Brixton's Black Community Meets the Met* (London: Past Tense, 2013); Peplow, *Race and Riots*; Neil Wain and Peter Joyce, 'Disaffected Communities, Riots and Policing: Manchester 1981 and 2011', *Safer Communities*, 11 (2012), 125–34.
[35] Romyn, *London's Aylesbury Estate*; Connell, *Black Handsworth*; Kieran Connell, 'Photographing Handsworth: Photography, Meaning and Identity in a British Inner City', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 46 (2012), 128–53; See also, Joy White, *Terraformed: Young Black Lives in the Inner City* (London: Repeater Books, 2020).
[36] Dan Hancox, *Inner City Pressure : The Story of Grime*, (London: William Collins, 2019).

front doors, you just went into everybody's houses. Everybody sat outside on chairs'.[37] Although Blakeley spent her early years in an area that would have typically been referred to as 'traditional terraced housing' or 'the slums' she appropriated the more current term 'inner city' in her memory to conjure up positive images of community life, indicating the varied use of the descriptor by its residents.

Taking these qualifications of the term 'inner city' into account, this thesis builds on the research of Romyn, Connell, and Hancox by incorporating the experiences of women to illustrate that the inner city offered up spaces for inter-ethnic interaction and cultural expression. As this thesis demonstrates, women in Tottenham, Moss Side, and Hulme took local and immediate action to improve life in these areas, and have, in turn, left behind a wealth of archival material which, to date, no historian has examined. By placing an emphasis on the lives of Black and white women in Britain's inner cities, it demonstrates that while the inner city was marked by deprivation, marginalisation, and institutionalised racism, it was also a hub of resistance, self-expression, and solidarity. The so-called 'rise and fall' of the British inner city looks far different when viewed from below.

Historiographical approaches to race and gender in the inner city

By charting the experiences of inner-city women, particularly women of colour, this thesis offers an original contribution to the scholarship on gender and race in urban Britain. Despite the growing interest in recent years on the lived experience of the 'inner city', there has been little sustained scrutiny of women's lives in these areas. While impressive research by Sam Caslin and Judith Walkowitz has focused on inner-city women's involvement in sex

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[37] SuAndi, *Strength of Our Mothers* (Manchester: artBlacklive, 2019), p. 24.

work, such studies have reified stereotypes of inner-city women as living on the periphery of mainstream society.[38] This stereotype has been made more pronounced by the interest in charting the female experience of urban change in other periods over the twentieth century, famously pioneered by oral historian Elizabeth Roberts.[39] Narratives of the social shifts and rupture that came with moving to a new housing estate have enticed historians, rather than the lived experience of stasis that defined most women's experience of inner-city living in the latter decades of the twentieth century.[40]

Within the existing scholarship on post-war women's experience of urban living, there has also been an emphasis on the persistence or disappearance of 'traditional' working-class habits, such as street-minding, dropping in, and the close mother-daughter bond.[41] However, this historical framework, that portrays working-class women as rooted to the past, foregrounds white women's experience. Indeed, most recent studies of the British working class, by scholars such as Ben Jones, Selina Todd, and Jon Lawrence, have adopted this ethnocentric approach.[42] Yet many Caribbean migrants moving into British cities had no experience of the 'traditional' working-class practices of the past. Once an analysis of urban womanhood centres the experiences of women of colour, the image of urban women clinging onto the past fails to stand. This study reveals that in response to the disappearance of childcare support, a lack of kinship network, and play facilities, inner-city women set up

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[38] Caslin, *Save the Womanhood!*; Judith R Walkowitz, 'Feminism and the Politics of Prostitution'.

[39] Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families: An Oral History, 1940-1970* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1995); Krista Cowman, 'Play Streets: Women, Children and the Problem of Urban Traffic, 1930–1970', *Social History*, 42 (2017), 233–56; Charlotte Wildman, *Urban Redevelopment and Modernity in Liverpool and Manchester, 1918-1939* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); Lynn Abrams, Linda Fleming, and others, 'Isolated and Dependent: Women and Children in High-Rise Social Housing in Post-War Glasgow', *Women's History Review*, 2018, 1–20; Ravetz, *Council Housing*, p. 168.

[40] Mark Clapson, *Working-Class Suburb: Social Change on an English Council Estate, 1930-2010* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011); Abrams, Kearns, and others, *Glasgow*; Jones, *The Working Class*; See also Ben Rogaly and Becky Taylor, *Moving Histories of Class and Community: Identity, Place and Belonging in Contemporary England* (London: Palgrave, 2009).

[41] For example, Ravetz, *Council Housing,* pp. 167–73.

[42] Jones, *The Working Class*; Selina Todd, *The People: The Rise and Fall of the Working Class 1910-2010* (London: John Murray, 2014); Jon Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me? : The Search for Community in Post-War England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

mother and toddler groups and childcare organisations - spaces that centred their emotional and practical needs and provided them with an outlet for self-expression. They also constructed tenants' groups that challenged the state's inability to maintain social housing and hosted community initiatives that responded to the state's drive to embed 'multiculturalism' into Britain's urban centres. Therefore, I argue that to understand urban working-class womanhood in the late twentieth century is to understand that they adapted to and embraced, rather than resisted, change in Britain's cities. In turn, this study contributes to the scholarship on class in late twentieth-century Britain, which has so far considered the Black experience as peripheral, rather than central, to understanding the history of the working class in Britain.[43]

By including the history of Black women into studies of urban Britain, this study de-centres the white female experience in the history of womanhood in the late twentieth century. Much of the literature on women's lives from the 1970s has focused on the Women's Liberation Movement [WLM], an eruption of a feminist activity, which has come to dominate the field of British women's history in the late twentieth century.[44] These narratives largely obscure inner-city women from lower-income backgrounds, and in

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[43] For example, see Stefan Ramsden, 'Remaking Working-Class Community: Sociability, Belonging and "Affluence" in a Small Town, 1930–80', *Contemporary British History*, 29 (2015), 1–26; Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, *Class, Politics, and the Decline of Deference in England, 1968–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); James L. Broun, 'Place, Identity and Social Conflict in Post-Industrial England: Cases from South Lincolnshire in the 1980s', *Contemporary British History*, 34 (2020), 331–57.

[44] While there are few monographs of the Women's Liberation Movement, there are numerous studies on the subject, see Jeska Rees, 'A Look Back at Anger: The Women's Liberation Movement in 1978', *Women's History Review*, 19 (2010), 337–56; Celia Hughes, 'Left Activism, Succour and Selfhood: The Epistolary Friendship of Two Revolutionary Mothers in 1970s Britain', *Women's History Review*, 23 (2014), 1–29; Finn Mackay, 'Mapping the Routes: An Exploration of Charges of Racism Made against the 1970s UK Reclaim the Night Marches', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 44 (2014), 46–54; Sue Bruley, 'Jam Tomorrow?: Socialist Women and Women's Liberation, 1968–82: An Oral History Approach', in *Against the Grain: The British Far Left from 1956*, ed. by Evan Smith and Matthew Worley (Manchester University Press, 2014), pp. 155–72; Sue Bruley, 'Women's Liberation at the Grass Roots: A View from Some English Towns, c.1968–1990', *Women's History Review*, 25 (2016), 723–40; Christine Wall, 'Sisterhood and Squatting in the 1970s: Feminism, Housing and Urban Change in Hackney', *History Workshop Journal*, 83 (2017), 79–97; Sarah Crook, 'The Women's Liberation Movement, Activism and Therapy at the Grassroots, 1968–1985', *Women's History Review*, 27 (2018), 1152–68; Sarah Stoller, 'Forging a Politics of Care: Theorizing Household Work in the British Women's Liberation Movement', *History Workshop Journal*, 85 (2018), 95–119.

particular women of colour. Such an occlusion is representative of the larger tendency within

the study of post-war womanhood to centre the white female experience.[45] However, recent

studies have started to challenge this ethnocentricity, most notably Natalie Thomlinson's

Race and Ethnicity in the Women's Movement in England (2016), which has focused on the

rise of Black, South Asian, and Jewish women's activism from the 1980s to the early 1990s.[46]

Thomlinson's inclusion of women of colour extended the history of the women's movement

to the 1990s, undermining the primacy of the 'Wave' paradigm, which argues that the

suffrage movement and the WLM were the only peaks in Western feminist activity,

overlooking women's activism between and after these moments. Moreover, by examining

the way in which ethnicity was a driving force in shaping women's activism, Thomlinson's

argues for the necessity to re-think the role that race plays not merely in women's history, but

in British history more widely.[47] Similarly, the notion that ethnicity played a central role in

dictating women's relationships with themselves, and with one another, is central to this

thesis.

 To understand the way in which race operated as a historical agent in dictating the

personal experiences of women, it is necessary to explore the role that 'whiteness' played in

post-war Britain. The field of 'white studies' has been developed by scholars such as David

Roediger, Alastair Bonnett, and Bill Schwarz who have demonstrated that 'whiteness' must

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[45] For example, Elizabeth Wilson, *Only Halfway to Paradise: Women in Postwar Britain 1945-1968* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1980); Jane Lewis, *Women in Britain since 1945: Women, Family, Work and the State in the Post-War Years* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1992); Roberts, *Women and Families*; Kathleen Kiernan, Hilary Land, and Jane Lewis, *Lone Motherhood in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Judy Giles, *The Parlour and the Suburb: Domestic Identities, Class, Femininity and Modernity* (Oxford: Berg, 2004); Angela Davis, *Modern Motherhood : Women and Family in England, 1945-2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012); Caitríona Beaumont, *Housewives and Citizens: Domesticity and the Women's Movement in England, 1928–64.* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); Helen McCarthy, *Double Lives: A History of Working Motherhood* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020).

[46] Natalie Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England, 1968-1993* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Margaretta Jolly's history of the WLM also looks at Black women's experiences, Margaretta Jolly, *Sisterhood and After: An Oral History of the UK Women's Liberation Movement, 1968-Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019). See also, Saffron East, 'Indian Workers' Associations, Southall Black Sisters and "Black" Politics in 1970s Britain' (forthcoming PhD dissertation).

[47] Thomlinson, *Race*, *Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England,* pp. 200–201.

not be naturalised in the history of Western societies.[48] Bonnett's research has demonstrated

that 'whiteness' developed out of European expansion into China and the Middle East,

evolving as an exclusively European attribute that was associated with chastity and

godliness.[49] Bonnett, who builds on the pioneering scholarship of Vron Ware, has also

demonstrated how the burden of whiteness fell on middle-class white women, who were seen

as the guardians in the reproductive capacity, passing on the moral character of white Britons

to subsequent generations.[50] As this thesis explores the intersection of race *and* gender, it

builds on Ware, as well as Kate Deliovsky and Raka Shome, who have looked at how the

cultural construction and valorisation of 'white femininity' conveyed meanings of

heterosexuality, fertility and domesticity, in the construction of a British national identity.[51]

This thesis shows that the press depicted middle-class white women at multicultural events

tasting Caribbean food, thereby legitimising a tolerable image of British multiculturalism.

Moreover, the tabloids would portray inner-city white women who lived on housing estates

with a high concentration of Black families as sexually vulnerable in order to vilify those

communities. This study not merely looks at how white woman were represented in the

mainstream press in accordance to the ideals of white femininity, but how these

representations worked in tandem with the cultural representations of Caribbean culture and

inner-city Black communities to construct specific ideas of nationhood that recognised racial

diversity, albeit only in restricted forms. By switching the analytical lens onto the field of

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[48] For an overview of the study of whiteness, see Jun Mian Chen, 'The Contentious Field of Whiteness Studies', *Journal for Social Thought*, 2 (2017), 15–27.

[49] Alastair Bonnett, *White Identities : An Historical & International Introduction* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), chap. 1; See also Alastair Bonnett, 'How the British Working Class Became White: The Symbolic (Re)Formation of Racialized Capitalism', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 11 (1998), 316–40; Bill Schwarz, '"The Only White Man in There": The Re-Racialisation of England, 1956-1968', *Race & Class*, 38 (1996), 65–78.

[50] Bonnett, *White Identities*, pp. 24–26; Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London: Verso, 2015).

[51] Kathy Deliovsky, 'Normative White Femininity: Race, Gender and the Politics of Beauty', *Atlantis*, 33 (2008), 49–59; Raka Shome, *Diana and Beyond: White Femininity, National Identity, and Contemporary Media Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2014); Ware, *Beyond the Pale*.

'whiteness', this thesis deepens our understanding of how 'race' operated in late twentieth-century society.

Natalie Thomlinson's analysis of Black women's oral history testimonies has also helped to flesh out Black women's history into the latter decades of the twentieth century. There is now a robust and growing literature on the African Caribbean experience in the twentieth century, developed by scholars such as Hakim Adi, Kennetta Hammond Perry, Marc Matera, and Rob Waters.[52] Despite this wealth of scholarship, much of the literature on African Caribbean women's history, such as that by Mary Chamberlain and Wendy Webster, has focused on the earlier histories of the Windrush generation, focusing on the themes of migration and labour following the Second World War.[53] In the broader field of academia, the study of Black women's lives has also been indebted to the work of Black British feminist such as , as well as American scholars such as social scientists Julia Sudbury and Tracey Fisher, and historian Tanisha Ford.[54] Building on this research, thesis develops a history of what it meant to be a Black British woman in the late twentieth century once the dust of

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[52] For studies on the earlier part of the century, see Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998); Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015); For immediate post-war decades, see Ron Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain* (Aldershot: Wildwood House Ltd, 1987); Webster, *Imagining Home*; Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012); Fryer, *Staying Power*; Mary Chamberlain, *Family Love in the Diaspora: Migration and the Anglo-Caribbean Experience* (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 2008); Perry, *London is the Place for Me*; Shirin Hirsch, *In the Shadow of Enoch Powell: Race, Locality and Resistance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018); Wendy Webster, *Mixing It: Diversity in World War Two Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); For the 1970s and 1980s, see Connell, *Black Handsworth*; Rob Waters, *Thinking Black: Britain, 1964-1985* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018); For popular accounts, see Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London: HarperCollins, 1998); Olusoga, *Black and British*; see also, John Solomos, *Race and Racism in Britain*, 3rd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
[53] Webster, *Imagining Home*; Chamberlain, *Family Love in the Diaspora*.
[54] Julia Sudbury, *'Other Kinds of Dreams': Black Women's Organisations and the Politics of Transformation* (London: Routledge, 1998); Tracy Fisher, *What's Left of Blackness: Feminisms, Transracial Solidarities, and the Politics of Belonging in Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Tanisha C. Ford, 'Violence at Desmond's Hip City: Gender and Soul Power in London', in *The Other Special Relationship : Race, Rights, and Riots in Britain and the United States*, ed. by R. Kelley and S. Tuck (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 207–24; See also Jacqueline Nassey Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

migration had settled, by threading in other themes relating to Black women's lives, such as motherhood, policing, and multiculturalism.

Perhaps the most influential historical text on Black British women, however, is *Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain.* First published in 1985, Black female activists and academics Beverly Bryan, Stella Dadzie, and Suzanne Scafe made some headway into developing other themes around Black womanhood which had been overlooked, particularly around activism.[55] The importance of *Heart of Race* is two-fold for this study. Firstly, the book matches the aim of this project: to offer a history of Black women in Britain in the post-war decades from the perspective of Black women themselves. 'We felt it was high time we started to record *our* version of events', noted the authors in their introduction'.[56] As such, the book recovered and preserved the history of Black women's experiences of labour, healthcare, education, and activism in Britain from the 1950s until the 1980s. Secondly, *Heart of the Race* also serves as a historical source *of* Black women in the 1980s, showcasing not only their everyday experiences of racism, but their concerted attempts at the time to document their own experiences and histories - themes that are recurrent in the stories found throughout this study. However, despite its significance, *Heart of the Race* still stands as one of the only histories of Black womanhood in the late twentieth century. By building on the aims and contents of *Heart of the Race*, this study aims to contribute to this body of literature.

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[55] Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie, and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* (London: Virago Press, 1985).
[56] Ibid., p.1. Emphasis in original.

The intellectual contribution of this project is owed to Black British feminist scholars, such as Gail Lewis, Lisa Amanda Palmer, Hazel Carby, and Denise Noble.[57] Lewis's work on 'presence' is especially important for this study. In her article 'Questions of Presence', Lewis has illustrated the ways in which Black women are made visible by the state, for instance in reported cases of police brutality or in statistics that draw attention to their struggles under austerity.[58] Yet, they are also rendered invisible through statistics on deaths in police custody which subsume them under the separate categories of 'Black and Minority Ethnic' or 'Women'. This dialectic between visibility and invisibility is pertinent for this study. Not only have Black women been made invisible in recent historiography, but they were made invisible in the 1970s and 1980s through the inability of the state and white feminists to engage with their needs and struggles, particular in relation childcare and feminism. However, as Lewis has suggested and as I explore further in Chapter Two, Black women took concerted efforts to make themselves visible, for instance through protests and history-writing. Lewis's work on visibility has also influenced the work of Palmer, who has argued that contemporary sexualised racism and violence against Black women's bodies remove Black women's voices, dehumanising them, and in turn upholding the imperial project in, and national identity of, post-colonial Britain.[59] Therefore, while little literature exists on Black

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[57] Gail Lewis, 'Questions of Presence', *Feminist Review*, 117 (2017), 1–19; Gail Lewis, 'Imaginaries of Europe: Technologies of Gender, Economies of Power', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13 (2006), 87–102; Lisa Amanda Palmer, 'Diane Abbott, Misogynoir and the Politics of Black British Feminism's Anticolonial Imperatives: "In Britain Too, It's as If We Don't Exist"', *The Sociological Review*, 68 (2020), 508–23; Hazel Carby, 'White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood', in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, ed. by Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, 1982), pp. 212–35; Hazel Carby, 'Policing the Black Woman's Body in an Urban Context', *Critical Inquiry*, 18 (1992), 738–55; Denise Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom: A Caribbean Genealogy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017); Nydia A. Swaby, '"Disparate in Voice, Sympathetic in Direction": Gendered Political Blackness and the Politics of Solidarity', *Feminist Review*, 108 (2014), 11–25; See also Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', *Feminist Review*, 30 (1988), 61–88; Sara Ahmed, '"It's a Sun-Tan, Isn't It?": Auto-Biography as an Identifactory Practice', in *Black British Feminism: A Reader*, ed. by Heidi Safia Mirza (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 153–67; Heidi Safia Mirza, 'Introduction: Mapping a Genealogy of Black British Feminism', in *Black British Feminism*, ed. by Heidi Safia Mirza (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 1–28; Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, 'Challenging Imperial Feminism', *Feminist Review*, 17, 1984, 3–19.
[58] Gail Lewis, 'Questions of Presence'; See also Gail Lewis, 'Imaginaries of Europe', pp. 94–96.
[59] Palmer, 'Diane Abbott', p. 515.

women's history in this period, the value of Black British feminist thought can help to frame the way in which the history of late twentieth-century Black British womanhood is conceived and produced, as well as its role in the constitution of British national identity. As Palmer has noted, 'we can recover how Black women can go missing in the grand narratives of imperial domination by also recovering Black feminist tools of analysis that resist and circumnavigate the ways we are erased and made to (dis)appear through the colonial lens'.[60]

More broadly, this study converges with recent regional studies of Black Britain. In recent years, historians such as Shirin Hirsch and Kieran Connell have diverted the historical lens away from London and towards areas such as Wolverhampton and Birmingham to offer greater depth to our understanding of racialised minorities in Britain.[61] To date, there has been no sustained analysis of the lived experience of the African Caribbean population that lived in Manchester in the post-war decades. However, Black female inhabitants living in Manchester faced different struggles to their counterparts in London, Birmingham, or Bristol, such as creeping unemployment because of deindustrialisation and mass urban decline derived from failed urban redevelopment plans. They adapted their lives accordingly by setting up grassroots organisations, such as skills training co-operatives and tenants' associations, which responded to these immediate local issues. By offering insight into the lives of Manchester's Black inhabitants, this study forces us, as Barnor Hesse asserts, to historicise the role of regionalism in the construction of Black British identities.[62]

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[60] Palmer, 'Diane Abbott', p. 521.
[61] Hirsch, *In the Shadow of Enoch Powell*; Connell, *Black Handsworth*; For the role of the 'local' in the American context, see Kerry Pimblott, *Faith in Black Power* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2017).
[62] Barnor Hesse, 'Diasporicity: Black Britain's Post-Colonial Formations', in *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, Transruptions*, ed. by Barnor Hesse (London: Zed Books, 2000), pp. 96–120 (pp. 102–3).

This study thus moves beyond offering an urban history of womanhood that simply deals with the loss of tradition and community in industrial neighbourhoods.[63] It argues that inner-city women had agency, and that they carved out new spaces and identities for themselves. Moreover, it demonstrates that inner-city women's identities were constructed around their ethnic backgrounds, in turn shedding light on the ways in which 'race' was lived in post-war Britain through activism and forming coalitions of interest rooted in culture, arts, and mutual support networks, alongside the experience of migration and racism. Approaching 'race' as a central force that framed relations between white and Black inner-city women, as well as forging a nexus between representations of inner-city women, the media, and the state, this thesis uncovers the structural power of ethnic difference in shaping personal and political history in post-war Britain.

Sources and methodology

To understand the impact that urban planning, colonial migration, and deindustrialisation had on life in inner-city areas, this thesis is explicit about centring the personal experiences of its inhabitants. It builds primarily on a rich collection of oral history interviews that took place between 1980 and 2019 for several different history projects. Firstly, it draws heavily on the Roots Oral History Project, now held at the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Centre [AIU] in Manchester Central Archives. Several Caribbean women set up the Project in the 1980s to trace the history of Manchester's migrant communities and included testimonies of migrant men and women from the Caribbean, India, and Ireland. It also uses SuAndi's *The Strength of our Mothers,* which examines the oral

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[63] Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1957); Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967); Roberts, *Women and Families*; Ravetz, *Council Housing*.

histories of mothers of mixed heritage children in Manchester. This project also examines

oral history interviews from the Do You Remember Olive Morris? [DYROM] Project, a local

history initiative set up to resurrect the history of the Jamaican-born British activist through

interviews with those who knew her.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, I had to cancel some oral history interviews that I had

organised, as well as archive visits. Had Pandemic not took place, the scope and focus of my

project would have looked far different. In particular, Chapter 4, would have looked at the

varied forms of community organisation and activism that took place following events such

as the Moss Side Disturbances of 1981, and the Broadwater Farm Disturbances of 1985,

rather than newspaper representations of urban disorder. To do this, I would have consulted

more of the collections related to policing at the AIU, as well as the Bernie Grant Collection

based at the Bishopsgate Institute. However, in an attempt to maintain the person-centred

approach of this study, I have supplemented these oral history narratives noted above with the

personal memoir of Broadwater Farm resident, Dolly Kiffin titled *Keeper of the Dream*

(1994), and other artefacts produced by inner-city inhabitants, particularly grassroots

newsletters, documentary film, poetry, artwork, and clothing, based at the AIU, Haringey

Search Rooms, and the Bishopsgate Institute.

There is now a growing consensus among historians about the benefits of personal

testimony.[64] Firstly, it can enable historians to understand the lived experience of structural

processes, such as government policy and urban planning, a crucial development since

histories of the inner city in the late twentieth century have largely relied on textual sources

created by outsiders. [65] Indeed, historians like Romyn and Abrams have used oral history

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[64] For an excellent overview, see Penny Summerfield, *Histories of the Self: Personal Narratives and Historical Practice* (Oxon: Routledge, 2019).
[65] Smith, 'Action for Cities'; Brown and Cunningham, 'The Inner Geographies'.

testimony to shed light on inner-city housing estates. These personal histories demonstrate that the lived experiences of the inner city vary across inhabitants and according to personal experience, moving away from representations of the inner city being uniquely a site of destitution.[66] Moreover, oral history is an indispensable source when unearthing the lives of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people. As scholars such as Chamberlain and Linda Herbert have argued, there is a paucity of information about the lived experience of Caribbean and South Asian migrants in conventional written documents from the post-war decades, such as cabinet papers and newspapers.[67] The reliance on conventional sources to narrate the Black experience risks constructing people of colour as progenitors of the national concerns, ranging from surplus immigration, racialised disorder, and unemployment. In the post-war decades, representations of Black women often presented them as drains on the welfare system, over-fecund, and unable to form stable family households.[68] As Chapter Four will demonstrate, by the 1980s, newspapers accused Black mothers of raising the criminal Black youths who were ostensibly responsible for the Disturbances in 1981 and 1985.[69] In this light, as Nadia Ellis' study of Black queerness has demonstrated, oral history helps marginalised and stigmatised communities challenge these hegemonic discourses and construct life stories on their own terms.[70] In the same way, by giving a voice back to those historical actors who cleaned estate hallways, contributed to local community events, and set

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[66] Romyn, *London's Aylesbury Estate*; Abrams, Kearns, and others, *Glasgow*; Paula Chorlton, 'Housing, Memory and the Post-War State: Resident Experiences, Regeneration and the Council Estate in Manchester, 1945-2010' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2015); For the use of oral history for the immediate post-war period, see Jones, *The Working Class*.

[67] Chamberlain, *Family Love in the Diaspora*, p. 7; Joanna Herbert, *Negotiating Boundaries in the City: Migration, Ethnicity, and Gender in Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008), p. 8.

[68] Webster, *Imagining Home,* p. 123; Tracey Reynolds, 'Mothering and the Family as Sites of Struggle: Theorising "race" and Gender through the Perspectives of Caribbean Mothers in the UK', in *Black Families in Britain as the Site of Struggle*, ed. by Bertha Ochieng and Carl Hylton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 100–122 (p. 104).

[69] See also, Fidelma Ashe, '"All about Eve": Mothers, Masculinities and the 2011 UK Riots', *Political Studies*, 62 (2014), 652–68.

[70] Nadia Ellis, 'Black Migrants, White Queers and the Archive of Inclusion in Postwar London', *Interventions*, 17 (2015), 893–915 (p. 911).

up tenants' associations, this study demonstrates that the fabric of the late twentieth-century inner city was not merely the product of the political minds in Westminster, but of those who lived there. This thesis foregrounds the perspectives of Britain's urban inhabitants to offer a very personal history of the inner city.

Second, examining personal testimony, particularly oral history, also lends itself to the study of the self, and in the burgeoning scholarship of post-war female selfhood, developed by Lynn Abrams, the inner city and the women within it have been left untreated.[71] As Abrams has noted, the process of recalling one's past allows individuals to construct a sense of self which is formed on the narrator's own terms, whereby they are able to construct not only a narrative of who they are at the point of the narration, but of the events and actions by which they wish to be defined.[72] Autobiography and personal memoirs work in the same way, as Carolyn Steedman has argued, as the act of writing about one's life can serve as a form of self-cultivation.[73]

Analysing oral history testimonies and personal memoirs therefore sheds light on how individuals fashion coherent personal identities. This study argues that Black women identified themselves not merely by their experiences of racism in post-colonial Britain, but through their identification with the culture, values, politics, and history of the Black diaspora. In this way, this project is influenced by the work of Denise Noble, whose research has articulated the unique ways in which Black women of Caribbean descent in Britain forge identities. First, Noble argued that the Black Caribbean women she interviewed rooted their

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[71] Lynn Abrams, 'Liberating the Female Self: Epiphanies, Conflict and Coherence in the Life Stories of Post-War British Women', *Social History*, 39 (2014), 14–35; Lynn Abrams, 'The Self and Self-Help: Women Pursuing Autonomy in Post-War Britain', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 29 (2019), 201–21; Katrina-Louise Moseley, 'Slimming One's Way to a Better Self? Weight Loss Clubs and Women in Britain, 1967–1990', *Twentieth Century British History*, 31, 2019, 427–53.
[72] Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (Oxon: Taylor & Francis Group, 2010), p. 38.
[73] Carolyn Steedman, 'State-Sponsored Autobiography', in *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945-1964*, ed. by Becky Conekin, Frank Mort, and Chris Waters (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1999), pp. 41–54.

sense of self in their Caribbean background; they articulated this heritage through engaging with, and practising, the cultures, familial traditions, and values of their Caribbean island.[74] These women also engaged with their African heritage, she argued, whether through identification or disidentification. Secondly, Noble outlined the way in which Black British female identities are articulated through the discourse of independence and freedom. She has demonstrated that the women she interviewed valued the importance of independence and autonomy and saw these as a constitutive element to their identities. They defined independence largely as 'a degree of sovereignty in the form of self-determination and agency', and 'autonomy as non-dependence and non-interference with a woman's self-determining will'.[75] Drawing from Noble, this study argues that, along with their interaction with Caribbean culture such as Carnival, Black inner-city women also forged personal identities that engaged with the cultures and political currents stemming from Africa and the United States. Secondly, through an analysis of Black maternal activism and feminist activism that prioritised Black women's experiences and identities, it outlines the centrality of agency and autonomy in the constitution of Black inner-city womanhood.

While drawing from narratives of the self to outline this argument, it is important to take note that individual's life stories are not always stable and follow a coherent and comfortable narrative, as Amy Tooth Murphy's analysis of lesbian oral histories has shown.[76] In fact, when an individual narrates their life story, they may encounter difficult memories and make sense of them, hide them, or excuse them. Moreover, as Penny Summerfield and Rebecca Jennings have demonstrated, individuals may also draw from external cultural

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[74] Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom,* chap. 3.
[75] Noble, chap. 4.
[76] Amy Tooth Murphy, '"I Conformed; I Got Married. It Seemed like a Good Idea at the Time": Domesticity in Postwar Lesbian Oral History', in *British Queer History: New Approaches and Perspectives*, ed. by Brian Lewis (Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 165–87.

discourses in order to reach a sense of satisfaction with their life story, called 'composure'.[77] For example, Summerfield noted that World War Two Home Guard veterans would often refer to the 1990s television comedy *Dad's Army* to narrate their lives in oral history interviews. She argued that despite the distance between the show and the War, the comedy enabled the men to frame their own history, demonstrating the contingent ties between personal memory and popular culture.[78] Nevertheless, rather than see these features as obstacles in the historical analysis, they make oral histories an excellent source for exploring the complexities of human existence. For instance, while inner-city women constructed sophisticated, complex, and assertive identities that challenged some of the dominant and negative stereotypes of inner-city communities, Chapter Two demonstrates that the popular memory of the activist Olive Morris also encouraged Black women to refer to themselves as 'shy' or 'less confident' in relation to her. By examining the different shades of female selfhood, this thesis shows that the inner city is far from the homogenous mass of concrete housing, crime, and poverty.

There are ethical issues raised by my secondary analysis of oral history data. Firstly, my intended use of these interviews differs from the original aims of those individuals and groups who conducted them. For instance, I am not reading these interviews to unpack the history of migration to Manchester, or the life of Olive Morris. Rather, I am writing about inner-city womanhood, and many of the women who contributed to these projects would not have imagined that a young academic – a fact that I discuss further below - who may not be fully cognisant of the context in which the narrative was produced, would use their life stories. Despite these factors, there are numerous benefits to revisiting oral history interviews

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[77] Penny Summerfield, 'Dis/Composing the Subject: Intersubjectivities in Oral History', in *Feminism and Autobiography : Texts, Theories, Methods*, ed. by Tess Coslett, Celia Lury, and Penny Summerfield (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 91–106; Rebecca Jennings, *Tomboys and Bachelor Girls: A Lesbian History of Post–War Britain 1945–71* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 10.
[78] Summerfield, *Histories of the Self*, pp. 121–22.

as Joanna Bornat and April Gallwey have both argued.[79] Bornat's re-use of oral history interviews with specialists in geriatrics revealed the frequency in which issues around race and ethnicity were mentioned in relation to the profession, but observed that these themes had previously been overlooked.[80] As she argued, reviewing oral histories with fresh eyes 'helps us to see and hear different interpretations, make new connections, revising our perspectives of those past time'.[81]

It is important to be aware that many of the participants who took part in oral history interviews wanted their life stories preserved and used for research beyond the project's intended purposes. For instance, as I show in Chapter Two, those who were involved in Morris's activist circle were aware that they formed part of a wider movement of late twentieth-century Black British activists. They wanted to ensure that the legacy of Black female activism, which is so often hidden, was incorporated into this history, rather than isolated to the dyadic oral history interview. One woman stated she got involved in the DYROM project not only because she knew Olive Morris but because she wanted to document the history of a Black women's co-operative she set up: 'lots of our contribution as women, or just generally as black people...is not recorded...and so, I just thought it was important for the organisation [the co-operative] and the people who took part in creating it to be recognised as an important part of our history'.[82] Thus, rather than neglect these interviews or only analyse them for their intended purpose, my aim is to demonstrate their broader significance by outlining how they challenge historical preconceptions and representations of the inner city.

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[79] Joanna Bornat, 'A Second Take: Revisiting Interviews with a Different Purpose', *Oral History*, 31 (2003), 47–53; April Gallwey, 'The Rewards of Using Archived Oral Histories in Research: The Case of the Millennium Memory Bank', *Oral History*, 41 (2013), 37–50.
[80] Bornat, 'A Second Take', p. 48.
[81] Ibid., p. 49; See also Gallwey, 'The Rewards'.
[82] Lambeth Archives [LA], Do You Remember Olive Morris? [DYROM], Interview with Diana Watt, 2009.

Moreover, my own positionality as a white feminist is noteworthy here. A history of white feminist scholars speaking for, or over, the experiences of Black women raises ethical issues around my own analysis.[83] During the rise of feminist scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s, white female academics often subsumed the Black female experience into a shared female experience that obfuscated the role of other social categories like race, class, age, and sexuality in refracting those experiences. Or, as Donna Chambers and Rob Worrall have shown and as I also demonstrate in Chapter Four, they performed alliance to the extent that they obscured, and sometimes patronised, Black women.[84] My focus on how Black women constructed their sense of self could, to use Katherine Borland's term, 'violate' Black women's own sense of self, and potentially reify those former scholarly practices of white Western feminists.[85] To avoid this, it is important to be wary of using Western theoretical frameworks for analysis. As Abrams has noted in her reader on oral history, Western theories of the self, particularly those that were a product of the European Enlightenment, stipulate that the self is unique, and the construction of the self is an individual act.[86] Abrams also noted that, in fact, the individual act of storytelling where the teller is the main protagonist is not universal, and in many non-Western cultures self-narration 'has been more likely to elicit stories where people positioned themselves within a group or community'.[87] Chamberlain's analysis of Barbadian women's life stories in Britain has demonstrated how their stories often incorporated the life stories and memories of their families, reflected a shared consciousness

[83] See Carby, 'White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood'; Patricia Hill Collins, 'Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood', in *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*, ed. by Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang, and Linda Rennie Forcey (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 45–65; Mohanty; Mirza; Donna Chambers and Rob Worrall, 'The Frontiers of Sisterhood: Representations of Black Feminism in Spare Rib (1972–1979)', in *Re-Reading Spare Rib*, ed. by Angela Smith (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 159–78.
[84] Ibid., pp. 166–75.
[85] Katherine Borland, '"That's Not What I Said": A Reprise 25 Years On', in *Beyond Women's Words: Feminisms and the Practices of Oral History in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by Katrina Srigley, Stacey Zembrzycki, and Franca Iacovetta (Oxon: Routledge, 2018), pp. 31–37 (p. 34).
[86] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, p. 36.
[87] Ibid., p. 37; See also Sue Anderson, Jaimee Hamilton, and Lorina L. Barker, 'Yarning up Oral History: An Indigenous Feminist Analysis', in *Beyond Women's Words*, pp. 170–83.

with their grandmothers and mothers, and articulated selves that were made up of the different lineages of their female kin.[88] Similarly, this thesis will argue that while Black women in Britain's inner cities did produce individual and distinctive modes of self, they also saw their personal experiences of racism and sexism as part of a collective experience shared among all women from the global Black diaspora.

Being cognisant of my positionality as a white woman therefore does not necessarily mean shying away from interpreting personal narratives of women of colour. In fact, it is incumbent that these women do not only perform this labour. Rather, I intend to be sensitive to the fact that these women's experiences 'were very different from my own…and that led to a very different sense of self in the world'.[89] By the same merit, I do not wish to overemphasise the difference between the subjects and myself as such an analysis would reinforce the sense of Otherness directed towards marginalised histories that I am trying to overwrite. Instead, I suggest that future scholars judge the extent to which my positionality, and historical context, shaped the thesis.

While the personal testimony of inner-city women forms the foundation of this thesis, this study also draws on local and national digitised newspaper records. This dual approach came about because partway during the research project, with the advent of the pandemic, many of my selected archives closed before I had a chance to consult them. This led to a shift in methodology, whereby I became reliant on the digitised tabloid newspapers that catered for the popular audiences, particularly th*e Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*. While I consulted some national broadsheets, such as *The Guardian, The Independent,* and *The Times,* and local newspapers, I chose to focus on tabloids because, while analysing these newspaper records, I

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[88] Mary Chamberlain, 'Family and Identity: Barbadian Migrants to Britain', in *Caribbean Migration : Globalized Identities*, ed. by Mary Chamberlain (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 1998), pp. 152–66.
[89] Borland, '"That's Not What I Said" p. 36.

encountered cultural depictions of inner-city women that were unsympathetic, sexualising, or misleading. They offered exactly the opposite image of urban womanhood from those 'selves' that I had found through my analyses of oral history interviews. As this thesis demonstrates, Black women were often - although not always, as I show in Chapter Three - framed as aggressive, overtly sexual, or bad mothers. These contradictory images of Black womanhood were driven by the nature of the right-wing tabloid press in the late twentieth century. By the 1970s, publications such *The Sun* and *Daily Mirror* reached circulation figures of four million per day, and placed a high value on law and order, and family values.[90] In matters relating to race and immigration, these papers favoured tighter immigration laws, and tended to view anti-racist legislation as impinging freedom of speech. But rather than dismiss these racist representations of inner-city women as simply a product of the sensationalist jingoism of tabloid journalism, I examine the meaning of these contradictions to discern how these depictions of inner-city female identity operated in mainstream British society.

To explore these ideas more firmly, this thesis is informed by Stuart Hall, and his writing on mass communication. In his essay 'Encoding/Decoding', Hall argued that the media use visual and discursive signs to construct meanings, which are decoded by the reader, whose reception and interpretation of these meanings are then fed back into the cultural institutions.[91] In brief, media outlets, such as newspapers, compose stories for an intended interpretation, called the preferred or dominant reading. Often this preferred reading goes beyond simply telling the 'story'. For instance, a 1993 newspaper description of a Black woman attacked by the police reported that: 'The 13 1/2- stone illegal immigrant, wearing

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[90] Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Britain: Constructing a Community through Language* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 18.
[91] Stuart Hall, 'Encoding/Decoding', in *Culture, Media, Language Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*, ed. by Stuart Hall and others (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 117–27.

only a pair of knickers, screamed and shouted as they tried to restrain her, one of the officers'.[92] On the surface, the 'message' from this *Daily Mail* news story is that of a Black woman restrained by a police officer. Yet considering the newspaper's support for the police and tighter immigration laws in the 1990s, this description can also be read as an example of Black women's aggression and laughable indecency, justifying the use of restraint and deportation. In this way, the media message contains layers of meaning and the ability to decode this message depends on the audience's capacity draw from the existing socio-political context. This thesis builds on Hall's analysis to demonstrate that the layers of meanings produced by depictions of inner-city Black women contributes to our understanding of British national identity.

This thesis also examines news photography of women to develop these themes of identity formation. It builds on the scholarship of Roland Barthes, John Berger, Jean Mohr and Susan Sontag, who have all demonstrated that while news photographs give an illusion of objectivity by providing 'the facts', the processes leading up to their publication are those of cultural construction.[93] Thus behind every newspaper photograph, there are numerous actors (photographers, editors) who have their own belief systems and intentions, all of which shape the composition and ultimately, the meaning of a newspaper photograph. Examining news photographs of inner-city women within their cultural context opens them up to multiple interpretations and sheds light on the way in which the identities of Black and white women were constructed and altered in mainstream society. In the same way as its linguistic analysis, this thesis analyses the role of news photographs in producing powerful and conflicting messages around British national identity. This dual approach to examining inner-city

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[92] 'Raging Joy Gardner sank her teeth into me, PC tells court', *Daily Mail*, 19 May 1995, p. 37.
[93] John Berger and Jean Mohr, *Another Way of Telling* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), p. 89; See also Roland Barthes, 'The Photographic Message', in *A Barthes Reader*, ed. by Susan Sontag (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), pp. 194–210 (pp. 197–98); Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Rosetta, 2005), p. 3.

women's lives, from both the personal and cultural perspective, offers not only an examination of the lived experience of the inner city, but the broader cultural significance of inner-city women in late twentieth-century Britain.

Through this source base, this research has identified four main areas that came to define women's experience of inner-city living: motherhood, women-centred activism, multiculturalism, and urban unrest. These themes dictate the structure of this thesis. Chapter One examines and centres the activism and experiences of Black mothers to demonstrate the primacy of race in the construction working-class motherhood in inner-city areas. While recent scholarship has demonstrated the way in which working-class mothers could be vectors of social change in post-war Britain, it has obscured the experience of Black mothers. The chapter corroborates recent scholarship by demonstrating that by participating in tenant's' associations, playgroups, and mothers' groups, working-class mothers developed a mode of motherhood that worked around their own practical needs and demands. However, it argues that these opportunities for assertiveness were refracted through the lived experience of both systemic and interpersonal racism that Black women faced in post-imperial and post-industrial Britain. Moreover, by examining the community efforts taken by Black women in inner-city areas, the chapter also contributes to recent studies on race, class and community activism in urban Britain. It demonstrates that the intersecting experiences of race and class could combine to produce forms of community activism among mothers, particularly in the form of tenants' associations. However, racism continued to persist in inner city neighbourhoods, which isolated Black mothers from mother-centred community groups.

Chapter Two in turn closely examines Black women's centres and groups in urban areas, exploring the personal stories of the women involved in setting up and running these organisations during the 1970s and 1980s. Black women were excluded from some mother-centred organisations, however, Black British women's centres and groups also evolved out

of Black women's combined exclusion from male-dominated anti-racist activism and the resurgent feminist movement of the late 1960s. And yet despite their stable presence in many of Britain's inner cities, Black women's centres and groups, and the lives of the women who forged them, have evaded historical interrogation. This chapter explores how Black women's centres provided women with the space and time to nurture their personal experiences of sexism and racism, achieve a sense of self-sufficiency, and celebrate their heritage, which placed every member on a path towards self-discovery. This centring of the Black female self was not, as Black male activists believed, set on undermining the Black liberation movement, but was considered as a vital tool in the overarching mission to defeat white global supremacy. Drawing primarily on oral history interviews, this chapter explores how Black female activists constructed a sense of self that turned away from the homogenising white gaze of post-war Britain. Teasing out the complexities around Black female activism, selfhood, and memory, this chapter highlights the power of personal experiences in fleshing out the marginalising cultural representations of inner-city life.

This study also identifies how cultural representations of inner-city women in both written and visual forms often sought to overwrite the modes of self-determination that women fashioned. Chapter Three explores the way in which women's identities and sense of belonging in the 1970s and 1980s was affected by state-aided project of 'multiculturalism'. Focusing on the British Caribbean carnival, it examines the way in which both white and Black women practised 'multiculturalism' in their everyday lives, and how this effected their identity. It argues that Black women constructed new identities through multicultural activism achieving a sense of 'Britishness' through constructing a hybrid culture that combined Caribbean culture with national traditions. This hybrid culture enabled Black women to project an image of ethnic integration that challenged stigmatising narratives of segregation and social tension in inner-city areas. Then, through a close examination of

carnival processions and costumes, this chapter demonstrates that multicultural activities enabled Black women to challenge these cultural representations, arguing that processions and costumes enabled Black women to project a positive image of Black womanhood and the Black community in general. This chapter then concludes by examining the way in which the press deployed Black women's identities to project a positive image of multicultural Britain, indicating the centrality of the performance of ethnic toleration to Britain's national identity. Drawing from Perry's notion of 'the mystique of British anti-racism', it is significant in arguing that inner-city Black women played a fundamental role in this cultural myth.

Building on this analysis of newspapers, Chapter Four examines the representations of Black womanhood in the tabloid press following the Broadwater Farm Disturbances of 1985, which were prompted by the death of Black mother Cynthia Jarrett following a police raid on her home. This chapter demonstrates how Black women, such as Cynthia Jarrett and community activist Dolly Kiffin, were at the centre of the media's coverage and served as cultural signifiers of broader national concerns around rising youth unrest and race relations policies. And yet while Black women represented the 'Other' against which a collective readership could oppose, it was the favourable portrayal of white women, who represented hegemonic values of domesticity and heterosexuality, that created an imagined national community of British tabloid readers. Alongside examining tabloid coverage, this chapter also explores the wave of cultural output from the Black community following the Disturbances, interrogating how Black women constructed personal identities in relation to crime that contorted the hegemonic representations found in the national media in the form of memoir, poetry, and journalism. Examining the varied cultural output following the Disturbances, this chapter offers an insight into the broader anxieties and ideas around white Britishness in the 1980, and the Black community's challenges to these anxieties.

One limitation of this thesis is its exclusive focus on women racialised as Black, and those racialised as white. It does not take into the account the lives of South Asian or Chinese women, for instance, who make up significant ethnicity minority communities in Britain but whose presence in my sources was less visible. Many factors made this the case, largely the fact that, in the two main areas under study, the largest ethnic minority group was of African descent. As a result, many of the stories told within this thesis mostly cover the experiences of Black and white women. Yet, this study still makes crucial headway into developing and complicating the fields of race and gender in late twentieth-century British urban history. It sheds light on the multitudes contained within Britain's inner cities, and demonstrates the important role that inner-city women have played in contributing to British politics and culture.

Chapter 1.

'All of us are poor whites or Blacks…we're all still oppressed': race and motherhood in the inner city

On the night of 29 January 1970, sisters Kathleen Locke and Coca Clarke, along with several other mothers, occupied the West Indian Community Centre in Chorlton-upon-Medlock in Manchester. They demanded that the Centre put nursery facilities in place for local mothers in the area. After a night of negotiations involving the police, the Centre's organising committee conceded and gave the women permission to start the Moss Side People's Nursery. The local *Moss Side News* reported, 'before you could say "Black Power" there were 20 kids, black and white, playing together happily, while their mums had the chance to do a bit of shopping or tidy the house without having to worry about junior'.[1] Rather than an isolated incident, the Moss Side women's occupation was representative of a new mode of motherhood developing from the 1970s, in which Black inner-city mothers had become increasingly confident in articulating and responding to their own practical, social and emotional needs, often, but not always, in a politicised fashion. Furthermore, as the reference to 'Black Power' suggests, the politics of race and the experience of racism, were central to the maternal experience in inner-city areas. While historians have paid attention to these instances of maternal assertiveness among working-class white mothers in urban districts, they have failed to account for Black mothers, or the category of race, in their analysis.

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[1] Greater Manchester County Archives [GMC], Hulme Tenants Participation Project [HTPP], GB127.M781, Box 11, 'Black militants start a people's nursery', *Moss Side News*, February 1970, p. 5.

This project begins its examination of race in inner-city Britain by examining and centring the activism and experiences of Black mothers to demonstrate the primacy of race in the construction of working-class motherhood in late twentieth-century Britain. In this way, it not only responds to longstanding calls by Black scholars for western feminists to decolonise their theorisation of motherhood, but also to more renewed demands that historians of motherhood do the same.[2] For instance, in her introduction to the recent supplement on 'mothering' in the journal *Past and Present,* Sarah Knott called for historians of motherhood to draw from alternative theories developed by Black and minority ethnic scholars to expand their understanding of the term 'mothering'.[3] She suggested that the term 'othermothering', developed by African American feminist Patricia Hill Collins, can encourage historians to re-think about modes of care beyond the mother-child dyad that can inform and expand the scope of the field.[4] However, while the studies in the special edition covered the variety of different forms that mothering can take, there were no articles on British motherhood that did not centre the white experience. Similarly, despite efforts by scholars such as Angela Davis and Helen McCarthy to historicise British motherhood, the themes of race and ethnicity remain peripheral.[5] This chapter goes towards breaking down this ethnocentricity by analysing mother-centred activism and community work carried out by both Black and white mothers in Britain's inner cities.

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[2] Collins, 'Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood'.

[3] Sarah Knott, 'Theorizing and Historicizing Mothering's Many Labours', *Past & Present*, 246 (2020), 1–24.

[4] Knott, 'Mothering's Many Labours', 6; For a fuller definition of 'othermothering', see Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 3rd edn (New York: Routledge, 2000), chap. 8.

[5] McCarthy, *Double Lives: A History of Working Motherhood*; Davis, *Modern Motherhood*; Abrams, 'The Self and Self-Help: Women Pursuing Autonomy in Post-War Britain'; Pat Thane, 'Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England', *Women's History Review*, 20.1 (2011), 11–29; Beaumont; Kiernan, Land, and Lewis; Lewis; Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place : An Oral History of Working-Class Women, 1890-1940* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984); Roberts, *Women and Families: An Oral History, 1940-1970*; Cowman, 'Play Streets: Women, Children and the Problem of Urban Traffic, 1930–1970'; With some exceptions, see Wendy Webster, *Imagining Home: Gender, 'race' and National Identity, 1945-64* (London: UCL Press, 2005); Mary Chamberlain, 'The Global Self: Narratives of Caribbean Migrant Women', in *Feminism and Autobiography : Texts, Theories, Methods*, ed. by Tess Coslett, Celia Lury, and Penny Summerfield (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 154–66.

By including, and largely centring, Black mothers' experience of urban living, this chapter makes a critical contribution to the scholarship on working-class motherhood in post-war Britain. Recent scholarship has demonstrated the way in which working-class mothers could be vectors of social change in post-war Britain. Eve Worth has argued that rising number of working-class mothers re-entering education in the 1970s enabled them to destabilise conceptions of class through their own social mobility.[6] Laura Paterson has shown that working-class mothers in the 1970s and 1980s differed from their own mothers and grandmothers by choosing to return to paid employment for a sense of self-sufficiency, as well as financial security.[7] Yet, despite demonstrating how these mothers set up a mode of motherhood that encompassed women's identity beyond her role as mother and housewife, the focus of this scholarship remains on the white experience with little interrogation of the subject of race. As outlined in the Introduction, thousands of migrant women from the Commonwealth arrived into Britain's working-class neighbourhoods in the post-war decades, however, recent studies have obscured these demographic changes. The labour of charting the lived experience of Black British mothers in the latter part of the century has in turn fallen onto scholars in other disciplines, and onto Black women themselves.[8]

This chapter therefore offers a history of working-class motherhood in the late twentieth century that highlights the importance of race in dictating the maternal experience in inner-city areas. It corroborates recent scholarship by demonstrating that by participating

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[6] Eve Worth, 'Women, Education and Social Mobility in Britain during the Long 1970s', *Cultural and Social History*, 16.1 (2019), 67–83.

[7] Laura Paterson, '"I Didn't Feel like My Own Person": Paid Work in Women's Narratives of Self and Working Motherhood, 1950–1980', *Contemporary British History*, 33.3 (2019), 405–26; See also McCarthy, *Double Lives: A History of Working Motherhood*, chap. 11; Davis, *Modern Motherhood*; Dolly Smith Wilson, 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker: The Good Working Mother in Post-War Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17 (2006), 206–29; Stephen Brooke, 'Gender and Working Class Identity in Britain during the 1950s', *Journal of Social History*, 34 (2001), 773–95.

[8] Tracey Reynolds, 'Mothering and the Family as Sites of Struggle: Theorising "race" and Gender through the Perspectives of Caribbean Mothers in the UK', in *Black Families in Britain as the Site of Struggle*, ed. by Bertha Ochieng and Carl Hylton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 100–122; Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *The Heart of the Race*.

in tenants' associations, playgroups, and mothers' groups, Black working-class mothers participated alongside white mothers in this mode of motherhood that worked around their own practical needs and demands. However, it also argues that these opportunities for assertiveness were refracted through the lived experience of both systemic and interpersonal racism that Black women faced in post-imperial and post-industrial Britain. The realities of racism also impelled Black mothers to act on particular issues, such as economic and housing discrimination, that affected them as Black women. In this way, this project develops the key work on freedom and Black British womanhood developed by Denise Noble. Noble has identified and argued that Black women in Britain constructed their identities through stressing their independent-mindedness and their sense of authority and self-determination over themselves, and autonomy from the interference from other external, patriarchal, power.[9] Working-class mothers had differing experiences of motherhood that hinged on their racialised identities, and Black women adapted to these experiences through community-based activism and engagement that stressed their autonomy and independence. Through this activism, I argue, Black women's maternal practices contributed to the construction of a mode of Black British womanhood hinging on freedom and independence.

This study addresses the ethnic bias in the historiography of motherhood by drawing on the personal testimony of Black mothers, as well as the campaign literature generated by grassroots organisations in Britain's inner cities. By examining the community efforts taken by Black women in inner-city areas, it also contributes to the growing number of studies on race, class and community activism in urban Britain. In *Black Handsworth,* Connell examined the community efforts that Black and South Asian residents of inner-city Birmingham made to promote community life by setting up activist groups that accounted for

[9] Noble, chap. 4.

racist housing policies and inferior schooling.[10] Similarly, in their analysis of community

activism in Notting Hill, Camilla Schofield and Ben Jones explored how racism could often

be a driver for community activism among its Black residents, who also often united with

white community activists to demand housing rights from the council.[11] They have argued

that this activism enabled this multi-ethnic locality to rebuild the 'working-class community'

that moved away from the 'traditional' image imposed by post-war social scientists. This

chapter builds on these analyses, demonstrating that the experiences of race and class could

combine to produce forms of community activism among mothers, particularly in the form of

tenants' associations. However, much like Schofield and Jones, it highlights how racism

continued to persist in inner urban areas, which isolated Black mothers from mother-centred

community groups. It shows that race and racism often impeded the construction of an

identifiable and inter-racial working-class community in late twentieth-century Britain.

The conditions of marginalisation and oppression that inner-city mothers faced

produced various forms of community-led activism. This chapter builds on a range of

archival material and testimony to trace the history of motherhood in these areas. In

particular, it draws from the local newsletter published in Moss Side, *Moss Side News,* held at

the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre, as well as the Broadwater Farm

Estate, the *Broadwater Farm Youth Association Newsletter*.[12] Local residents of Moss Side

set up the *Moss Side News* in 1969 to educate the community about the projected plans by the

local authority to demolish large parts of western Moss Side. The paper stopped running once

the demolition went ahead, only to start up again in 1978 for another year to keep the

community up-to-date with local groups events. Meanwhile, the lived experience of inner-

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[10] Connell, *Black Handsworth*.
[11] Camilla Schofield and Ben Jones, '"Whatever Community Is, This Is Not It": Notting Hill and the
Reconstruction of "Race" in Britain after 1958', *Journal of British Studies*, 58 (2019), 142–73 (pp. 151–61).
[12] For the uses of personal testimony, see Introduction.

city motherhood is elucidated through oral history testimony, especially SuAndi's *Strength of our Mothers,* a collection of oral history interviews with white mothers of mixed heritage children based in Manchester.[13]

This chapter focuses on three developments that became an important feature of inner-city mothers' life in late-twentieth-century Britain. It begins by outlining the history of women's involvement in housing and tenants' activist groups. As local councils demolished thousands of homes and constructed cheap, system-built housing that was sometimes susceptible to falling into disrepair, tenants' associations evolved in the late twentieth century and served as the mouthpiece of individual residents unable to cut through the red tape of the local housing department. The second section examines women's involvement in inner-city playgroups, which were set up to account for the lack of play facilities in inner-city areas, while also giving young mothers a break from childcare to shop, carry out chores or to go out to work. The final section examines the role of homosocial maternal group and groupings, such as mother and toddler groups but also parent-centred groups, and the way in which the confessional environment proffered by these spaces centred the female self, while also allowing mothers to form significant bonds with one another.

Housing and tenants' activism

In 1968, Manchester City Council drew up plans to demolish large sections of Moss Side and to replace the rows of Victorian terraced housing with a mixed development of both low- and high-rise housing blocks. Residents of Moss Side knew the social impact that demolition could have on their local area after witnessing the slum demolition of Hulme, which had dispersed families and kinship networks to various overspill estates around Greater

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[13] SuAndi, *Strength of our Mothers* (Manchester: artBlacklive, 2019).

Manchester.[14] In order to make sure the same fate did not befall Moss Siders, local residents

set up the Housing Action Group (HAG) of the Moss Side People's Association (MSPA) to

make sure Manchester City Council heard their views on redevelopment. The Association

was composed of both men and women, but Black women were at the vanguard of the

Association's protest efforts. As noted in this thesis's introduction, Moss Side was a migrant

gateway from the 1950s and in the early 1970s, one third of the population was of Caribbean

descent, housing Manchester's highest concentration of African Caribbean people.[15] In the

decades following the Second World War, Caribbean migrants across Britain were excluded

from the private rental market because of unregulated high rents that landlords placed upon

people of colour. First generation migrants were also excluded from social housing because

of racist allocation procedures that prohibited multi-generational households or shared

households.[16] As a result, the Caribbean community in Moss Side pooled together money in

'pardner' systems, allowing them to buy cheap property of their own. The properties were

dilapidated and in disrepair, but these systems gave space to the creation of robust, self-

sufficient immigrant communities by the late 1960s.

The Black community came under threat in the plans drawn up to redevelop Moss

Side, as Caribbean residents occupied around thirty per cent of the homes scheduled for

demolition.[17] As the homes they owned were of such little value, any compensation by the

state would have been minimal. As such, the local Black community formed the vocal faction

of the HAG offshoot, as they feared that dispersal to overspill estates would break down the

social infrastructure that they had spent years building. One Black HAG member Theresa

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[14] For more on Moss Side redevelopment, see Brown and Cunningham, 'The Inner Geographies'.

[15] 'Happy festival helps race relations', *The Guardian*, 30 May 1972, p. 24; 'City's coloured community moves to its new homes', *The Guardian*, 11 May 1972, p. 7.

[16] For racist allocation procedures, see John Rex and Sally Tomlinson, *Colonial Immigrants in a British City: A Class Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1979); Deborah Phillips, 'The Institutionalization of Racism in Housing: Towards an Explanation', in *New Perspectives on Race and Housing in Britain*, ed. by Susan Smith and John Mercer (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1987), pp. 124–58; For a recent historical account, see Wetherell, '"Redlining" the British City'.

[17] Brown and Cunningham, 'The Inner Geographies', p. 106.

Hooker said to *The Guardian* (the only national newspaper to cover the group): 'it is because of our identity; we are, we want to keep together. In Moss Side, we have our own shops where we can buy our own food…'[18] Similarly, *The Guardian* also noted that 'coloured people [in Moss Side] also wanted their children to go to schools where there were many other children so they would not feel isolated'.[19]

Prior to the involvement of the Black community in HAG, Manchester already had a history of Black activism. The city had played host to the Pan-African Congress in 1945, inviting Pan-African leader Marcus Garvey, as well as activist Amy Ashwood Garvey and local boxer and communist Len Johnson.[20] From the 1950s onwards, Moss Side itself had a contingent of residents tied to Black Power organisations. Coca Clarke, mentioned in the opening of this chapter, was a member of the Black Union and Freedom Party, which was set up by Ron Phillips (see Chapter Two), who came from London to set up a northern base for the national Black Power organisation.[21] This activism enabled local members, such as Clarke and her sister Kathleen Locke, to discover the similar experiences they shared with Moss Side's other Black and minority ethnic residents. As Clarke remembered in an oral history interview, members would meet 'in a doctor's house…we met there and we started discussing and we found that every one of us had the same thing in common. We was black regardless of where we are from'.[22]

Moss Side's Black Power activism was an important introduction for many Black women to become involved in community action, particularly housing activism as it impacted on the migrant community. Yet despite these Black Power origins of HAG, the original

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[18] 'Coloured folk plead for "no dispersal"', *The Guardian*, 29 April 1970, p. 8.
[19] Mark Clapson, 'Working-Class Women's Experiences of Moving to New Housing Estates in England since 1919', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10 (1999), 345–65 (p. 355); Abrams, Kearns, and others, *Glasgow*, p. 73.
[20] Adi, *West Africans in Britain,* pp. 125–28.
[21] Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Archive [AIU], Roots Oral History Collection [ROH], GB3228.7/1, Interview with Coca Clarke, 1982.
[22] Ibid.

argument that demolition would cause damage to the Black community soon faded into the background when HAG began their public protests. As residents of all ethnic backgrounds were involved in the HAG, the primary theme of the group's discourse centred on citizens' rights, rather than Black liberation. Crucially, mothers served as the public face of the tenants' group. In July 1969, Kathleen Locke and other Moss Side mothers, accompanied by their children, presented a petition of 3,000 signatures from local residents to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.[23] Marching through Piccadilly Gardens in Manchester's City Centre, the women delivered the same petition to Alderman Edwards of the Town Planning Committee, as well as to the local Conservative MP Frank Taylor. The petition presented did not oppose redevelopment. In fact, the MSPA welcomed improvements to the area. Their central concern was that the council recognise Moss Siders' rights as long-standing residents and consult them in the process. Many of the protestors were house owners who had bought and made improvements on their houses, and so were unwilling to enter freely into a deal that overlooked their rights.[24] Their petition therefore made two demands: that, if redevelopment were to take place, Moss Siders 'should be consulted about their future and the new Moss Side they would like to see', and also that 'Moss Siders should be allowed to stay in the Moss Side District when it's rebuilt'.[25]

The petition of the Moss Side People's Association spoke to greater changes in Britons' relationship with the state, and their changing identities as 'consumers'. In his study of post-war housing, Peter Shapely has situated tenants' activism within the broader history of British consumerism. He argues that demand for better housing must be understood as an example of residents claiming their rights as individual consumers.[26] The residents positioned

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[23] AIU, Elouise Edwards [EE], GB3228.5/3/42, 'Cities are for people, moors are for sheep', *Moss Side News,* July 1969, 1, p. 6.
[24] 'Coloured folk plead for "no dispersal"'.
[25] 'Housewives present the petition', *Moss Side News*, 1, p. 6.
[26] Shapely, 'Tenants Arise!', p. 64; See also Peter Shapely, *The Politics of Housing*.

themselves in accordance with a post-war 'social consumerist' ideology, built around achieving a fair deal for the public and protecting weak members of the community who would be affected by rehousing.[27] By demanding a consultation about the new Moss Side 'they would like to see', the residents positioned themselves as recipients of public services, entitled as consumers and citizens to a home catered for them. Within the context of the post-war welfare state, the petition was representative of changing assumptions about personal entitlement and individual rights. Moreover, as Locke and others marched through Manchester with their children, the Moss Side women imbued these ideas into their performance of motherhood.

While the contents of the petition itself was a significant act of protest, the delivery of the petition in Piccadilly was also important, serving as an opportunity for the mothers to reconfigure their collective identity as inner-city mothers. As Henry Miller has demonstrated, female suffragist activists and suffragettes were more concerned with the delivery of a petition, rather than the petition itself.[28] Moreover, in her study of seventeenth-century female petitioners, Ann Marie McEntee has argued that the delivery of the petition is a practice in female self-representation.[29] In the face of geographic dispersal and disempowerment, the march through the public thoroughfare of Piccadilly Gardens represented the female petitioners' performance of citizenship and their own claim to ownership of physical space. McEntee has argued that by stipulating their rights as citizens, female petitioners projected self-identities that existed outside of traditional identities of wives and mothers.[30] Similarly, when the Moss Side women were delivering the petition,

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[27] Shapely, 'Tenants Arise!', p. 64.
[28] Henry Miller, 'The British Women's Suffrage Movement and the Practice of Petitioning, 1890-1914', *The Historical Journal*, 64 (2021), 332–56 (p. 339).
[29] Ann Marie McEntee, '"The [Un] Civill-sisterhood of Oranges and Lemons": Female Petitioners and Demonstrators, 1642–53', *Prose Studies*, 14 (1991), 92–111.
[30] Ibid., p. 93.

they were doing so as spokespersons for 'Moss Siders', and as citizens exercising a democratic right to publicly protest.

From the perspective of Black mothers, who were being increasingly edged out of discourses of British nationhood, the march was particularly salient in claims to belonging and citizenship. As several scholars have noted, the 'motherhood mandate' of post-war Britain did not extend to Black women, who, since the colonial period, were deemed by researchers and politicians incapable of possessing maternal qualities.[31] Furthermore, the 1962 and 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Acts had tied together the links between British citizenship and whiteness by restricting immigration from the New Commonwealth and Pakistan.[32] Moreover, in the 1964 general election, Peter Griffiths of the Conservatives gained a seat in Smethwick, based on a campaign during which he pinned the area's economic and housing issues on immigration and the Asian and Pakistani community.[33] Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech in 1968 also fanned the flames of anti-immigration political discourse.[34] However, the language around rights helped to revoke this racist rhetoric. As Grace Redhead has demonstrated, Black healthcare activists in the 1970s and 1980s positioned Black sufferers of sickle cell disease as consumers of the British welfare state, thereby employing the lexicon of British welfare citizenship to gain fair treatment from the NHS.[35] In a similar way, as political legislation and a vocal minority of politicians made concerted and explicit efforts to exclude mothers of colour from discourses of British citizenship, the march through Manchester, which made claims to Black women's housing

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[31] Webster, *Imagining Home*, 119–27; Connell, *Black Handsworth*, 150; Adam Elliott-Cooper, *Black Resistance to British Policing* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), 63.

[32] Nick Kimber, 'Race and Equality', in *Unequal Britain: Equalities in Britain since 1945*, ed. by Pat Thane and Liza Filby (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 29–52 (pp. 34–36).

[33] Rachel Yemm, 'Immigration, Race and Local Media: Smethwick and the 1964 General Election', *Contemporary British History*, 33 (2019), 98–122 (pp. 106–10).

[34] For Powell, see Hirsch, *In the Shadow of Enoch Powel*; Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[35] Grace Redhead, '"A British Problem Affecting British People": Sickle Cell Anaemia, Medical Activism and Race in the National Health Service, 1975–1993', *Twentieth Century British History*, 32.2 (2021), 189–211.

rights as British citizens, enabled them to assert their belonging not simply in Moss Side, but in Britain. Thus as a vocal minority of politicians were excluding migrants of colour from discourses of British citizenship, the march through Manchester, which made claims to Black women's rights as British citizens, enabled them to assert their belonging not simply in Moss Side, but in Britain.

These acts of politicised and defiant modes of motherhood continued into the coverage of the event. For example, Heather Leach, a white mother who took part in the march, wrote a short piece on the event for the local publication *Moss Side News*, which she titled 'Housewives Present the Petition'.[36] While Leach's title is keen to demonstrate that the protestors were all housewives and mothers, her article suggests that they did not conform to traditional gendered identities. For instance, in her article Leach noted that 'a deputation of women (plus one toddler)' presented the petition to the Ministry offices, indicating that while she was a mother, her children were temporarily peripheral, an afterthought, to her identity as a protestor. This relegation of her children was reinforced when Leach commented that, 'there was only two of us, but this time we had two kids to strengthen the forces', suggesting that the women's children were simply an extension of their tools of protest, able to guarantee the expedient delivery of the petition into the hands of the right people.[37] Leach's savvy comment on the effect of her children's presence illustrates her willingness to deploy them as a tool in her larger fight for individual rights. Moreover, it is significant that while joined by their children, the Moss Side women were protesting in the interests of the democratic rights of the community, rather than the protection of their families, marking a change from the mere 'domestic' concerns often associated with older models of urban mothers.

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[36] 'Housewives present the petition', p. 6.
[37] Ibid.

While Black mothers were at the forefront of the MSPA's protests, their racialised identity, at first, appeared subsidiary, almost invisible, in their demands. As Leach's 'Housewives Present the Petition' title suggests, ethnicity played no role in defining the female protestors. Moreover, in an interview with *The Guardian* about the Association from 1971, Locke stated that 'all of us are poor whites or Blacks … we're all still oppressed. Economic discrimination has brought us here together'.[38] Locke collapsed racial signifiers into the language of class to find a sense of allegiance with her white neighbours. This complexity around identity, housing activism, and race is supported by oral history testimony from 1982, in an interview with Clarke. When asked about her involvement, Clarke noted:

> I don't have a lot to say about it, because it was not a Black people's group. It was a multi-racial group consisting of Whites. I don't want to say much because to me it was something we were fighting so that the community would not be split up [sic].[39]

Coca's testimony indicates that while she was aware of her racialised identity at the time of the interview, she saw her participation in the Association as somehow separate from her identity as a woman of colour. Such a finding reinforces some of the nuanced narratives around race and community outlined by Jones and Schofield in their study of post-war Notting Hill, who have argued that common material inequality, particularly in relation to housing, was often the basis for experimental forms of community activism in ethnically diverse areas. [40] Their analysis indicates that Locke and Clarkes' statements are also testimonies to how maternal activism could, if only momentarily, suppress matters of race to forge new patterns of late twentieth-century female solidarity.

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[38] 'Moss Side story', *The Guardian*, 22 May 1971, p. 9.
[39] Interview with Coca Clarke.
[40] Schofield and Jones, '"Whatever Community Is, This Is Not It", p. 173.

Similarly, on the Broadwater Farm Estate in London, we can find Black women using the language of 'ordinariness' to surpass labels of ethnicity. Dolly Kiffin was perhaps one of the most active residents on the council housing estate, and set up a new Broadwater Farm Tenants' group after finding that the pre-existing included members of the National Front.[41] Instead of leveraging manpower to gain repairs from the local authority for the estate, she set up the Broadwater Farm Youth Association (BWFYA), which employed young residents to carry out the repairs, while also setting up a food co-op that would cater for old people on the Estate. In an interview with *Race & Class* in 1987, Kiffin referred to herself as 'an ordinary person'.[42] Claire Langhamer has demonstrated that in the post-war decades, 'ordinariness' came to signify claims to authenticity in the face of the state, experts, and corruption and that it could be used from a position from 'which to mount the collective'.[43] However, Langhamer has also suggested that non-white migrants were not included in this discourse of collective ordinariness. In fact, Kiffin's testimony suggests otherwise, as she weaponised the language of ordinariness to speak on behalf of the Estate. She used the term to position herself as part of a collective opposed to the Haringey council, asserting that 'as ordinary people, we didn't realise that we were stepping on other people's toes' and that the council did not like her 'because we as ordinary people came in and tried to experiment…we put our whole selves into it'.[44] Here Kiffin suggested that their 'whole selves' was framed through being ordinary people, whose race was peripheral to their shared identity as tenants. In this instance, when it came to her tenants' activism, there were no labels of ethnicity, simply ordinariness.

Upon closer examination, it is possible that the women's activism was indeed informed by their Black politics, but they muted this in public discourse to promote solidarity

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[41] Les Levidow, 'Broadwater Farm: A "Criminal Estate"? An Interview with Dolly Kiffin', *Race & Class*, 29 (1987), 77–85 (p. 79).
[42] Ibid., p. 83.
[43] Claire Langhamer, '"Who the Hell Are Ordinary People?" Ordinariness as a Category of Historical Analysis', *Transactions of the RHS*, 28 (2018), 175–95 (p. 194).
[44] Levidow, 'Broadwater Farm', pp. 80 & 83.

with white members of the community, while in turn producing a mode of politics on their own terms. Locke's anti-racist activism was heavily influenced by Marxism, and she even carried out a trip to China in the 1970s with Black female activist Olive Morris to learn more about Communism and its relationship to the anti-racist movement.[45] In a sense the language Locke employed was part of her Black Power politicisation, but this was made invisible in the *Guardian* article. Similarly, Clarke's comment that she did not have a lot to say about HAG 'because it was not a Black people's group' indicates that she felt a greater sense of association with Black Power, rather than housing activism, demonstrating her priorities in her own political outlook. Finally, as shown later in Chapter Four, Kiffin saw herself as Black; she played a prominent role in anti-racist groups and set up her own Civil Rights Movement. In this way, moving beyond categories of race could also demonstrate a mode of freedom, according to the logics of Denise Noble. Noble has demonstrated the way in which moving beyond 'the wounded subject of racist representations and experience in Britain' can be a form of self-development of British-born Black individuals.[46] It could therefore be argued that moving beyond their experiences as Black women and forging a politics of identification with their white neighbours, allowed women such as Locke and Clarke to form an identity that was not 'reactive' to state racism, but constructed on their own terms. Therefore, rather than suggest that housing activism simply suppressed markers of ethnicity among mothers, another more nuanced reading would indicate that Black mothers, while informed by Black anti-racism, selected to adopt the rhetoric around community welfare for the benefit of the housing movement.

Some housing and tenants' groups were less inclusive than the groups in Moss Side and Tottenham. Despite numerous attempts to include local residents of colour, the

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[45] LA, DYROM, Interview with Maria Noble, 2009.
[46] Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom,* p. 66.

Whittington Park Community Association (WPCA) in London was unable to gain traction with the minority ethnic residents of Holloway. The WPCA grew out of a movement to prevent the demolition of a row of houses in the area, and grew to become a successful thriving lobbying housing group, which also ran a community centre. Gentrification had a part to play in the WPCA's growth. As Joe Moran has demonstrated, gentrification started to take root in London's northern districts, like Holloway, from the mid-1950s.[47] Moran's study explored the habits of gentrifiers following the slow trickle of white middle-class young people into London's ailing neighbourhoods, such as Whittington Park. He observed that gentrifiers would often set up community events aimed at producing social cohesion, or organise housing campaigns to conserve traditional Victorian or Edwardian homes marked for demolition. Indeed, the WPCA's initial mission to preserve a local row of houses did not come from the same need as MSPA to preserve a community, but rather from a parallel middle-class tradition of conservationism, which would also lead onto renovation.[48]

The impact of gentrification on racial politics in Britain is starting to receive sustained historical attention.[49] While there are no official figures on the different ethnicities that were members of the WPCA or that visited the Whittington Park Community Centre, newsletters and annual reports indicate that the Association had difficulty in drawing visitors from different ethnic backgrounds, as well as including them on the governing board. In the early 1970s, several funding applications were made by the Association for a local fete, in which they claim they made sure to note that the proposed event would include stalls 'with produce from…the local ethnic groups e.g Greek, African, West Indian foods'.[50] However, in 1983,

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[47] Joe Moran, 'Early Cultures of Gentrification in London, 1955–1980', *Journal of Urban History*, 34 (2007), 101–21.
[48] Moran, 'Early Cultures', pp. 102–6.
[49] Stephen Bentel, 'Limits of Conviviality: Cosmopolitan Convivial Culture, Contact Zones, and Race in Late-Twentieth Century London' (unpublished PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, 2020).
[50] Bishopsgate Institute [BI], Whittington Park Community Association [WPCA], WPCA/1/1, Application for Urban Programme: Holiday Project, 1973, p. 2.

the local newsletter announced that, 'a meeting has been fixed for Thursday 22nd September 8.00 to discuss involving more black people and those from different ethnic groups to use the Centre and its facilities. The meeting is open to all, particularly people from black or ethnic minority groups'.[51] Such an announcement indicates that while employing the language of ethnicity, the Centre was failing to match up its multi-racial rhetoric with a multi-racial centre.

Stephen Bentel's PhD thesis on convivial culture in London has explored how gentrification shaped white gentrifiers engagement with ethnic diversity. His study draws from the white perspective, and thus it remains a challenge to gauge the lived experience of gentrification on Black mothers, particularly in terms of these housing associations. However, an oral history collection collected by the Bishopsgate Institute sheds some light on the subject. Beatrice Coker, a mother of two who migrated from Nigeria to England in 1965, became a member of the WPCA board after moving to the Holloway area in the late 1970s. She remembered that she 'didn't know what was going on there [in the Community Centre]' until she received a leaflet about the AGM in the late 1970s, and attended the meeting:

> I was happy that I came, because those days they were saying they need more board member [sic]…one lady I remember the lady, I forgot her name, it was a white woman…was saying that "Oh Beatrice, what about you? You know? Don't you want to do this, don't you want to do that?" And I said, "okay, I give it a try" and she stood up and put her hand up.[52]

Although this local woman was attempting to include her in the Association, her ethnicity, rather than her name, stood out in Coker's memory. While portraying her feeling of ease at being included in the AGM, ethnicity still played a part in shaping Coker's memory of the

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[51] BI, WPCA, WPCA/4/1, 'Mural/Outside of Building', *Whittington Park Community Newsletter,* 53, September 1983, p. 2.
[52] BI, Bishopsgate Voices [BV], BV/90, Interview with Beatrice Coker, 2013.

event. Thus racial difference and inclusivity seemed to work in unison. However, in this statement Coker portrays the sticky power balance embedded in female inclusivity. While Coker was willing to volunteer her services, the white woman stood up on her behalf during the meeting, thereby muting Coker's own agency in the act. While there is little evidence of these awkward race relations in the Moss Side area, this scenario does suggest that the subjective experiences of the ethnic minority mothers in housing groups was affected by their interaction with local white women.

Back in Manchester, the Council eventually demolished large parts of western Moss Side, replacing the terraced streets with new housing estates by the mid-1970s with little consultation with the residents. Failing to provide adequate compensation to former owner-occupiers, the Council rehoused these residents in local authority housing in Moss Side or Hulme, making them tenants of the state. However, within a few years of completion, Manchester City Council neglected the management of Moss Side's new council housing stock. In 1974 the Neighbourhood Council, a group comprised of tenants' associations from social housing estates in both Moss Side and Hulme, carried out a survey of the conditions of the housing. The Neighbourhood Council found that 41 per cent of maisonettes in the new Moss Side District Centre housing estate (completed in 1971) had bugs, 32 per cent had beetles while 83 per cent had mice.[53] The Neighbourhood Council demanded that the local authority take action, but there was little success. As a result, on 8 October 1974, eighty parents, along with their children, occupied a newly completed council home on Quinney Crescent in Moss Side.

While men participated in the protest, the press chose to position women at the forefront, lending to the public construction of an urban maternal identity. A photograph of the event printed in *The Guardian* (Figure 1.1) portrayed women at the helm of the protest,

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[53] Family Advice Centre, *The FAC Book*, p. 10.

featuring two women looking out of the tiny window of the occupied council home holding a sign that read, 'homes not hovels'. Unlike the feminist, lesbian, and gay squats of the 1970s that Matt Cook and Christine Wall have examined, the women's signs alluded to their traditional concerns with the home, rather the wish to forge radical alternative living arrangements. Again, this stemmed from similar rhetoric adopted in the rent strikes of the earlier part on the twentieth century, in which working-class women made demands for 'decent' housing in which to care for their family. The demands for acceptable housing standards fed into the Association's previous demands for equal and fair treatment under the eyes of the state, which imbued these women's collective identity as mothers with broader democratic concerns.

PROTEST: Squatters from the Moss Side District Centre, Manchester, who have taken over a new council house.

Figure 1.1: 'PROTEST: Squatters from the Moss Side District Centre', *The Guardian*, 14

October 1974, p. 8.

The occupation was a success: on the 15 October, the Council finally approved an extermination scheme to rid the homes of pests. However, shortly after the Neighbourhood Council withdrew from the occupation of Quinney Crescent, sixty women carried out their own march with their children and prams, blocking the busy Moss Lane East during rush hour to protest over the poor condition of the maisonettes.[54] The use of prams was a method

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[54] Family Advice Centre, *The FAC Book,* p. 13.

used elsewhere by mothers living on newly developed housing estates. In 1970, a group of

mothers from Wansford, Cheshire had also marched into the town centre with their prams to

protest fire hazards on a new housing estate.[55] Pram marches, which Black women led

alongside white mothers, fractured traditional practices of working-class motherhood. Prams

had symbolic functions, serving as a visual and material device that turned the women into

'mothers', and as such they became a literal defence mechanism against violence from the

state or frustrated motorists. In this way, rather than facilitating a mundane liminal

performance that usually lacked significance, the prams imbued an embodied everyday

activity with renewed political meaning. Similar situations were mirrored through the

construction of play streets, as Krista Cowman has also explored, with mothers in urban areas

barricading their streets to protect their children's right to play, turning traditional street

minding into a political act.[56] The use of these objects in such a way challenged the notion

that these particular residents of Moss Side and Hulme were just mothers, but citizens

protecting their rights.

Housing as a basis for political action for inner-city mothers was not new. However,

by the 1970s, Black working-class mothers began deploying the same methods of protest and

language of white working-class housing activists of previous decades, which enabled them

to forge solidarities with their white counter-parts in housing and tenants groups. It also

enabled them to be equally assertive as white mothers in making demands for her family, and

the locality. Black women spoke about their housing activism through the rhetoric of class

demonstrating how housing activism could be the basis for inter-racial community solidarity.

And yet Black women's in housing politics was still closely defined by their involvement in

Black Power movements and anti-racism activism. In that way, the language of equality and

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[55] 'Housewives protest at fire risks', *The Guardian,* 16 June 1970, p. 6.
[56] Cowman, 'Play Streets'.

democracy that penetrated housing activism served two-fold for Black mothers, also enabling them to highlight, albeit implicitly, their rights as Black citizens and mothers in Britain. In this way, they enabled their class status, rather than ethnicity, to draw them into solidaristic relationships with white women. However, there was the potential for racial disparities in maternal activism to occur. The next two sections will explore further how mother-centred organisations had the potential to create racial fissures within working-class motherhood.

Playgroups and childcare

Urban regeneration, colonial migration, and deindustrialisation intersected to have significant repercussions for mothers' childcare practices by the 1970s. Firstly, slum demolition eradicated typical forms of child's street play, which removed the close living quarters that enabled them to rely on other mums for informal childcare arrangements, such as street-watching, while they went to work. Secondly, as Caribbean women migrated to Britain for work, they were often separated from their kinship network who provided childcare support. Moreover, as Tracey Reynolds has shown, due to cultural differences in household structures in the Caribbean, Black families in Britain tended to be matri-focal and it was common to see Black mothers in single-parent households in Britain.[57] Finally, as the manufacturing sector fell into decline, many inner-city mothers needed to gain new skills and qualifications to enter the growing service sector. In 1971, 14 per cent of economically active women in Moss Side were unskilled manual workers and 21 per cent were semi-skilled workers, compared to 11 per cent and 16 per cent of the county as a whole respectively.[58] These three factors combined to make the need for childcare particularly acute among inner-city mothers.

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[57] Reynolds, 'Mothering and the Family', pp. 108–10.
[58] UK Data Service, 1971 Census aggregate data <http://dx.doi.org/10.5257/census/aggregate-1971-1> [accessed 7 July 2021].

This need for childcare in Moss Side and Hulme was demonstrated in a television broadcast from the late 1970s. In 1978, the ITV magazine programme *World in Action* visited the Hulme Crescents. 'No Place like Hulme' examined the dilapidated housing estate, opening with the bold statement that, 'it's not necessary to go as far as South Africa to observe the reality of second-class citizenship'.[59] The show featured a segment on one white mother, following her as she struggled to carry her shopping trolley and baby up several flights of stairs. Walking along her balcony, she was asked about the dangers of high-rise living for children. Talking directly into the camera, she gestured towards to the balcony ledge, 'well, they put their feet on there, and their hands on there and try to look over. And if you look over yourself, look at what a drop it is'. It is unsurprising that the mother was concerned for her child's safety considering a young child had only recently fallen to his death from the fifth-floor balcony of the Crescents.[60] There was no playground on the Crescents, and the balconies provided the only source of play space for young children. Similarly, in neighbouring Moss Side, the erection of the Monton Street Estate in the early 1970s also stoked anger among residents about the limited play facilities. Local mother Alice Evans articulated her frustration in the local newsletter *Moss Side News:* 'One fault of the estate is that, although building family houses, they did not consider the children…there is not one play area anywhere on the estate'.[61] In 1974, Evans, along with her husband, eventually set up a play-scheme for local children in the area.

Mothers commonly complained about the lack of play space on housing estates in the post-war period. As Valerie Wright et al. have shown, the home-centred disposition of post-war Britain pushed child's play indoors.[62] However, indoor play was a rarity for inner-city

[59] *World in Action,* 'No place like Hulme' (ITV, 1978).
[60] Family Advice Centre, *The FAC Book,* p. 13.
[61] AIU, EE, GB3228.5/3/56, 'Monton Street Estate', *Moss Side News*, June 1978, p. 7.
[62] Valerie Wright and others, 'Planning for Play: Seventy Years of Ineffective Public Policy? The Example of Glasgow, Scotland', *Planning Perspectives*, 34.2 (2019), 243–63 (244).

children living in flats or smaller homes, and at the same time, the rise of urban traffic and the demolition of cloistered streets in industrial cities impeded their ability to play outdoors.[63] In their rush to build homes during the housing shortage of the post-war years, urban planners did not always factor this cultural and environmental juxtaposition into their designs, and failed to provide play space for children living on housing estates. White working-class mothers took it upon themselves to set up playgroups to provide much needed play space for their children. For instance, when Judy Walker set up a playgroup on the Hillfields Estate in Coventry in the 1970s, she did so because of the lack of play facilities offered to the children on the new estate. When looking back on her time as a mother and playgroup leader, Walker reflected 'so, so all my life, it's been about kids, that's been my motivation in life, is kids'.[64] As Matthew Thomson has demonstrated, the concern for child's play and safety outdoors in the post-war period extension from 'the post-war focus on the importance of mothering and provision of a secure, loving home', as such, the provision of a safe place for child's play in the form of playgroups became an important aspect of mothering in itself.[65] Walker defined her play work as largely a form of self-sacrificial maternalism, placing her own story outside of mothering in the background. In this way, she was similar to the white working-class mothers in Lancashire studied by Elizabeth Roberts in the 1970s, who were considered 'mothers first and workers second'.[66]

This sense of self-sacrifice is present in the testimony of Black mothers who also set up childcare groups. For example, in the early 1980s, Dolly Kiffin set up the Willan Road Day Centre on the Broadwater Farm Estate to account for the lack of play facilities in the

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[63] Cowman, 'Play Streets', 248.
[64] UK Data Service, Coventry and Liverpool Lives Oral History Collection, c.1945-1970, http://dx.doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-7485-1, [accessed: February 2019], Interview 7485.
[65] Mathew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 148.
[66] Roberts, *Women and Families: An Oral History, 1940-1970*, 139.

area.[67] In her role as local community activist, Kiffin prided herself on her title as 'the mother' of the local area, a nomenclature that indicated her awareness of her exceptional status on the Farm.[68] In *Keeper of the Dream,* Kiffin's biographer emphasised her role as the community mother as a way to elevate her activism and become a marginal celebrity in her own life story, demonstrated further by the fact that she commissioned a biography about herself.[69] Connell has argued that the societal stigma against Black mothers meant that they would draw upon their own modes of self-expression, such as the decoration of their front room, to reject cultural narratives that demonised Black motherhood. In relation to Kiffin, her self-commissioned biography is a testimony to the ways in which child-centred groups opened up new avenues for self-exploration among migrant mothers and enabled them to challenge racist narratives of Black motherhood and to showcase their maternal qualities.

It is once again important to trace the Black Power origins to many of these groups. For example, the Manchester Black Women's Co-Operative was a skills training project set up in Moss Side in 1975 to equip unqualified Black mothers with office skills so they could re-enter the workforce. Many Black mothers needed to re-train, and local skills training schemes provided childcare as an incentive to get women to attend. As explored in Chapter Two, the MBWC received funding from the George Jackson Housing Trust, set up by Manchester's BUFP leader, Ron Philips, to help house homeless Black families. Similarly, the occupation explored in this chapter's opening was led by members of the United Coloured People's Association (UCPA), another Black Power group based in Moss Side. Indeed, the newspaper article that covered the event in *Moss Side News* titled the incident, 'Black Militants start a People's Nursery'.[70] In this sense, playgroups started by Black

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[67] Lord Gifford, p. 28.
[68] Williams, *Keeper of the Dream*, p. 1.
[69] Ibid.
[70] 'Black Militants start a nursery', p. 1.

mothers, while catering for children of all ethnicities, could be important modes of anti-racist organising.

While rooted in Black Power, many childcare groups set up by Black women were also an afterthought to the more pressing project of providing inner-city mothers with career mobility and some form of financial independence. For mothers in Moss Side and Hulme, playgroups in the mid-1970s became indispensable tools in the fight against racialised unemployment in the area. The deindustrialisation of Britain's northern manufacturing towns meant that mothers in inner-city Manchester, who had often relied on factory-line work in the textile or packaging industries, did not hold the secretarial skills necessary to enter the flourishing sector of clerical, white-collar work.[71] For instance, the MBWC's scheme, noted above, 'catered for the children while their mothers attended classes', indicating that the childcare was geared towards the professional mobility of the mother, as well as the child.[72] Observers often recognised the benefits of a nursery or playgroup to a mother's professional development after the establishment of a childcare scheme. After Kiffin set up the Willan Road Day Centre on the Broadwater Farm Estate, she and her fellow organisers only realised afterwards that the facility 'has givern [sic] quite a few mothers the chance to go to work, which they could not do before'.[73] Child-centred groups opened up professional avenues to Black women, to alleviate their racialised poverty and give them greater control over their livelihoods.

It is important to be sensitive to the complexities around female autonomy and working motherhood. The professional independence bolstered by playgroups was not necessarily a positive by-product of these childcare schemes. I have already outlined the

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[71] Vincent S. Walsh, 'The Social Life of Hulme : Politics and Protest in an Inner City Housing Estate' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Manchester, 1993), p. 40.
[72] AIU, EE, GB3228.5/4/16, Abasindi Co-Operative Booklet, n.d, p. 4.
[73] George Padmore Institute [GPI], Black Parents Movement [BPM], BPM/7/1/6/2, *Broadwater Review*, 1, 1984, p. 14.

scholarship of Patricia Hill Collins in relation to her concept of 'othermothering', a term developed to encompass the cooperative childcare roles that Black women take in their community as part of the fight against racialised oppression.[74] However, not only has Collins been influential in developing Black feminist theories around motherhood, but she has also challenged ethnocentric feminist theories around the subject. In her scholarship on ethnic motherhood, Collins has suggested that what may seem liberatory for white, middle-class mothers may not be so for women of colour.[75] She noted that white feminists' early theorization of motherhood has often emphasised the patriarchal culture of the home, suggesting that female liberation from this environment came in the pursuit of professional work. However, as Collins has gone on to note, Black women have rarely sought liberation in labour, where they are exploited and separated from their children for long periods. In turn, she has suggested that 'rather than adding racial ethnic women's experiences to pre-existing feminist theories', it is important to consider 'how these experiences challenge those theories'.[76]

Collins' theorization forces historians of post-war womanhood to re-examine the effectiveness of childcare in Britain's inner cities in transforming the experience of motherhood from an intersectional perspective. For example, the two schemes described above were designed specifically for Black mothers, who were some of the most financially dependent individuals living in Britain's cities. In some areas Black women earned six per cent less than white women did, and thus racist wage differences and insufficient support networks made working motherhood a necessity for Black mothers.[77] In the account of her stay in Handsworth, Birmingham, travel writer Dervla Murphy painted a picture of the

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[74] Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, pp. 178–83.
[75] Collins, 'Shifting the Center', p. 47.
[76] Ibid, p. 48.
[77] Haringey Search Rooms [HSE], Urban Development, 925.3, Deborah de Lange, 'The Gender Comment: gender implications of reports to the Housing Committee, Policy Research and Information Papers', 1, *London Borough of Haringey Comprehensive Housing Service*, 1984, p. 7.

'exhausted' Black mother, leaving her children at a nursery or with friends, and returning

from 'the end of a long, hard day's work and in no mood for individual dialogue'.[78]

Similarly, in *Heart of the Race*, one mother contributed her own memories of working

motherhood as a Black woman:

> I had to leave the child between 7.30 and 5.30 every day. That meant I didn't spend
>
> much time with him at all ... I can remember when all three children were talking to
>
> me at once, each one trying to get my attention. They needed me, but although i was
>
> listening to them, my mind was on rushing off to work.[79]

The sense of self-sufficiency and personal growth that work provided white working-class

mothers, as explored by Laura Paterson, often reinforced the racialised system of inequality

for Black mothers in Britain, and thus produced alternative experiences of mothering.[80]

Instead, as Noble has also argued, for Black women pursuing independence could be a

double-edge sword that bound them to societal structures of discrimination.[81] For many

African Caribbean inner-city mothers, improving the professional and personal self was

simply a method of survival.

Alongside giving them the opportunity for professional development, the playgroups

in inner-city areas attracted Black mothers by also affording them time to carry out domestic

chores without being hampered by children. Moss Side People's Nursery marketed itself on

allowing 'mums…the chance to do a bit of shopping or tidy the house'.[82] Similarly, in oral

history testimony from London, Black women also noted that childcare groups made

shopping alone possible. Valerie Bonsu, who moved from Ghana to the Woodberry Down

Estate in Hackney in 1979, praised the mother-led crèche because 'you…can go and do your

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[78] Dervla Murphy, *Tales from Two Cities : Travel of Another Sort* (London: John Murray Ltd, 1987), p. 208.
[79] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, p. 29.
[80] Paterson, '"I Didn't Feel like My Own Person"', 418–20.
[81] Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom,* pp. 118–21.
[82] 'Black militants start a people's nursery', p. 5.

shopping and come back'.[83] In her study of urban redevelopment, Charlotte Wildman has explored how the act of shopping allowed working-class women in interwar Britain to escape domestic drudgery and to perform an aspirational model of womanhood, to become someone else.[84] She has suggested that walking through town and shop window gazing allowed women to imagine being someone else when they shopped and in turn the act 'offered new opportunities to imagine and perform different selfhoods'.[85] While Bonsu saw playgroups as catering to her busy life as a mum, her comment that she could 'come back' suggests that the crèche also allowed her to relinquish motherhood, if only temporarily. By allowing Bonsu to go and come back to being a mother through the act of shopping, the crèche gave her the opportunity to fashion a different sense of self that was set on her own time.

It is never clear within this discourse whether the act of shopping was for the mother to buy items for herself, or for the family and domestic household. The fact that shopping was the only viable reason why mothers would want time away from her child suggests that maternal autonomy was only acceptable if mothers still fulfilled their gendered role as consumers. This stipulation also ties in with Dolly Smith Wilson's argument that in the post-war decades, mothers from all classes could only explain their employment in terms of benefitting the family.[86] Black mothers in inner-city areas could not yet fully articulate a desire for maternal independence in the form of self-care or rest and relaxation. Regardless of this ambiguity, the way in which shopping was considered an act best done alone still demonstrates that mothers sought out, perhaps even enjoyed, time away from their children, and time to themselves.

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[83] Hidden Histories Archive [HHA], Woodberry Down Oral History Project [WDOHP], Anonymised Interview 2013_ESCH_WDPS_03, 2013.

[84] Wildman, *Urban Redevelopment and Modernity*, pp. 113–27.

[85] Ibid., p. 126.

[86] Dolly Smith Wilson, 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker: The Good Working Mother in Post-War Britain', p. 228.

By giving local mothers the time and space to shop, playgroups and crèches in Moss Side and Hulme also facilitated the emotional separation between mother and child, allowing women to disengage from their identity as mothers. Playgroups gave respite from the emotions expected from, and indeed experienced through, mothering. As well as allowing mothers to shop, the Moss Side People's Nursery noted that it gave mums time alone 'without having to worry about junior'.[87] Thus while the emotional detachment from the child was merely to direct the mother's attention to the home, it still provided the local mothers with the mental distance to nurture their own emotional experiences that were not directly related to the concerns of childcare. Similarly, simply by bringing mothers into contact with one another, playgroups allowed mothers to form friendships that reduced their loneliness. In an Inner London Education Authority report on playgroups in Hackney and Tower Hamlets, it was noted that 'mothers involved in playgroups frequently remark on the pleasure they get from the companionship of the friends they have made for themselves within the playgroup', alleviating the 'lonely, frustrating, and confusing' aspects of mothering'.[88]

It is worth thinking here about how being free from the dependency of children, and being able to pursue one's own interests, correlates with the work of Black British feminist Denise Noble. In her analysis of freedom, she argued that independence for Black Caribbean women in Britain meant sovereignty in the form of self-determination, and that autonomy meant non-interference with a 'woman's self-determining will'.[89] While the women Noble interviewed for her study were all mothers, they defined freedom through a discourse that was extracted from their maternal identities. This form of independence, Noble then argued, was defined by not allowing one's ideas 'to be controlled by particular forms of external

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[87] 'Black militants start a people's nursery', p. 5.
[88] Inner London Pre-School Playgroups Association, *Playgroups: A Shared Adventure* (London: Inner London PPA, 1976), p. 29.
[89] Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom,* p. 112.

authority', particularly the societal and institutional power of white men.[90] Similarly, for Black mothers in Britain, childcare enabled to practise a form of freedom, autonomy, and independent mindedness on their own terms, that shifted away from the deviant images and regulations that were imposed upon Black women. In this way, their maternal practice was a mode of political resistance, as well as mode of Black British female self-fashioning.

Emotional freedom did not necessarily come from collective childcare, and personal childcare arrangements with friends allowed other inner-city mothers emotional liberation. For instance, when white Moss Side mother Ellen Forrester's husband died in the 1970s, she asked her friend to take care of her children:

> I thought, I might as well instead of just sitting around the place. My friend Pat who had been my only support after I lost Jimmy, agreed to look after my boys Ryan and Kieran. She got a little bit of money and I knew the kids would be alright. I went back to work as it gave me something to do, *to take my mind off things*.[91]

Rather than choosing to work to provide extra income for her family, Forrester's decision to work derived from her need for psychological respite from mothering and its associations with her husband's death. While there is evidence of working-class mothers wanting to work for 'extras', historically only middle-class mothers have been represented as having the cultural capital to be able to articulate the need to work for psychological well-being.[92] In fact, Forrester's testimony demonstrates that inner-city mothers were equally capable of performing maternal emotional distancing in the form of work.

Private childcare arrangements were particularly common among Black mothers in Britain due to their need to work full-time, and their separation from traditional kinship structures due to migration. Dervla Murphy drew attention to the popularity of the practice in

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[90] Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom,* p. 113.
[91] SuAndi, *Strength of our Mothers*, p. 45. Emphasis added.
[92] McCarthy, *Double Lives*, p. 311.

Handsworth. Murphy followed a young Black woman, simply called 'Gerry's niece', who was one example of the many unlicensed childminders in the area who looked after those children who could not get into state nurseries.[93] Similarly, in his popular anthropological study of a housing estate in Southwark carried out in the 1980s, *The People of Providence* (1996), Tony Parker followed Barbara, a seventeen-year-old white resident who looked after the children of her Jamaican and Guyanese neighbours, Hazel and Gloria.[94] These practices are demonstrative of Collins' 'othermothering' concept, with women attending to cooperative childcare arrangements in order to remedy the economic discrimination and structural injustices that required Black women to work longer hours than white women. Not only do these arrangements illustrate the operation of diasporic mothering practices in inner-city Britain, but the way in which these global practices weaved into the lives of white women.

Not all inner-city mothers could adopt a form of motherhood on one's own terms was not an opportunity for all mothers in urban areas. SuAndi's collection of oral history interviews with white mothers of dual heritage children has shed light on how racial and sexual politics impeded on some mothers' ability to perform absolute ownership over her maternal choices.[95] The following extract from Ann Horan, who was of dual heritage, about her white mother Margaret demonstrates this complexity:

> She was going to work, and I caught the bus with her...We were sat together on the
> long back seats. As her stop was coming up these guys came down the stairs and
> immediately, I saw my Mum turn away from me and look out the back window… I
> said, "What are you doing" she said, "Nothing, nothing". I said, "This is your stop"
> she said, "Oh leave it" and she didn't get off. It hit me like a ton of bricks… I
> confronted her "You were ashamed of me – you are ashamed – did those lads work at

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[93] Murphy, *Tales from Two Cities,* p. 208.
[94] Tony Parker and Clare Vaughan, *The People of Providence : A Housing Estate and Some of Its Inhabitants* (London: Eland Publishing, 2011), p. 249.
[95] SuAndi, *Strength of our Mothers*.

Schon Brothers?" She said "Yeah". I said, "They don't know that you have got a

Black daughter, do they?" and she said, "No because there is a lot of racism within the

company, you know comments from the workers, not from the Jewish owners but

from the workers". She said, "and I didn't want to face it" and I understood. [96]

While the story is told through her daughter, Horan's narrative reflects the limitations of

pursuing one's authentic self in areas of mixed social demographic when tolerance towards

racialised outsiders was still low. Despite Moss Side having a large African Caribbean

population, access to white women's bodies was still provided on racial terms. Inter-racial

relationships in Moss Side in the 1970s remained stigmatised, with white mothers often

enduring most of this stigma. Thus, even for white mothers, performing ownership over

individual choices was inhibited when their sexuality was called into question.

As it stands, the literature on white mothers of dual heritage children in inner-city

areas is slim, however, Lucy Bland's *Britain's 'Brown Babies': The Stories of Children Born

to Black GIs and White Women in the Second World War* (2019) does shed some light on the

subject. While her study focuses largely on the experiences of the children to Black GI

soldiers, she does offer fragments of insight into the experiences of the white mothers in the

1940s and 1950s. She has demonstrated that white mothers were often ostracised from their

family and community for mothering the babies of Black men or would be encouraged to

give up their children altogether.[97] Similarly, as SuAndi's collection of oral history interviews

has demonstrated, white mothers to dual heritage children in Manchester in the 1960s and

1970s also faced familial struggles. For instance, the aunt of Estelle Longmore 'couldn't sit at

the table and have a meal with [Jamaican-born husband] Wyllie, because she didn't know

how to speak to him'.[98] The experience of white mothers to dual heritage children still needs

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[96] SuAndi, *Strength of our Mothers*, pp. 99–100.

[97] Lucy Bland, *Britain's 'Brown Babies': The Stories of Children Born to Black GIs and White Women in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), chap. 2.

[98] SuAndi, *Strength of our Mothers*, p. 54.

greater historical attention, but the interviews collected by SuAndi (herself a daughter of a white woman) indicates the fracturing of maternal experiences by ethnicity and societal attitudes around race.

The playgroups and childcare arrangements explored in this section were often short-lived, usually only surviving for as long as the founding mothers needed them. However, regardless of their longevity, playgroups and childcare groups enabled working-class mothers of all ethnicities in the late twentieth century to explore and practice different modes of motherhood. This motherhood took on an autonomous nature, in which women could pursue her sense of self outside of mothering in the form of financial mobility, time on her own, and emotional distance from her child. Often Black mothers were at the forefront of this mode of motherhood, responding the racialised nature of unemployment that exacerbated the need for children. However, race also drew limits to these outcomes: childcare groups could often uphold discriminatory practices of labour among Britain's racialised minorities. Ethnicity determined the benefits of childcare for working-class working mothers in paid employment. As the next section will demonstrate, racism itself served to isolate some Black women from modes of working-class maternal self-reflection and community derived from mother-centred groups.

Maternal Groupings

Playgroups proliferated across Britain's cities, but they did not meet the needs of all mothers. Below is an extract from a 1976 report by the PPA on inner London playgroups:

> Life for a young woman with a baby or toddler, or with both is often lonely,
> frustrating, and confusing. She misses desperately the hour by hour companionship
> she was accustomed to at school and then at work, and in the place of her

contemporaries she has a puzzling, demanding, and ever-present infant requiring ceaseless vigilance…Mothers involved in playgroup frequently remark on the pleasure they get from the companionship of the friends they have made for themselves within the playgroup. They see these friends with their own children and learn from each other about childcare and the value of play. *Most of the mothers wait three whole years for this*.[99]

This observation from the PPA attests to the increasing awareness in the early 1970s among professional play organisations of the isolation experienced by women in the first years of motherhood. During these years, toddlers were too young to attend pre-school playgroups, which usually catered for children over the age of three while also allowing mothers to interact with one another. There were few homosocial settings like playgroups that catered for mothers with newborn babies. This section will examine the importance of mother-centred groups in shaping the experience of mothers in inner-city areas.

Mother and toddler groups in Moss Side evolved in tandem to the urban redevelopment programme of the 1970s, as a means of negating the deleterious effects of the new housing estates on women's social lives and were essential to mothers in combatting the social isolation that derived from inner-city living. These mothers' groups were especially important for women of African and Caribbean descent, who were statistically more likely to be lone mothers separated from partners and families due to migration and different cultural attitudes towards marriage.[100] Themes of loneliness are prevalent among testimonies from Black women. One mother who contributed to *Heart of the Race,* remembered: 'I had no social life outside of work. After the children came, I took them to church and two of them were in the choir. The only other social life was at weddings or christenings'.[101] Furthermore,

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[99] Inner London Pre-School Playgroups Association, *A Shared Adventure,* p. 29. Emphasis added.
[100] Pauline Davies, *Trapped! Unmarried West Indian Mothers in Handsworth*, Papers on Community and Youth Work (Birmingham: Westhill College, Department of Community and Youth Work, 1983), p. 19.
[101] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *Heart of the Race,* p. 32.

a mother and toddler group based in the Hideaway Youth Project in Moss Side in the 1980s arose out of 'an expressed need' by Black single women who were isolated from wider family support structures.[102] These mother and toddler groups appealed to mothers because they recognised, and legitimised, their need for social interaction and to relinquish, whether knowingly or not, the identity of the 'selfless mother' that was valued in popular culture. These groups actively encouraged this form of maternal self-centredness. A local report on the Moss Side group reported that 'it [the group] has encouraged parents to … take part in activities organised by, and *for them*'.[103] Considering the vilification and fears around lone Black mothers during the 1970s, who were seen as harbingers of social disorder among young Black men, the acknowledgement that lone Black mothers would and should receive personal satisfaction from the group demonstrated an attempt to undermine the pathologisation of lone motherhood from within inner-city community groups.[104]

Once again, Noble's insight is vital here. The need for Black mothers in Moss Side to be self-determining, to choose and organise an activity, around their needs, correlates to Noble's notion that Black British women value most their own independence and autonomy. This valorisation does not, she has also suggested, mean sacrificing her maternal role or responsibility. Instead, she suggested that being independent and self-governing was a valued and traditional mode of Black mothering stemming back to the Caribbean family structures and was a response to social hostility Caribbean mothers have faced both in imperial and post-colonial periods.[105] Thus, these groups set up by Black women indicate a mode of working-class maternal independence stemming from the racial formations of the British imperial project, not merely their everyday inner-city realities.

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[102] AIU, EE, GB3228.5/4/23, *Hideaway Youth Project Annual Report,* 1988, p. 6.
[103] Ibid. Emphasis added.
[104] Elliott-Cooper, *Black Resistance to British policing,* 68–70.
[105] Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom,* p. 125.

Not all Black mothers found solace in mother and toddler groups. In *A Troubled Area: Notes on Notting Hill* (1964)*,* Jephcott drew attention to the isolation of working Caribbean mothers in Notting Hill, in particular noting the hostile attitudes from local white mothers towards them.[106] Racism played an important role in keeping mothers separate in these homosocial spaces. From this time, popular discourse villainised and scrutinised the Black mother. In his 'Rivers of Blood' speech, Powell ignited fears about Black and South Asian mothers being drains on the country's welfare resources.[107] As Jordanna Bailkin has also noted, social and medical researchers pathologised African student mothers for their inability to adhere to Bowlybist norms of parental care and resorting to sending their children into foster care while they underwent their training.[108] Women who were not white or English, such as the Irish, represented a danger to the economic, political, and social infrastructure of post-war Britain.

These cultural attitudes towards Black mothers affected the social dynamics within mother and toddler groups. When discussing access to welfare support, Jean Darlington, who lived on an estate in inner-city Birmingham, remarked that, 'if I'd have come over on a so-and-so banana boat, I'd have it handed to me on a plate'.[109] Incidentally, Darlington ran the Estate's mother and toddler group, but her overt racism prevented Beryl Ferguson, a Caribbean neighbour, from attending. 'Now I've been to the mother and toddlers here and they don't even talk to you', Beryl noted, 'and then they wonder why you don't go back'.[110] While Ferguson never experienced direct racial abuse from Darlington, her identity as a Black woman affected her ability to participate in the confessional culture that forged

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[106] Pearl Jephcott, *A Troubled Area: Notes on Notting Hill* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), pp. 91–92.
[107] Sally Tomlinson, 'Enoch Powell, Empires, Immigrants and Education', *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 21 (2018), 1–14 (p. 5).
[108] Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire*, chap. 5.
[109] UK Data Service, Ethnic Relations on West Midland Housing Estates, 1983-1984, <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-4846-1> [accessed 4 February 2019], Interview 053, n.d.
[110] Ethnic Relations on West Midland Housing Estates, Interview 143, n.d.

belonging in mother and toddler groups. Thus, whether relationships between Black and white women were fraught or fruitful, race and gender worked together to determine their experience of motherhood.

Indeed, the result of this racialised segregation of mothers' groups was addressed through the growth of Black women's centres (see Chapter Two), and other women's centres that catered exclusively for minority ethnic mothers. Black women's centres were for African Caribbean mothers to find a sense of belonging in their local area. For instance, the Haringey Black Women's Centre in London provided cultural activities such as dancing, as well as educational classes on Black women's health and history. Mothers would often leave their children in the Centre's crèche to take part in the services offered by the centre, but the Centre itself never marketed itself as a nursery or mother and toddler group. Similarly, in 1980 the Abasindi Cooperative was opened in an old school in Moss Side providing a range of services for Black women living in the area. These services included dance and music lessons, welfare support, and immigration advice. Abasindi also offered a hair-braiding service and sold traditional African clothing to Black women in the local area. As a hub of activity that catered for both the practical and social needs of Black women in Moss Side, mothers would often bring their children to Abasindi while they took part in whatever activity the cooperative had to offer. In their book charting the history of Abasindi, Diana Watt and Adele Jones have noted how 'it was common to see a swollen-bellied woman in her seventh or eighth month of pregnancy wedged behind a bongo drum'.[111] By never framing their activities and praxis explicitly towards the needs of mothers, these centres promoted a Black female identity independent of motherhood. By the same merit, the homosocial rituals, such as hair braiding, were practices that brought women together into a community that was built

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[111] Diana Watt and Adele D. Jones, *Catching Hell and Doing Well : Black Women in the UK – the Abasindi Cooperative* (London: Institute of Education Press, 2015), p. 60.

on the cultural symbols of their African Caribbean heritage. Thus while Black women faced exclusion from some mothers' groups, Black women's centres were places that centred the cultural specificities of their Black maternal experience.

As *Heart of the Race* attests, activism and organising was at the heart of many of Black British women's experiences of motherhood. Other forms of Black maternal groupings took the form of education activism in the shape of the Supplementary School Movement and the Black Parents Movement (BPM), the latter of which was set up in 1976 to challenge racism in British schools and racist policing of young Black people, and had chapters all across Britain.[112] The core value of the BPM, according to Adam Elliott-Cooper, was that the family was 'an important site for Black struggle against policing', and therefore the BPM was made of parents seeking justice for their over-policed and over-monitored children.[113] Naturally, the impact of racist policing and schooling of young Black children impacted on Black inner-city mother's experience of motherhood. For instance, Kathleen Locke's 12-year-old son Stephen was arrested by the police in 1979 after an incident occurred involving students from various local high schools.[114] The establishment of the Stephen Locke Defence Committee, with Locke at the helm, demanded that charges are dropped, that the schools be made accountable, and that 'the police stop harassing black people'.[115] The experience of Locke not merely demonstrates, firstly, that racism determined Black women's everyday experiences of motherhood, but that groups such as the BPM enabled Black parents, not simply mothers, to unite in their shared experiences in the same way that mother and toddler groups did.

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[112] For supplementary schools, see Kehinde Andrews, *Resisting Racism : Race, Inequality, and the Black Supplementary School Movement* (London: Institute of Education Press, 2013); Elliott-Cooper, p. 34.
[113] Elliott-Cooper, *Black Resistance to British Policing,* p. 34.
[114] GPI, BPM, BPM/3/2/3/9, 'Press statement – schools join police in terrorising school students: no bogus charges against Stephen Locke', c. 1980, pp. 1-2.
[115] Ibid., p. 2. Unfortunately, due to access to archives I was unable to find out how Locke's case proceeded.

Black mothers also took a key role in organising Saturday and Supplementary Schools. As scholars such as Kehinde Andrews, Heidi Mirza, and Jessica Gerrard have documented, these schools were set up to counter-act the inferior schooling of young Black children, who were faced with targeted abuse in class and were more likely to be classed as 'Educationally Sub-Normal' by their teachers.[116] Following the publication of Bernard Coard's report, titled 'How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Sub-Normal in the British Education System' (1971), Black parents were galvanised into teaching Black children outside of, and alongside, the national education system. Abasindi, mentioned above, set up its own Saturday School and specialised in subjects such as Black history.[117] Furthermore, most of these schools, as the authors of the biography on Abasindi note, were often set up by Black mothers.[118] For instance, the Haringey Black Pressure Group on Education, which sought to investigate the disproportionate number of Black children getting suspended or having fewer qualifications, was set up after a discussion at the first Black women's conference in 1979.[119] These instances of Black maternal activism are not exhaustive, for instance Black mothers were central to the 'SCRAP SUS' campaigns of the 1970s, protesting against the heavy-handed stop and searching of young Black people by the police.[120] Moreover, these examples demonstrate not only that Black mothers' community activism was inherently imbued with the politics of race, as Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe make clear in their book, but that the politics of race was indeed shaped by Black maternal activism itself.

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[116] Andrews, *Resisting Racism : Race, Inequality, and the Black Supplementary School Movement*; Heidi Safia Mirza and Diane Reay, 'Spaces and Places of Black Educational Desire: Rethinking Black Supplementary Schools as a New Social Movement', *Sociology*, 34 (2000), 521–44; Jessica Gerrard, 'Self Help and Protest: The Emergence of Black Supplementary Schooling in England', *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 16 (2013), 32–58.

[117] Watt and Jones, *Catching Hell and Doing Well,* chap. 6; See also Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *Heart of the Race*, pp. 71–72.

[118] Watt and Jones, *Catching Hell and Doing Well,* p. 113.

[119] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *Heart of the Race,* p. 78.

[120] Ibid., p. 160.

And yet, some mother-centred groups were not characterised by the politics of race or racist exclusion. In the television documentary *Scenes from the Farm* (1988), which sought to chart life on the Broadwater Farm Estate in the wake of the Disturbances that took place on the Estate in 1985, there is some evidence of harmonious multiracial relations within the mothers' groups on the Estate. In one scene, four local mothers, two Black and the other white, in the Broadwater Farm Mothers' Project discussed the subject of setting up a babysitting co-operative:

> Mother 1: What is it you're looking at? Just a babysitting stint two, three hours a night or something? Or an all night sleepover sort of thing?
>
> Mother 2: It could lead to that, I mean, it's up to whoever's looking after -
>
> Mother 3: Well this is it isn't it? 'Cos everybody's got different lives int' they? Some people go out nine, come home eleven. I mean I wouldn't go out 'til eleven and come home next morning.
>
> Mother 4: Can I come with you?
>
> [They laugh] [121]

Not only did the footage show both Black and white women discussing a subject unrelated to their racialised identities, but they were also discussing their collective desire to carry out hobbies outside of mothering. In his study of progressive rock in the 1970s, Martin Johnes has drawn attention to the individualistic nature of this genre of music, which nurtured personal experience and separation from education, family, and class background.[122] He has argued that the collective appreciation of the genre among music fans created a sense of community, that he has termed a 'cult of individualism in unity'. Similarly, in this mothers' group, the women came together in their group to find a way in which they could allow each

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[121] *Scenes from the Farm*, dir. by Melissa Llewelyn-Davies (Channel 4, 1988).
[122] Johnes, 'Consuming Popular Music'.

other to prioritise their individual lives. The mothers had never met before, but they found an affinity with one another by the end of the scene by their desire to nurture their own need for autonomy and agency.

Yet the transition from the selfless to the self-nurturing mother was by no means smooth. While mother and toddler groups provided inner-city mothers alternative spaces to attend to their own needs, this was only to facilitate the performance of a more 'traditional' motherhood outside of these spaces. Mother and toddler groups consolidated gendered social practices through the subjects that were under discussion, with conversation focused on subjects such as marriage and contraception. Joyce Donoghue's report on London's mother and toddler groups sheds light on these conversations. 'This lot persuaded me to go to the family planning…I didn't feel so bad about it when I knew other people who'd been', explained one woman.[123] There was a certain understanding that other mothers offered a form of interaction they could not acquire elsewhere, as one woman commented: 'it doesn't matter how good your husband is, he doesn't see things the same as a woman does'.[124] Moreover, the conversational limits imposed within the domestic setting had some degree of flexibility within these mother-centred groups. 'Politics, religion, women's rights, what's wrong with education...you name it, it'll come up', noted Joyce Nicholson, who set up a mother and toddler group on an estate in Southwark.[125] The relationships forged in mother and toddler groups were thus counterpoints to the traditional expectations set upon mothers in the post-war period. Paradoxically, by offering mothers a temporary space to resist and relinquish societal expectations of motherhood, these homosocial groups encouraged women to maintain a traditional type of motherhood within their own home. These female spaces

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[123] Joyce Donoghue, *Running a Mother & Toddler Club* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1983), p. 1.
[124] Ibid., p.1.
[125] Parker and Vaughan, *People of Providence,* p. 129.

offered mothers a chance to sustain multiple identities of the female self, one centred on the needs of the family, and the other centred on their own needs.

As women's sense of self-worth became increasingly dependent on these homosocial spaces, mother and toddler groups provided new modes of community in Britain's inner cities. In London, on an unknown estate in Islington, ten women set up a mother and toddler group in the 1980s, with the Family Welfare Association (FWA) noting that 'what unites them is their loneliness and depression' that had left members with 'an inability to feel they had any value in the outside world'.[126] The FWA report noted that the mothers' group allowed the women to 'explore problems that they experience in their daily lives'. Even prior to attending groups, mothers were made aware that their transgressive experiences of motherhood were acceptable. In a WPCA newsletter produced in 1985, an advert for a mothers' support group noted: 'Calling all mothers, do you need an outlet for your pent up frustrations?'[127] In the neighbouring borough of Haringey, an advertisement for a mothers' club on the Broadwater Farm Estate asked, 'Mums – Do you fancy a chat?'[128] These advertisements gestured towards an imagined, emotional community of women, structured on the awareness that other mothers elsewhere were going through the same emotional experience.[129] By the 1980s, sharing the negative aspects of motherhood soon became an accepted norm among mothers. When discussing her experiences of a mother and toddler group, one woman commented that other mothers, 'talked about what they felt, and some of their problems, and I knew I wasn't the only one who felt like bashing the kids or running out on them'.[130] Therefore, through mother and toddler groups, mothers were included into a

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[126] London Metropolitan Archives [LMA], Manor Gardens Centre [MGC], LMA/4314/01/025, Report from the FWA, Executive committee minutes and agenda, January 1984, p. 1.
[127] BI, WCPA, WPCA/4, 'Mothers support group', *Whittington Park Community Newsletter*, 60, 1985, p. 2.
[128] GPI, BPM, BPM/7/1/6, *Broadwater Review*, 1, 1984, p. 12.
[129] For emotional communities, see Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 2.
[130] Donoghue, *Running a Mother & Toddler Club*, p. 1.

collective unit of women, in which the feelings of guilt, frustration and loneliness were accepted as a part of a mother's daily reality.

Inner-city maternal groups contributed to an 'interior turn' among working-class mothers, but this turn was predicated on women's ethnicities. By acknowledging women's need for social interaction and nurturing their individual experiences, these groups allowed inner-city mothers to look inwards and acknowledge the painful and often isolating experience of mothering. While inherently centred on the maternal experience, these groups gave women the space room to explore their personal identities and emotions beyond motherhood, and thus they mark a shift towards a more self-centred mother in these areas. For Black women, this was a distinct form of independence and autonomy, that emanated from a desire to be free from external governing factors that sought to remove their agency. Moreover, mother and toddler groups drew attention to the fact that women had similar emotional experiences of mothering, bringing them into a community of mothers. Often these experiences surpassed matters of ethnicity, enabling young mothers to form coalitions of support that did not take into account women's racialised identities. However, racist members of mothers' groups could often exclude Black mothers, forcing them to forge separate spaces where other mothers did not spotlight or marginalise their ethnicity. Black mothers set up their own maternal groupings, such as the BPM or Supplementary Schools, that became another mode of resistance while allowing them to unite with other Black mothers who shared their experiences of mothering Black children in Britain.

Conclusion

The changes brought about by urban redevelopment and colonial and post-colonial migration created changes to the ethnic make-up of working-class motherhood in Britain, which historians have yet to examine. This chapter has demonstrated that threats of slum demolition and consequential inferior social housing provided opportunities for Black

mothers to take part in housing activism and make demands as mothers. In many areas, Black mothers were driving forces in this mode of motherhood, as they took action on particular issues that affected them as Black women, particularly housing demolition and dispersal measures. By the same merit, through housing activism they could participate in the shared language of democracy that stemmed from traditions of white working-class mothers in the earlier part of the century. Housing activism united working-class mothers of different ethnicities. While their activism was rooted in Black power, Black mothers used the language of class and new discourses of 'ordinariness' to demonstrate their shared experience of material inequality with their white neighbours. Moreover, childcare organisations and mother and toddler groups provided space for the formation of communities based on collective support - particularly among single mothers - and the shared emotional experiences of mothering in Britain's inner cities, bringing together working-class mothers across racial lines. Thus through the case studies explored here, this chapter has shown that Black mothers were driving change in many inner-urban areas, while also participating in change alongside white working-class women.

These forms of activism also enabled working-class mothers to nurture their sense of self outside of motherhood. As Paterson, Worth, and Abrams have also demonstrated, mother-centred organisations enabled working-class mothers of different ethnicities to look inwards, nurture their own emotional and social needs, while also enabling them to carry out paid employment. And yet this chapter has also demonstrated that these groups were not oases of multi-ethnic solidarity where the politics of race did not reach. Childcare groups did not create equal patterns of mothering, as they offered financial independence and self-sufficiency to white working-class mothers, while often perpetuating the system of economic inequality in Britain that required Black mothers to work longer hours for less pay. In a similar vein, mother and toddler groups could at times foster inter-racial solidarity, but could

equally operate on the exclusion of Black mothers. Moreover, as this chapter has highlighted, the language and politics of the British Black Power movements heavily influenced the modes of activism and form of homosociality undertaken by Black mothers. Similarly, the language of independence and autonomy adopted by Black mothers was distinct to their own experiences of living in Britain as Black women, rather than emanating from a similar experience that they shared with white women. Examining the differing experience of working-class motherhood through these organisational aspects of inner-city living demonstrates that while working-class mothers were not defined purely by their race, ethnicity often cut through class to determine women's experiences of motherhood.

In demonstrating the limits of community organising for working-class mothers, this chapter has also contributed to ongoing discussions around the nature of race, class and non-governmental activism in the late twentieth century. Mothers from different ethnic backgrounds came together to form political collectivities in the name of their children and their locality, articulating their shared concern for the community through a discourse centred on individual rights. This not only suggests that inner-city areas were not split neatly across ethnic lines, but that, as Jon Lawrence has also argued, community 'hasn't died, but it has changed'.[131] As Schofield and Jones have also demonstrated, housing activist groups in the worked across racial lines as the shared conditions of housing inequality in late twentieth-century Britain could function irrespective of ethnicity, thereby producing forms of mother-led community activism. [132] However, in gendered spaces, such as playgroups and mothers' groups, race could come to fore the shape the nature of mother-led community activism. As Stuart Hall has argued, 'race is the modality through which class is lived'. [133] Examining

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[131] Jon Lawrence, *Me, Me, Me? : The Search for Community in Post-War England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 1.
[132] Schofield and Jones, "Whatever Community Is, This Is Not It", 151–61.
[133] Stuart Hall, 'Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance', in *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism* (Paris: UNESCO, 1980), pp. 305–45 (341).

motherhood at the granular level demonstrates the importance of viewing the British working

class from the perspective of not only gender, but also race.

Chapter 2.

'We sat in that place as women defending ourselves': Black women's groups and the construction of the female self

In 1975, Coca Clarke and Kathleen Locke, whose tenants' activism was explored in the previous chapter, helped found the Manchester Black Women's Co-operative (MBWC) in Moss Side along with their sister, Ada Phillips. Their project retrained unsupported and unqualified Black mothers in the office skills needed to re-enter the workplace in Manchester. The MBWC was housed at the Moss Side People's Centre, which they shared with the George Jackson Trust, a charity aimed at housing homeless Black residents in Moss Side. The Trust had received substantial government funding in the 1970s, and, under the leadership of Ron Philips, channelled this funding into the MBWC. After four years Ron Phillips, who was managing the funds, began to interfere in the MBWC's day-to-day management and it soon emerged that he was re-directing funds from the Co-operative funds into other local initiatives. On 26 October 1979, when Phillips tried to relocate the women's group to another location, the founding members of the Co-operative staged an occupation in their room of the Centre. Subsequently, after a protest lasting ten days, on the 1 January 1980, the MBWC reformed as the Abasindi Co-operative, completely autonomous from the Trust, aimed at improving the lives of local women in the area by providing a place 'for the exchange of information and personal development'.[1] Abasindi became one of several Black women's centres that opened across Britain during the 1970s, providing both a political base as well as a social hub for Black women in cities such as London, Liverpool, and

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[1] AIU, EE, GB3228.5/4/16, 'Abasindi Co-operative booklet', n.d, p. 3.

Birmingham.[2] Despite their stable presence in many of Britain's inner cities, Black women's centres and groups, and the lives of the women who forged them, have evaded historical interrogation.

The previous chapter explored how mothers developed housing and tenants' action groups, along with childcare and mothers' groups, to adapt to the changes of Britain's cities. The chapter argued these groups enabled mothers to assert identities outside of motherhood, foster a sense of emotion and financial security, as well as construct emotional communities with other mothers. The chapter also suggested that these groups could allow Black mothers to explore their identities beyond being a 'Black woman'. However, it demonstrated that Black women often faced exclusion and racism within these groups, if they were able to profit from them at all. Black mothers had unique experiences of inner-city living that white mothers did not, having to face societal exclusion and economic racial discrimination, all the while balancing these factors with ongoing childcare commitments. This chapter explores in more depth the mechanisms and strategies inner-city Black women took to centre their lived reality, arguing that Black women's centres and groups enabled inner-city Black women to foster empowered personal identities that celebrated, rather than stigmatised, their racialised identity. It further demonstrates the need to move away from negative stereotypes of the inner city, and to centre the lived experience of its residents.

Alongside the exclusion that Britain's inner-city women faced, there were broader political developments on a national and international level that provided an impetus for Black women to establish spaces dedicated to their needs. As the first section of this chapter will outline in further detail, Black and South Asian British female academics, such as Hazel

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[2] AIU, Manchester's BME Communities [MBC], GB3228.8/14, Diane Watt, 'Silent Warriors: The Women of the Abasindi Co-Operative', n.d, p. 4. Following the incident, Ron and Ada split and Ron soon returned to his native country Guyana, 'Obituary: Ron Phillips', *The Independent*, 1998 <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/obituary-ron-phillips-1183773.html> [accessed 7 January 2020].

Carby, Claudette Williams, and Chandra Mohanty, had begun voicing their experiences of racialised and gendered exclusion from Black and feminist liberations struggles.[3] Black women's centres and groups were thus set up to offer a variety of services designed exclusively for Black women, including dancing and drumming workshops, welfare advice, craft sessions, and courses in Black women's studies. One of the first Black women's groups was the Brixton Black Women's Group (BWG), set up in 1973 by several former female members of the British Black Panthers, such as Beverly Bryan and Olive Morris.[4] Similar groups were set up across Britain and in 1978, the Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent (OWAAD) was formed in Brixton, acting as a central hub for these organisations in England to communicate with and be kept informed of national campaigns that were relevant to them. While scholars have paid attention to the history of BWG and OWAAD, the development of local Black women's groups outside of London has hardly been addressed.[5] However, Black women's groups in Manchester differed from OWAAD in that they stemmed from the male dogmatism of Manchester's own Black Power groups and they largely responded to challenges of the local area. For instance, they focused on redressing the unemployment that came with deindustrialisation, as Britain's shift towards a service-based economy resulted in mass unemployment in Moss Side.[6] Moreover, the increase in heavy-handed policing in the area, which led to the outbreak of conflict between local residents and the police in 1981, provided the impetus for Black women groups to

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[3] Carby, 'White Woman Listen!'; Claudette Williams, 'We are a Natural Part of Many Different Struggles: Black Women Organizing', In *Inside Babylon: the Caribbean Diaspora in Britain*, ed. By Winston James And Clive Harris (London: Verso, 1993), pp. 153–63; Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes'; see also Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *The Heart of the Race*.
[4] Suzanne Scafe, 'Brixton Black Women's Group', in *Companion to Contemporary Black British Culture*, ed. by Alison Donnell (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 59; See also, Fisher, *What's Left of Blackness: Feminisms, Transracial Solidarities, and the Politics of Belonging in Britain*, pp. 72–77.
[5] Natalie Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England, 1968-1993* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 89–102; See also Sudbury; Swaby.
[6] For deindustrialisation, see Tomlinson, 'De-industrialization not Decline'.

support victims of police violence and to get involved in anti-police defence campaigns.[7] Thus, viewing Black female activism from the regional perspective isolates the central importance of the 'local' not merely to Black female organising, but in understanding the idiosyncrasies of inner-city history.

This chapter examines the personal experiences of Black women who founded and attended Black women's centres and groups in the 1970s and 1980s. It demonstrates the ways in which these organisations allowed Black women to fashion a sense of self in a period when journalists, social researchers, and politicians all constructed a homogenising narrative of Black womanhood as, among other things, over-fecund, isolated, and welfare dependent.[8] Black women's centres provided women with the space and time to nurture their personal experiences of sexism and racism, achieve a sense of self-sufficiency, and celebrate their heritage, which placed every member on a path towards self-discovery. This centring of the Black female self was not, as some Black and South Asian male activists believed, set on undermining the anti-racist movement, but was considered as a vital tool in the overarching mission to defeat global white supremacy.[9] This chapter illustrates that while these groups allowed women to unite in their shared experience as Black women in inner-city Britain, they also fostered a social environment where they could construct a sense of self that was founded on the histories, ancestries, politics, and culture of the global African diaspora.[10] It draws on the work of Denise Noble, whose analysis of Black women of Caribbean descent in Britain has also demonstrated how they forged self-identities that drew

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[7] For more on the Moss Side Riots, see Shirin Hirsch and David Swanson, 'Photojournalism and the Moss Side Riots of 1981: Narrowly Selective Transparency', *History Workshop Journal*, 89 (2020), 221–45.
[8] Webster, *Imagining Home*; Helen McCarthy, 'Pearl Jephcott and the Politics of Gender, Class and Race in Post-war Britain', *Women's History Review*, 28 (2019), 779–93; Tomlinson, 'Enoch Powell, Empires, Immigrants and Education'.
[9] For male scepticism of female-centred activism in the Black liberation movement, see A. Sivanandan, *Communities of Resistance: Writings on Black Struggles for Socialism* (London: Verso, 1990), p. 39.
[10] From herein, the terms 'African diaspora' and 'Black diaspora' will be used interchangeably.

from their diasporic cultures and traditions.[11] Examining Black British women's activism

from the perspective of selfhood, this chapter inserts 'the personal' into the political history

of late twentieth-century Black British activism, which has predominantly been skewed

towards charting intellectual origins and protests methods, and their impact on legislation.[12]

Such an analysis therefore encourages us to view Black British activism as constituted by

everyday acts of personal development, as well as more explicit acts of resistance.

This chapter analyses publications, grassroots magazines, and marketing materials

issued by Black women's groups in Manchester and London. It also draws from a collection

of transcribed life history interviews with Black female activists that took place in 2008 and

2009, now held at Lambeth Archives. The interviews were not conducted by myself, but

formed part of the Do You Remember Olive Morris? (DYROM) project, which was set up by

the artist and activist Ana Laura Lopez De La Torre to resurrect the life story of the

prominent Black female activist Olive Morris. [13] Morris, born in 1952, had moved from

Jamaica to Brixton at the age of nine and became part of the Black Panther Youth League and

the Squatters' Rights Movement in the 1970s. She was also instrumental in setting up the

Brixton Black Women's Group in 1973, and later OWAAD in 1978. Unfortunately, after a

diagnosis of leukaemia, Morris died in July 1979 at the age of twenty-seven. The interviews

for this chapter are with those women who knew Morris while she was a mature

undergraduate student in Manchester between 1975 and 1978 studying social sciences, and

where she quickly embedded herself in the local Black activist network in Moss Side. It is

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[11] Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom,* chap. 3.

[12] For intellectual origins, Waters, *Thinking Black*; Connell, *Black Handsworth,* chap. 1; For protest, Michael Higgs, 'From the Street to the State: Making Anti-Fascism Anti-Racist in 1970s Britain', *Race & Class*, 58 (2016), 66–84; Peplow, *Race and Riots*; Daniel Renshaw, 'The Violent Frontline: Space, Ethnicity and Confronting the State in Edwardian Spitalfields and 1980s Brixton', *Contemporary British History*, 32 (2018), 231–52; For impact on legislation, Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain,* chap. 7.

[13] Tanisha C. Ford, 'Finding Olive Morris in the Archive', *The Black Scholar*, 46 (2016), 5–18 (p. 7).

through the oral history interviews with Morris's connections in Manchester that there is now a wealth of material of Black women's local activism and life in Moss Side.

One of the challenges posed by the DYROM collection is that by being encouraged to narrate their life stories thirty years after their interaction with the revered Morris, the women may have been prompted to overstate the impact that the activist had on their lives. However, as outlined in this thesis' introduction, oral history has never been geared towards merely gathering the 'facts'. As Alessandro Portelli has written of oral history, rather than dismiss 'errors, myths, interventions, lies… we investigate their meaning and what they tell us about the narrator's world'.[14] Thus the final section of this chapter focuses on how Black women constructed a sense of self in the oral history interview process. It builds on oral history theory developed by historians such as Portelli, Penny Summerfield, Lynn Abrams, and others, to demonstrate that through the interview process, the women had the unique opportunity to construct personal identities in which their status as female activists came to the fore. [15] It draws on Abrams's concept of 'feminography', a form of life story in which being a woman is central to the personal narrative, rather than other traditional frameworks such as motherhood or marriage.[16] Moreover, these narratives diverged from traditional Western theories of the self, which stipulate that the self is unique, and the construction of the self is an individual act.[17] Instead, this chapter builds on the work of Mary Chamberlain and Sue Anderson et al., whose analysis of non-Western women's life stories has demonstrated how women sometimes create narratives that are shared between people and articulate selves

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[14] Alessandro Portelli, 'Living Voices: the Oral History Interview as Dialogue and Experience', *The Oral History Review*, 45.2 (2018), 239–48 (p. 247).

[15] Summerfield, *Histories of the Self*, p. 128; See also, Abrams, *Oral History Theory*; Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: the Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991). See also Introduction.

[16] Lynn Abrams, 'Heroes of their own life stories: narrating the female self in the feminist age', *Cultural and Social History*, 16 (2019), 205–24.

[17] Abrams, *Oral history theory*, p. 36.

formed of the lineages of their female kin.[18] Similarly, this chapter argues that while the women did produce individual identities, they also built their sense of self around their political engagement with, and on behalf of, other women. Such an insight therefore sheds light on alternative modes of self-formation in late twentieth-century Britain.

To begin this analysis, this chapter charts the ideological origins of Black women's groups, outlining the values of collective self-sufficiency, personal autonomy, and self-actualisation that underpinned women's centres and their outreach work in the community. The second section then explores the services and opportunities within Black women's centres that allowed Black women to fashion their individual identities, whether that be through celebrating and exploring their African heritage, or through entering interpersonal conflict. The third and final section considers what the individual memories of Black women's groups reveal about the construction of the Black female self in post-war Britain. Teasing out the complexities around Black female activism, selfhood, and memory, this chapter contributes substantially to fleshing out the racial and gendered intricacies of the inner city.

The ideological origins of Black women's groups

As the previous chapter began to illustrate, from the 1950s, Moss Side was home to a stable and politically conscious Black population, who had established a variety of community organisations to meet the practical needs of its African Caribbean residents, in issues related to housing but also in other matters too. For instance, the BUFP and the BPM, two nationwide Black Power groups, both had bases in Moss Side set up by activist Gus

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[18] Chamberlain, 'Family and identity: Barbadian migrants to Britain', pp. 152–66; Sue Anderson and others, 'Yarning up oral history'.

John.[19] Meanwhile, other groups, such as the Moss Side Afro-Caribbean Care Group and the Moss Side Defence Committee, were set up in the 1980s to deal with matters relating to healthcare and police harassment.[20]

Many of the women who became central players in Manchester's Black female activist scene were part of these Black Power organisations initial, and for the most part relationships between men and women could be harmonious. For instance, both sexes would often participate in protests alongside each other. In 1976, both men and women from the BUFP carried out an anti-apartheid march after the Soweto uprisings. BUFP member Coca Clarke remembered: 'we had a protest at Manchester Cathedral … and they was given [sic] a sermon…and we decided that we would do a protest, we all dress in Black, Black berets, Black blouses, boys in Black trousers, girls in Black skirts'.[21] The visual aspects of Black Power movement, particularly the distinctive Black beret, would have served as a unifying element for those members of the organisation.

But despite the solidarity in groups such as the BUFP, Black women's own involvement was often overlooked and discouraged. Speaking about her involvement in the BUFP, Clarke noted that, 'as women we were doing a lot of the donkey work'.[22] In a similar vein, in 1977, local residents Kathleen Locke and Elouise Edwards established the Black Woman's Mutual Aid (BWMA) to address the educational needs of children in Moss Side. In her oral history testimony, Edwards, who was born in Guyana in 1932 and migrated to Britain in the 1950s in her late twenties, remembered how the group would meet at the local West Indian social club every Sunday, where many of the members' husbands would also be

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[19] For BUFP, see Barker, *In the Shadow of the SPG,* pp. 13–14; For BPM, see Kehinde Andrews, *Resisting Racism : Race, Inequality, and the Black Supplementary School Movement* (London: Institute of Education Press, 2013).

[20] Moss Side Afro-Caribbean Care Group, *The Golden Years: A Souvenir Booklet Detailing the Various Activities and Interests of the Moss Side Afro-Caribbean Care Group from 1983 to 1990*, 1990.

[21] Interview with Clarke.

[22] Interview with Clarke.

socialising. However, meeting in these mixed-sex environments led to the organisation's demise. Recounting on the early years of the group, Edwards reflected that the husbands 'used to give their wives hell, when their wives went home you know…that was one of the reasons why it [the BWMA] just collapsed, women stopped coming because they were having a hard time'.[23]

This feeling of exclusion and male resistance to female activism was not specific to Manchester. As early as the 1940s, Black women who campaigned in Britain, such as the Trinidadian-born Communist exile Claudia Jones, were voicing their exclusion from mixed-sex groups. Jones set up the *West Indian Gazette*, the first popular newspaper in Britain dedicated to covering Afro-Asian news, and organised the first Caribbean festival in 1959, the precedent to the Notting Hill Carnival.[24] She also helped develop the theory of the 'triple oppression', arguing in her work that that Black women were the victims of racism, classism, and sexism, and that freeing Black women from this exploitation would lead to freedom for all who were oppressed. [25] Similarly, in their seminal book, *Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain,* Black female activists Beverly Bryan, Stella Dadzie, and Suzanne Scafe noted how Black men overshadowed Black women in early Black community groups. The authors noted the prevalence of Black women at the forefront of early Black organisations, such as the League of Coloured People, but that male members overlooked their experiences. [26] In reference to the radical groups of the 1970s and 1980s, such as the BUFP and the British Black Panthers, the authors noted that, despite dedicating their time and energy to these groups, 'we could not realise our full organisational potential

[23] LA, DYROM, Interview with Elouise Edwards, 2009.
[24] For Caribbean carnivals, see Chapter 3.
[25] Claudia Jones, *An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!* (New York: National Women's Commission, 1949).
[26] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *The Heart of the Race,* pp. 129–35; see also Jones, *An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!*,

in a situation where we were constantly regarded as sexual prey'.[27] One member noted that while being victims to male sexual harassment, Black women were also left out of decision-making and were required to take on gendered tasks, such as minute-taking and coffee-making.[28] Similarly, in her study of Black Women's Centres in Southwark, Tracey Fisher has also demonstrated that Black women felt unheard in mixed-sex Black grassroots organisations in the 1970s and 1980s.[29]

While incidents of male resistance dissuaded some women from getting involved in local activism, such experiences also drove inner-city Black women in Britain to set up groups that reviewed their place within Black community activism. When looking at the Black women's centres in Moss Side, it is evident that sexism informed their central values of collective female self-determination. For Abasindi, the Black women's co-operative that had grown out of the male dogmatism of local leader Ron Philips, collective female autonomy was a central value to its founding ideology. In a booklet published by Abasindi, the founders wrote that, 'it was agreed that the Co-Operative should show itself to be clearly autonomous and self-determining' and 'that Black women need to organise projects staffed and controlled by women'.[30] Abasindi members articulated the necessity for autonomy from male interference in the ways that defined the organisation's name in later years. One of the Co-operative members Lindiwe Tsele defined Abasindi as, 'a Zulu name meaning those who have escaped, because we didn't all realise the powerlessness of black men, because they wanted to be in charge of us and we were saying this is a women's group'.[31] Similarly, in their account of the Co-operative, former members Diana Watt and Adele Jones stated that

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[27] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *The Heart of the Race*, pp. 143–44.
[28] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *The Heart of the Race,* pp. 144–45.
[29] Tracy Fisher, 'Black Women, Politics, Nationalism and Community in London', *Small Axe*, 11 (2002), 133–50 (p. 142).
[30] 'Abasindi Co-operative booklet', p. 4.
[31] LA, DYROM, Interview with Lindiwe Tsele, 2009.

Abasindi was Zulu for 'survivors', meaning the 'strength, resilience and competence of black women'.[32] Both definitions highlight the female-centred, independent nature of the group. Indeed, this collective autonomy also trickled down to encouraging individual autonomy among Black women. On the Broadwater Farm Estate, the United Black Women's Action Group (UBWAG), who later set up and ran the Haringey Black Women's Centre from 1983 until its closure in 1984, stressed that their central aim was to 'assist Black women to help themselves'. [33] The need for women to be both collectively and individually self-sufficient was at the root of Black women's female-centred activism.

Drawing on Noble again, these assertions of autonomy and self-determination identify the centrality independence to the self-fashioning of Black British womanhood. In her analysis on freedom, Noble argues that for Black women, even those who valued heterosexual marriage and relations, they were second to retraining self-determination, and 'to be free from the constraints of the…female submission to masculine power' would provide women with the courage to inhabit liberty.[34] Similarly, while the women in Abasindi never advocated the denunciation of marriage, their battle against masculinist power demonstrates their embodiment and embodied practise of liberty, and how this was central to their praxis of female activism.

The centrality of the depiction of 'survivors' is also indicative of a narrative form often used in Black female life stories within the African diaspora. Culturally dominant narratives of Black women have often portrayed them as working against the odds for survival, as Noble has also argued.[35] For instance, in American novels about African

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[32] Diana Watt and Adele D. Jones, *Catching Hell and Doing Well*, p. 1.
[33] Black Cultural Archives [BCA], Dadzie Collection [DAD], Dadzie/1/1/30, United Black Women's Action Group flyer, n.d.
[34] Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom,* p. 115.
[35] Ibid., p. 125.

American women, such as *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and *The Colour Purple* by Alice Walker, the main female protagonists have to confront and overcome the psychological and physical trauma of American racism to achieve solace. This narrative also plays out in the ways that Black women in Britain narrate their life stories. In *The Heart of the Race*, the narrative of survival is threaded through the oral histories that formed the basis of the book:

> I grew up in a very poor but strict family in Georgetown [Guyana]…jobs in stores were hard to get…if your skin was dark you could get a market-stall job. After about six months of sewing, I had 100 dollars, enough for a deposit on a general store…eventually I bought it.[36]

In the same way, by stressing the meaning of Abasindi as 'survivors', the women of Moss Side connected their personal stories within a history of Black female survival within the African diaspora, reaffirmed by the women reiterating the Zulu roots of the term. Furthermore, Cheryl Rodriguez has also argued that narratives of survival were central to the life stories of African American female community activists in the 1970s.[37] These testimonies, which build on this narrative tradition, reiterate the ways in which the women of Moss Side considered their personal autonomy within a global diasporic female tradition.

For the members of Abasindi, autonomy was not simply about distancing themselves from the dogmatism of Black men within activist groups. In Manchester, mainstream feminism failed to address the poverty and institutionalised racism that the African Caribbean community of Moss Side and Hulme experienced, with activism largely circulating within and around the University of Manchester. This oversight was representative of the intellectual tradition of white Western feminism at the time, whose allegiances to a universal definition of womanhood obfuscated the intersections of racism

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[36] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *The Heart of the Race*.
[37] Cheryl Rodriguez, 'Activist Stories: Culture and Continuity in Black Women's Narratives of Grassroots Community Work', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 19 (1998), 94–112 (p. 95).

and sexism that Black and South Asian women faced in Britain and the Global North. For instance, in her history of British women since 1945, *Only Halfway to Heaven: Women in Postwar Britain 1945-1968* (1980)*,* white feminist Elizabeth Wilson argued that the post-war reconstruction made domestic motherhood an aspiration for women of all classes, and that women could only enter the workforce as temporary workers until they married and had children.[38] This dual role, she argued, impeded the liberation of women. From the 1980s, Black female academics in Britain began to make their own criticisms of this line of feminist thought. In 1982, in her now oft-cited essay, 'White Woman Listen!', Hazel Carby criticised Wilson for suggesting that women had to pick between entering the workforce and the home, noting that Black women had bridged this division for decades because of their racialised oppression in Britain.[39] Later, in 1988, Chandra Mohanty also noted that white feminists measured all gendered social relations in accordance with their own framework. She argued that white feminist anthropologists portrayed women from the Global South as 'monolithic', dependent, and subordinated in the home, overlooking how the home could in fact be a site of resistance for South Asian and African women.[40]

This disconnect worked at a local level between Manchester's white female activists, and was illustrated in the bold ethnocentricity of white-led feminist publications in the city. A lack of intersectional awareness was reflected in an article on South Asian women from the *Manchester Women's Paper*, a local feminist paper that ran from 1976 to 1981:

Manchester's Asian women live together in certain areas and the women lead very restricted lives… Islam is a total way of life. It governs every part of a woman's life.

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[38] Wilson, *Only Halfway to Heaven,* chap. 3.
[39] Carby, 'White Woman Listen!', pp. 218–19.
[40] Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes'.

She only exists as a member of a family; she is not seen as an individual acting of her own accord.[41]

Not only did the anonymous author elide the differences between religion and nationality in this piece, but the article also assumed that Asian women's independence was diminished because of her social position in the family. Remarkably, the *Manchester Women's Paper* was printed in the centre of Moss Side, and yet the authors displayed no consciousness of the area's ethnically diverse population, and the problematic nature of this representation. The *Manchester Women's Paper* also displayed its ignorance of the experiences of ethnic minorities in its celebratory coverage of a local Reclaim the Night (RTN) event in 1977. Demonstrating their lack of awareness over issues related to police harassment of Black communities, the publication lauded the event, in which police officers were deployed to protect female protestors in a march against rape.[42] As Natalie Thomlinson has also noted, white feminists in Leeds held police-assisted RTN events through the so-called 'Black area' of Chapeltown, displaying a tone-deaf attitude to issues of police racism.[43] Indeed, during the lifetime of the *Manchester Women's Paper*, there was no coverage of police racism or any matters related to Manchester's Black women.

Another incident surrounding a case of police brutality also demonstrates the fissures between white women's feminism and Black activism. In 1985, Jackie Berkeley accused police of raping her while detained at Moss Side police station.[44] After the allegations failed to stand, Berkeley was found guilty of wasting police time.[45] Personal testimony from

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[41] FAN, MWP, FAN/PER/661 'Asian Women', *Manchester Women's Paper*, 10, 1977, p. 11.

[42] FAN, MWP, FAN/PER/661, 'A woman's place is … everywhere', *Manchester Women's Paper,* 11, 1977, p. 14.

[43] Thomlinson, *Race*, *Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England,* p. 169; See also Finn Mackay, 'Mapping the routes: an exploration of charges of racism made against the 1970s UK Reclaim the Night marches', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 44 (2014), 46–54; For contemporary criticisms from black feminists, see Williams, 'We are a Natural Part', p. 162.

[44] 'The Moss Side Police Force: A Law unto Itself', *Race Today*, June 1985, pp. 1–4 (p. 2).

[45] 'Woman convicted over false allegation of rape', *The Guardian,* 15 March 1985, p. 2.

Berkeley, and her own version of events, is almost invisible in the archives. In anti-racist publications, such as *Race Today*, and in the campaign literature for the Jackie Berkeley Defence Committee, her story is framed within a broader narrative of police brutality in Manchester, and she is not quoted anywhere.[46] Similarly, in the local and national press, such as the *Manchester Evening News*, her voice is funnelled through court proceedings, for instance through the evidence of her psychologist, Dr Mary Gibbs, who told the magistrate "'I do not think she is physically or psychologically fit to continue to give evidence'".[47]

One of the few times when Berkeley's voice is perhaps more discernible was in relation to a white feminist reaction to the incident. On a national level, this incident created fissures between mainstream feminist groups and grassroots anti-racist groups. Following the Berkeley incident, the Kings Cross Women's Centre in London supported the campaign by holding a public meeting in March 1985. The meeting was to be focused on 'Race and Rape' and listed itself as a women-only discussion. However, members of the Jackie Berkeley Defence Committee in Moss Side, the group set up by Berkeley's mother, Violet, and local activist, Gus John, to defend and gain support for Berkeley's case, requested that the multi-racial Kings Cross Women's Centre dissociated from the cause. In a letter to the Centre, the Committee, which was backed by local women's organisations, argued that 'the defendant...herself has made it absolutely clear that she does not see the fact that she was raped...as a matter that concerns women only'.[48] The letter also noted that 'the rape of Jackie Berkeley….was in keeping with Moss Side Police Station's treatment of black people and has to be understood as such'. While the Jackie Berkeley Defence Committee was not a women-

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[46] 'The Moss Side Police Force: A Law unto Itself'; GPI, BPM, BPM/3/2/3/2, Jackie Berkeley Poster for Demonstration, 28 April 1985.

[47] 'Trial delayed after doctors' advice', *The Times*, 8 March 1985, p. 3.

[48] GPI, BPM, BPM/3/2/3/2, Letter to Ruth Hall and Wilmette Brown at Kings Cross Women's Centre from the Jackie Berkeley Defence Committee, 28 March 1985; 'Rape claim against police', *The Guardian*, 16 February 1985, p. 2.

only group, such divisions on a national level reiterates the eagerness of Black women and community groups to practice a form of female agency separate from mainstream feminism.

Ethnic differences were not just rhetorical, but also surfaced in action in 1980 when a Manchester-based group interested in women and education carried out a Girls' Day at a youth club in Hulme. Soon after the event, the organisers quickly recognised that they had failed to cater for the large African Caribbean and Asian community. 'We found that far fewer black than white girls attended', the organisers wrote in a follow-up article in *Women and Education*, realising in retrospect that the day 'offered very few positive role models for black girls to identify with'.[49] Not only was there poor attendance from local Black girls, but the workers also admitted that they had not given enough thought to involving Black female youth workers and local Black women. This admission may have been an allusion to the work of the Abasindi Co-operative, who had already run girls' youth work activities, revolving around West African dance and music. While Jo Somerset has argued that urban youth work among working-class women empowered them to engage with 'Second Wave' feminism in Wigan in the 1980s, this research effaces the fact it could also be a form of cultural imperialism that exacerbated notions of difference and division among women in inner-city areas.[50]

Overall, the members of Abasindi could not associate with local white feminism. Reflecting on her involvement in women-centred activism, Elouise Edwards noted that, 'the white women's groups that were around … we didn't feel that we wanted to be part of that because our problems were different, you know, because we had the issue of racism…which of course the white ones [groups] didn't have'.[51] Instead, Black female activists in Moss

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[49] FAN, Women & Education (Manchester) (WAE), FAN/PER/1168, 'Girls' Days rule', *Women & Education*, 22, 1981, p. 4-5.
[50] Jo Somerset, 'Pushing the Boundaries of 1980s Feminism in a Northern English Town', *Northern History*, 55 (2018), 76–91 (p. 86).
[51] LA, DYROM, Interview with Edwards.

Side adopted their own political framework that distanced itself from local white feminism. In their biography of the Abasindi Co-operative, Watt and Jones wrote that although 'Abasindi espoused feminist values, we did not always describe ourselves as a feminist organisation', instead the founders claimed their 'feminism was pragmatic and socially meaningful to our realities'.[52] Inspired partially by Pan-African philosophy, Abasindi built a political outlook that centred the experience of Black women in the global Black diaspora, and celebrated early Pan-African Black female activists like Amy Ashwood Garvey and Amy Jacques Garvey.[53] They also took inspiration from the fact that Ashwood Garvey attended the 1945 Pan-African Congress, which took place in Manchester, and the Co-operative even helped campaign for a Blue Plaque commemorating the event.[54] While *The Heart of the Race* makes explicit mentions to Black female thinkers such as Claudia Jones, Angela Davis and Patricia Hill Collins, Abasindi literature referred to womanism, the theory developed by African American Alice Walker in the 1970s that encompassed Black women's unique struggles with racism and sexism.[55] In many ways therefore, Abasindi engaged with some of the intellectual roots of 'intersectionality', a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980s to theorise Black women's intersecting experiences of sexual and racial discrimination on account of being both Black and female.[56] This engagement with Black female intellectual thought allowed the Co-operative to develop their own woman-centred philosophy that was both national and global in its inspiration.

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[52] Watt and Jones, *Catching Hell and Doing Well,* p. 130.
[53] Watt, 'Silent Warriors', p. 3.
[54] Watt and Jones, *Catching Hell and Doing Well,* p. 28.
[55] Watt and Jones, *Catching Hell and Doing Well,* p. 34; See Patricia Hill Collins, 'Whats in a name? Womanism, black feminism, and beyond', in *The Womanist Reader*, ed. by Layli Phillips (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 57–68.
[56] Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: a Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics', *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 140 (1989), 139–67.

While they adopted a transnational political outlook, Black women's groups tended to work towards addressing immediate local issues. Moss Side's Black women were instrumental in campaigning against racism in the local schools, in which Black school children were not only obtaining lower grades than white pupils, but were also targeted by the police.[57] As noted above, Elouise Edwards helped in setting up the educational action group the Black Women's Mutual Aid, and Abasindi itself ran a supplementary school for local schoolchildren on Saturdays.[58] Moreover, the groups responded to the effects of deindustrialisation. By the 1970s, the number of manufacturing jobs available in Manchester declined. As noted in the Introduction, Moss Side suffered from this shift, with disproportionate numbers of men unemployed in the ward in comparison to the rest of the country. The effects of deindustrialisation played an important role in dictating the shape of Black female community activism. For instance, creeping unemployment among young residents pushed Abasindi to set up skills-training workshops for local women in secretarial skills. Moreover, the number of unemployed young Black residents in Moss Side invited scrutiny and harassment from local police, leading to the Moss Side Riots in 1981. Abasindi were actively involved in helping residents during the Disturbances, turning itself into a hospital for people who were injured.[59]

As they responded to the day-to-days issues of the post-industrial North, members of Abasindi were also involved in national campaigns, including the protests at Greenham Common and the miners' strikes.[60] Moreover, some members, such as Lindiwe Tslele were

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[57] 'Press statement – schools join police in terrorising school students: no bogus charges against Stephen Locke', c. 1980.
[58] Watt and Jones, *Catching Hell and Doing Well*, pp. 109–18; for Black supplementary schools, see Kehinde Andrews, *Resisting Racism*; Jessica Gerrard, 'Self Help and Protest: The emergence of Black supplementary schooling in England', *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 16 (2013), 32–58; Heidi Safia Mirza and Diane Reay, 'Spaces and places of Black educational desire: rethinking Black supplementary schools as a new social movement', *Sociology*, 34 (2000), 521–44.
[59] LA, DYROM, Interview with Edwards.
[60] Watt and Jones, *Catching Hell and Doing Well,* p. 26.

involved in African liberation protests, like those against South African Apartheid.[61] Abasindi's position paper from 1979 also reflected a sense of solidarity with Black women across the globe:

> We should realise that as women we have taken part in the struggles, and if this means organising a training scheme which would benefit our sisters dying in bushes in Africa and the Caribbean, we will do it. We are part of the evolution process of the liberation of the Black race and the respect of a nation lies in its women.[62]

Thus, by situating their local activism within a globalised, and gendered, discourse of racial justice, the founders of Black women's centres provided a rationale for the necessity of local, female-centred spaces in the journey towards overcoming the racism experienced by all (women) in the Black diaspora.

Not all Black male activists supported female-centred activism, as many believed it drew attention away from the universal Black struggle. Writing in the early 1990s, Ambivalaner Sivanandan, an anti-racist activist and scholar, decried the rise of identity politics and the growing power of 'New Politics' movements such as feminism and the Gay Liberation Front. According to Sivanandan, shifting attention to the personal 'gave an individual an out not to take part in issues that affected the community... There is now another venue for politics: oneself...a politics of identity as opposed to a politics of identification'.[63] Yet, upon close examination of the testimony from members and visitors of Black women's groups, there was a contingent relationship between nurturing women's experiences and wider community action. Wilma Deane, a member of the BWMA, remembered:

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[61] LA, DYROM, Interview with Tsele.
[62] GPI, BPM, BPM/3/2/3, Position Paper, part one, 26 October 1979.
[63] Sivanandan, *Communities of Resistance,* pp. 38–39.

I think what I was taking out of it, for myself, was just the whole thing about, you know, being confident, that we needed to support each other...it was like mutual support, feeling confident about things, about yourselves as black women, you know, moving forward, education.[64]

Deane's reflexivity on her involvement, 'I think what I was taking out of it, for myself', demonstrates a form of self-narration typical in oral history narratives whereby the narrator attempts to construct a sense of self through vocally reflecting on this phase of their life.[65] Deane moved from recognising the personal benefit she received from the group, to recognising an empowered Black womanhood, concluding by tying these to a broader structural issue. By concluding her sentence with 'you know…education', Deane came to a sense of coherence, a sense of continuity between the past self and the self at the time of narration, in her life story, whereby she could negotiate the links between nurturing her sense of self, Black women's centres, and the broader mission of anti-racism.

Moss Side's Black women's groups and centres fostered a sense of 'intersectional' awareness among its members. These groups were spaces that allowed inner-city Black women to construct their unique form of political outlook, which addressed their realities and concerns without fear of reproach from mainstream feminism and anti-racist activism. The members established their own distinctive framework of feminism that contested the political grammar of Western feminist theorisation, and in doing so, it fostered the emotional space that enabled members to centre their collective lived experience as Black women. These groups responded to the aftermath of deindustrialisation in the North of England, but also imbued their local activism with global perspectives of the Black female experience, which, as the next two sections will demonstrate, played a fundamental role in the

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[64] LA, DYROM, Interview with Wilma Deane, 2009.
[65] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, pp. 39–40.

construction of a sense of personal selfhood among Black women in late twentieth-century Britain.

Fashioning the self in Black women's groups

> Our culture shapes and determines our identity. To convey our sense of self, as Black women, we must first generate a positive understanding of the long cultural tradition which has fashioned our way of life here in Britain.[66]

These were the first lines of the final chapter in *Heart of the Race,* titled 'Self-consciousness: Understanding Our Culture and Identity'. The quote is illustrative of the way in which Black women's groups focused their aims on developing individual Black female self-sufficiency and selfhood, grounded in the importance in understanding one's culture, whose root was Africa. In turn this sense of self would provide Black women with the tools to defeat racism in their local area and in Britain. As Noble's study has demonstrated, the identification of Black women in Britain went beyond the context of state racialisation but was 'accessed through transnational Caribbean and African Diaspora identifications'.[67] Similarly, this section explores how Black women's centres and groups laid down the path towards this self-actualisation by enabling women to forge personal identities that were not dictated by the logics of British racism, but derived from their identification with their African heritage.

To arrive at this sense of self-actualisation, members had to 'reclaim the self', reaching a point of self-acceptance and understanding that gave women the armour that

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[66] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *Heart of the Race*, p. 183.
[67] Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom,* p. 63.

could resist the debilitating effects of societal racism and objectifying images of Black womanhood.[68] The first stage taken by Black women's centres to get Black women to reconnect with their sense of self was by engaging them with the politics and culture of the Black diaspora, namely Africa. In *Heart of the Race,* the authors noted that 'our African origin is the cornerstone of our lifestyle and our perception of the world, the internal dynamic which has enabled us continuously to resist new assaults on our way of life'.[69] The authors felt that by knowing one's African origin, Black women could go some way towards challenging the traumas of racism. These themes were prevalent in Manchester's Black women's groups. Despite most of its members being of Caribbean heritage, Abasindi centred 'Africanness' within its activities and environment. The founders felt that by centring the 'African self', the Co-operative would create a collective identity among its members of both African and Caribbean descent, while also providing individual members 'with the space to both "recover" and "discover"' their African identity, which had for centuries been stigmatised in the colonial West.[70] The Co-operative connected members to their African heritage through hair-braiding, dress-making, and re-naming ceremonies, which enabled women to rename themselves in African languages such as Yoruba, Zulu, and Xhosa. One woman remembered that 'as a Diasporan African born and raised in Moss Side…the name Olajumoke Sankofa resonates with the heartbeat of Africa, reconnecting me to the authentic essence of who I am'.[71] Renaming was thus not only a way for Sankofa to re-connect with her African heritage, but also a way for her to reconnect and realise her sense of self as an African woman living in Britain. As the Abasindi's African-centred

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[68] Watt, 'Silent Warriors', p. 9.
[69] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, p. 183.
[70] Watt and Jones, *Catching Hell and Doing Well,* p. 41.
[71] Watt and Jones, *Catching Hell and Doing Well*, p. 46.

praxis demonstrates, the path towards self-actualisation in Black women's groups spotlighted, rather than marginalised, their ethnic identities.

Sankofa's self-identification as a woman of African descent born in Moss Side is important here. In her study *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom,* Denise Noble's study has demonstrated how Black women of Caribbean descent in Britain constructed identities whereby their Caribbean island identities were lived by women through their values, practices, and ways of defining themselves as Black women living in Britain.[72] Significantly, their transnational identities played out when they linked their 'very local identities' in Britain to other 'national, transnational, regional and diasporic locations'.[73] She noted that drawing attention to their location in Britain enabled them to distinguish themselves from other locations, and allowed them to demonstrated that being a Black woman in Britain was different to being a Black woman in the Caribbean, Africa, or the United States of America.[74] In a similar way, Sankofa's attention to her Moss Side upbringing enabled her to forge an identity of Black British womanhood that drew from a diasporic culture, but which had its own distinction and character within that culture.

By reconnecting members with their African heritage, Black women's groups instilled a sense of pride and self-love among Black women. *Heart of the Race* expressed the need for Black women to rediscover a sense of pride in themselves, particularly through accepting and celebrating forms of African beauty. Hair-braiding was significant in this regard. Contributors to *Heart of the Race* noted how they were often ashamed of their Afro hair, as it did not meet Western beauty standards. 'The magazines told us to have straightened hair and fair skin', noted one contributor.[75] But Black women's groups taught

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[72] Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom*, p. 57.
[73] Ibid., pp. 57-58.
[74] Ibid., p. 58.
[75] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *Heart of the* Race, p. 223.

hair-braiding, encouraging members to learn the skills of their African heritage and become proud of their hair. The same contributor commented that:

> A lot of sisters began to braid, bead and cane-row their hair again, which was just another expression of our African heritage...As we got more conscious, it became a proud way to carry yourself. It signified so many cultural bonds for us, especially when we saw Black American women wearing the same styles. This was something which was firmly under our control![76]

In this way, learning and reconnecting with one's African culture and roots did not only help in resisting racism, but it had a multitude of other effects. It not merely imbued a sense of authority and control among Black women, but it gave them a sense of pride in their physical appearance. Furthermore, learning these skills also enabled them to forge a sense of identification with other Black women, increasing diasporic bonds across the Atlantic.

Outside of centres the spaces where members met also forged environments where Black women could nurture a form of Black female identity that was stigmatised in mainstream British society. Elouise Edwards, who had met Olive through her work in the BWMA, remembered that 'Olive and Kath [Locke, co-founder of the MBWC and Abasindi] and myself we used to meet quite regularly…we all lived very close together…if you wanted Olive, she was at Kath's house'.[77] Similarly, Deane recalled how their flat was often a central meeting spot for activists, 'I think people just knew about…the flat…people used to come and…stay…used to visit', and that the two would often cook and bake together, making 'Saturday soups' and rock cakes.[78]

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[76] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *Heart of the* Race, p. 224.
[77] LA, DYROM, Interview with Edwards.
[78] LA, DYROM, Inteview with Deane.

The relevance of meeting and cooking within the home should be considered in light of Black British women's experiences of housing in post-war Britain. As Connell has shown in his study of race in 1980s Britain, the front room was a site of sociability and empowerment for Black families, a place where they could entertain or play music from the Caribbean.[79] Drawing on Kennetta Hammond Perry, he has also argued that the act of home-making allowed Black women to undermine stereotypes that pathologised Black mothers, and that the front room 'represented a significant avenue of autonomous cultural expression'.[80] Similarly, bell hooks has argued that for Black women who have suffered discrimination in the public sphere, the home, or 'homeplace', can be a site of resistance and liberation struggle.[81] Drawing from the American context, hooks has argued that African Americans had historically been deprived of making their own homeplace due to the legacy of slavery and the economic structure of the United States. In turn she has considered the Black home as fertile ground to resist these struggles, as a site to 'redeem and reclaim the past, legacies of pain'.[82] Drawing from this scholarship, it is clear that by socialising and cooking in the home, Morris, Edwards, Deane, and Locke affirmed their belonging as women not only in Manchester, but also in Britain, while also forging spaces to resist the debilitating effects of societal racism.

For Black female activists in Britain, knowing, collecting, and documenting the histories of Black women could also serve as a way of understanding oneself and one's heritage, as well as undoing the effects of ethnocentric epistemologies that rendered Black women invisible. *Heart of the Race,* published in 1985 by members of OWAAD, was noteworthy in this regard. The contents of the book itself was significant in that it re-

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[79] Connell, *Black Handsworth ,*pp. 149–50.
[80] Connell, *Black Handsworth,* p. 150; See also Perry, *London is the Place for Me,* p. 78.
[81] bell hooks, *Yearning : Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990), p. 42.
[82] hooks, *Yearning*, p. 147.

connected readers with the longer ancestry of Black womanhood, with several chapters detailing the contribution of Black women to pre-enslavement labour industries in Africa and in the slave industries of the Caribbean.[83]

Yet, if we are to follow the logic of Gail Lewis, the penning of *Heart of the Race* itself was also a political act of becoming that would serve as a form of counter-knowledge that decolonised Western knowledge structures which had made Black women invisible. Drawing from psychoanalysis and Indigenous scholars such as Leanne Simpson, Lewis writes that the act of becoming is conceived in the space between presence and absence and that in this liminal space counter-histories and subaltern modes of being are created.[84] She notes that this 'presencing' is an:

> Epistemological and ontological praxis of emergence based on felt connection among human and non-human; ancestral and contemporary life. It…has the potential to detoxify the effects of colonial discourse (historical and contemporary) in which Indigenous peoples are rendered invisible and/or insensible.[85]

This statement is relevant for *Heart of the Race*, which was an act of becoming that flitted between presence and absence. The move to make what was absent and invisible (Black women and their history) become present and visible made *Heart of the Race* oscillate and exist between the past and the present. The authors recovered and remembered Black women's past narratives and ancestral histories, while also documenting their living conditions at the time of writing. In challenging absence the authors became the 'creative producers' of their own presence.[86] As a work of literature that engaged with absence and presence in this way, and by encouraging positive modes of selfhood among Black women,

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[83] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *Heart of the Race*, chap. 1.
[84] Gail Lewis, 'Questions of Presence'.
[85] Ibid., p. 4.
[86] Ibid., p. 14.

Heart of the Race enabled the authors and contributors to take part in a decolonising intellectual act that undid the effects of societal racism.

Newsletters provided another device that centred Black women's identities and histories, serving as a cultural outlet for Black female self-expression that resisted and challenged negative stereotypes that members encountered about themselves in the mainstream media. Following the large-scale migration from the Caribbean in the post-war decades, the depiction of Black women as villainous and parasitical permeated popular political and cultural discourse.[87] As noted in the previous chapter, politicians such as Enoch Powell ignited fears early on about Black and South Asian mothers draining the country's healthcare resources.[88] Meanwhile, in *A Troubled Area*, Jephcott portrayed an image of Black motherhood as isolated and tied to the home.[89] While this latter representation of lone Black motherhood was sympathetic, it was not constructed on Black women's own terms. Reflecting on *Black Sista,* the newsletter established by the north London-based Camden Black Sisters, Tsele noted that the founders 'wanted to write about our lives…the only time you find anything written about a black person is when they've done wrong…if you are doing something good or just of interest…it's not of interest'.[90] In this way, newsletters nurtured the need for Black women to re-establish their own voice in cultural representations of Black British womanhood.

In their wish to provide a platform for Black women's voices, newsletters, such as OWAAD's mouthpiece *FOWAAD,* invited members to submit feature articles and reviews on different aspects of global Black diasporic culture, and the pieces submitted helped women in their process of self-discovery. For instance, in a book review for *Sula*, written by

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[87] Sadiah Qureshi, 'Displaying Sara Baartman, the "Hottentot Venus"', *History of Science*, 42 (2004), 233–57.
[88] Tomlinson, 'Enoch Powell, Empires, Immigrants and Education ', p. 5.
[89] Jephcott, *A Troubled Area*; See also McCarthy, 'Pearl Jephcott and the Politics of Gender, Class and Race', pp. 785–88.
[90] LA, DYROM, Interview with Tsele.

Toni Morrison, the reviewer noted that, 'Morrison…writes about *our* lives, the lives of our grandmothers, and daughters. She touches so close and looks so deep into our souls that it is as if she has simply written down our thoughts as they come into our mind'.[91] By charting her engagement with Morrison's work, the anonymous author came to a sense of self that was constituted by an understanding that her experiences were shared with Black women throughout the Black diaspora.

In her study of Caribbean women's migrant life stories, Chamberlain has demonstrated that Caribbean women's subjectivities were often told through allying themselves with Black relatives and other Black women. Their stories represent 'not the autonomy, but the collectivity, of the individual'.[92] Similarly, Nydia Swaby has argued that 'shared historical forces' among Black and South Asian female activists in the 1970s and 1970s 'stimulated a positively articulated diaspora conscious and subsequently a political mobilisations aimed at re-inscribing subjectivity through appeals to a collective experience'.[93] While Swaby's discussion is drawing from the South Asian women's experience, her reasoning is still important here for this discussion. Her work illustrates how an acknowledgement of the shared experiences of oppression, sexism, and racism could produce an alternative mode of self-fashioning among Black women that drew from a shared consciousness. By articulating her identification with Morrison, and her broader sense of kinship with her female relatives, the review's author reinforced the way in which these newsletters allowed women to construct their sense of self through imagined female-centred relationships based on shared experiences but spread across geographical and temporal planes.

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[91] BCA, DAD, Dadzie/3/2/2, *FOWAAD,* '"Sula" by Toni Morrison', anon, 1980, p. 14. Emphasis in original.
[92] Chamberlain, 'The Global Self: Narratives of Caribbean Migrant Women', p. 159; On the importance of familial relation in contributing to the Black female subjectivities, see Noble, chap. 3.
[93] Swaby, 'Gendered Political Blackness', p. 14.

These grassroots magazines also invited women to share their personal experiences of navigating racism and microaggressions in Britain through different art forms. For instance, in a cartoon strip from *FOWAAD*, 'Sister Owanda' enters her public library asking for a book by Buchi Emecheti or Toni Morrison, to which the white librarian responds, 'I remember we did have one novel by a knee-grow writer…that lovely story about those slaves…er, what was it called again [sic]'.[94] Similarly, in 1984, the Haringey Black Women's Centre newsletter, *United We Stand,* published a poem entitled, 'My Home', in which the author Gwendalyn Goodman narrated her personal experience of everyday racism:

> [..]
>
> Some asked me, "why leave your country
>
> And come here?" "Why don't you go back
>
> To the jungle where you came from?"
>
> "go back to Africa." I know who my
>
> Ancestors are, more than I can say for
>
> Some, like you for one, she pushed her
>
> Toffee nose up into the air it temped
>
> Me to push my brolly up there
>
> [..] [95]

While these forms of self-expression indicated that Black women constructed their sense of self through their negative interactions with whiteness, these interactions did not define

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[94] *FOWAAD*, p. 14.
[95] BCA, DAD, Dadzie/1/5, *United We Stand*, 'My home', Gwendalyn Goodman, 2, 1984, pp. 10-11.

them.[96] Recounting these encounters created an opportunity to construct an assertive self that resisted and mocked this racism, while also allowing the women to make broader claims about personal belonging in Britain, demonstrated in the final line of Goodman's poem: 'I must be strong seeing what I'm around, I'm strong because England is now my home'.

There were also women's writing groups in Manchester. In 1987, the poet and writer SuAndi set up BlackScribe in Manchester, the first Black women's poetry collective.[97] Unfortunately, the group folded in 1990 due to difficulties in organising and 'diverging individual career paths'.[98] However, in the early 1990s, former BlackScribe member Pauline Omoboye set up Nailah, another Black women's writing group based in Moss Side.[99] The aim of Nailah was, in their words, to 'encourage Black and Asian women to come together and to supply a magazine that will publish women's ideas and feelings'.[100] The poetry Omoboye submitted to Nailah's magazine explored themes that explored the burdens put upon Black women in everyday life. In 'Coping' (1991), Omoboye reveals the exhaustive pressures placed upon Black mothers:

I cope

Four kids

A home

I cope

[…]

[96] For whiteness, see Bonnett, *White Identities*; Trina Jones and Kimberly Jade Norwood, 'Aggressive encounters & white fragility: deconstructing the trope of the angry black woman', *Iowa Law Review*, 102 (2016), 2017–70; Chen, 'The contentious field of whiteness studies'; Bill Schwarz, 'Wild Power: the Aftershocks of Decolonization and Black Power', in *Global White Nationalism*, ed. by Daniel Geary, Camilla Schofield, and Jennifer Sutton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), pp. 71–102.

[97] 'SuAndi – Commonword' <https://www.cultureword.org.uk/commonword-writers-gallery/suandi-2/> [accessed 10 May 2021].

[98] Nicola Abram, 'SuAndi', in *Black British Women's Theatre: Intersectionality, Archives, Aesthetics*, ed. by Nicola Abram (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), pp. 201–27 (p. 205).

[99] Lynne Pearce, Corinne Fowler, and Robert Crawshaw, *Postcolonial Manchester: Diaspora Space and the Devolution of Literary Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015).

[100] AIU, MBC, GB3228.8/14, Nailah Black Women's Writers Collective, 5, 1991, p. i.

Be doctor

Be nurse

Teacher

[…]

Father...mother

Peacemaker

Dictator

Councillor

Listener

Ignorer

Judge and Blooming Jury

And you have the cheek to call me the weaker sex

Jesus Christ

I definitely Cope [101]

In 'Coping', Omoboye's poem spoke of experience of simply surviving in Britain. Her

reference to the varying pressures placed upon Black women harked back to the earlier

academic work of Carby, who argued that women had to juggle being both a mother and

labourer. In this way, while poetry was personal to Omoboye's personal experience, it spoke

to a much broader Black female-centred intellectual tradition of centring the unique

experiences of Black womanhood.

And yet, as Nailah's mission statement suggests, the writing collective sought to

associate with other women outside the Black diaspora, which was concurrent with how

Black feminists of the 1980s view Black women's cultural expression. The authors of *Heart*

of the Race noted that 'any expression of a Black woman of her cultural and political

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[101] Nailah Black Women's Writers Collective, 5, 1991, p. 3.

identity must be seen to represent centuries of struggle. Our sense of self cannot be divorced from our collective consciousnesses'.[102] Pertinently, the authors also argued that 'any act of cultural defiance…whether it be through song, dance, our use of language...or a poem – testifies to our existence *outside* the roles in which British society has cast us'.[103] This sentences speaks to 'Coping' in particular, in which Omoboye uses poetry to refute and challenge the multitude of responsibilities and roles that she must adhere to in British society.

But perhaps the appeal of Nailah extended beyond the Black women of Manchester. The city had a robust South Asian community, many of whom lived in the adjacent wards of Rusholme and Longsight. There was often inter-ethnic mixing between Manchester's Black and South Asian communities. For example, BWMA founder Elouise Edwards also ran the yearly Roots festival, which sought to educate local children on their cultural background through a variety of events, such as food festivals and dance shows.[104] In many of the photographs from the events, South Asian women were also present, particularly at the fashion shows where they would wear traditional Indian and Pakistani dress.[105] Thus, while some groups like Abasindi centred Black women's experiences, this did not lead to factionalism among Black and South Asian activists in Manchester. Moreover, readers of Nailah's magazine outside of Manchester also felt an affinity with the published poetry collections. One reader from Derry, in Northern Ireland, explained that the collections had 'encouraged me to write poems and short stories', while another reader wrote in saying that 'as women, your poetry has a strength of its own and the mighty power of the word'.[106] Thus, Black women's writing groups provided another way for Black women to give shape

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[102] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, p. 212.
[103] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, p. 212 Emphasis in original.
[104] AIU, EE, GB3228.5/1/21, 'Draft version of "Roots Five years on"', n.d, p. 4; See also Chapter 3.
[105] AIU, EE, GB3228.5/1/4, Fashion show photographs for a Roots event, n.d.
[106] Nailah Black Women's Writers Collective, 5, 1991, p. 7.

to their personal experiences, while also encouraging other women to be introspective, thereby fostering an imagined community between women that pivoted around empowering female selfhood.

In London, as Black women's groups drew more members, internal divisions began to surface as it became apparent that exclusion from white British society was not always enough to maintain unity among female activists of colour. Lindiwe Tsele recalled divides over finance and funding which manifested between OWAAD and the Southall Black Sisters (SBS), a women's group largely made up of Sikh and Hindu women from Gujurati and Punjabi communities. OWAAD, as a state-funded organisation, was largely dependent on what the Greater London Council (GLC) was able to offer, meanwhile the SBS were able 'to raise money from their connections…it left a bitterness', remembered Tsele.[107] According to Tsele, these divisions over funding were strongly tied up with notions of ethnic identity. 'When they [the two groups] started it was all blacks together and now that they are bringing in more money they wanted to be Asian...there were a lot of tears'.[108]

The tension between different ethnic groups within OWAAD hints at similar modes of identity work that South Asian women in Britain were undergoing at the time. During the 1980s, cultural discourses available to ethnic minorities in the 1980s were often homogenising. 'Political Blackness' was used as an identifier within the anti-racist movement to signify the joint struggle between African Caribbean and South Asian activists. [109] However, the incident described by Tsele highlights the confidence of Black and South Asian women in Britain in moving away from such labels and articulating an identity on their own terms. As Swaby has explored in her analysis of the uses of gendered political Blackness in

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[107] LA, DYROM, Interview with Tsele.
[108] LA, DYROM, Interview with Tsele.
[109] For more on political blackness, see Kehinde Andrews, 'The Problem of Political Blackness: Lessons from the Black Supplementary School Movement', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39 (2016), 2060–78 (pp. 2068–69).

OWAAD, by the 1980s as the ideological policing of blackness hinged on 'black-Africanness', with discussions over the constitution of 'blackness' resulting in hostility being directed towards South Asian activists.[110] As such, demands from the SBS 'to be Asian' and to be self-supporting financially indicate parallel desires among Asian women in the 1980s to turn away from broad ethnic identifiers that did not speak to their reality.

Internal divisions also centred on which campaign issues to support. Reflecting on her time as a member of the Camden Black Sisters in the 1980s, Tsele recalled an awkward moment in the group's history that had stuck in her memory. The group was divided over the subject of sex work, which came to a head during a meeting with Camden Council when the group's manager was found supporting the rights and protection of sex workers. The manager argued that 'we can't be seen to be all against them [sex workers]', articulating a form of universal female solidarity that did not sit comfortably with other members. As Judith Walkowitz has examined, in the early 1980s, 'prostitution' became a central issue among women's rights campaigners who had raised concerns about the economic basis of sex work, as well as violent treatment of sex workers.[111] However, Tsele and other members were concerned that by supporting sex workers they would be defined as such. In an emotive recollection of the event, Tsele recalled that she and other workers objected 'because it came out like we were the prostitutes…when we came out of that meeting we were not talking…she was sat there and we were asking her what the fuck were you talking about [sic]'.[112]

Given the context of the intense scrutiny of Black women's sexual practices it is not surprising that Tsele was concerned about appearing as a sex worker. In the 1970s, Black

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[110] Swaby, 'Gendered Political Blackness', p. 21.
[111] Walkowitz, 'Feminism and the Politics of Prostitution'.
[112] LA, DYROM, Interview with Tsele.

feminist campaigners revealed that the Depo-Provera contraceptive injection had been

disproportionately administered to Black and South women, demonstrating the doctors had

not only been monitoring their sexual practices, but had also believed that they should be

regulated.[113] In *Heart of the* Race, one woman described how she was prescribed numerous

types of contraceptives:

> I was given another type of pill, but these brought me up in lumps and rashes…they
>
> gave me yet another brand. This one gave me migraines…They suggesting [sic]
>
> fitting an IUD. That was fine…but it kept slipping so they had to take it. Then my
>
> friend introduced me to one of the low oestrogen pills…because it was a low dosage
>
> pill…they didn't think I was responsible enough to take it regularly at the same time
>
> everyday. [114]

Furthermore, as the book also demonstrates, Black feminists of Tsele's generation were also

aware of the stereotype of Black women in films who took on roles as 'the Black whore and

seductress, exotic and amoral'.[115] Thus because Black women were considered, in the words

of Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, a 'high promiscuity risk', false assumptions were commonly

made and reproduced about their sexual habits by healthcare professionals and the media.[116]

By standing firm in their opposition to prostitution as a campaign issue, Tsele and her

colleagues asserted their ownership over their personal identities in opposition to some of

the universalising tendencies of mainstream British feminism, and British society more

broadly.

Lesbianism also grew to be a cleaving force within Black women's activist groups.

Over the years, lesbians within Black women's groups wanted greater recognition of their

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[113] Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England,* p. 73.
[114] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *Heart of the Race,* p. 102.
[115] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, *Heart of the Race,* p. 193.
[116] Ibid., 102.

personal experiences of homophobia in Britain. However, other activists felt that pressing the issue would draw away from the aims of Black women-centred activism. At the OWAAD conference in 1981, there were greater calls for the acceptance of lesbians within the movement, a controversial demand that led to uproar and walkouts.[117] Reflecting on this time, Stella Dadzie, founder of OWAAD and writer of the *Heart of the Race*, remembered in 2011:

> I remember sort of feeling angered about it at the time…irritable with it, because it was just after the Brixton riots and youths were being picked up…I certainly remember sort of feeling, well if they want that, let them go ahead and do it, but that shouldn't be what we're arguing about right now. [118]

Dadzie's testimony is demonstrative of the limitations of self-expression within female-centred political groups, particularly in matters of 'mainstream' causes such as police violence. Rather than take Dadzie's comment as a sign of low-level anti-lesbian sentiment within Black women's groups, it should instead be taken as an example of the outcomes of fostering environments where individual personal experiences were centred. While lesbian members' sense of self was the source of antagonism within the movement, that Black lesbian women were able to draw attention to their unique experiences is revelatory of the confessionary environment that Black women's groups proffered.

In Manchester, conflicts around prostitution rarely surfaced in the memories of activists, yet differences in political leanings could still pose an obstacle for creating solidarity. For instance, while Olive Morris had an important impact on the women she met in Moss Side, some members felt that Morris often overlooked local issues. When discussing the conflict between the Black Women's Co-Operative and Ron Phillips over the mismanagement of company funds, Tsele noted that Olive 'was not in with those sorts of

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[117] Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England, 1968-1993*, p. 89.
[118] British Library [BL], Sisterhood and After: the Women's Liberation Oral History Project [SAA], C1420/20/05, Interview with Stella Dadzie, 2011.

fights, those were just for us, grassroots', noting that she 'just used to come and help us with the intellectual bits, about how the system was working'.[119] Other women who knew Morris also drew attention to her structural approach to the social issues of the area. Maria Noble noted that Morris was 'an internationalist…she was very outward looking…so not at all parochial'.[120] For some members, however, Morris's disregard for these 'parochial' issues served as a distraction from the problems relevant to Moss Side. The issues that appeared to Morris as a reflection of the broader system of capitalism were, to others, the everyday problems tied to Moss Side. While these underlying differences never resulted in explicit antagonism, the very fact that these individual leanings existed, and that members acknowledged them, demonstrated how engaging in Black female-centred activism provided women with an outlet for political self-examination and expression, regardless of what form it took.

Black women's groups and centres thus opened avenues of self-expression in a variety of forms that were not always available to them outside these spaces. They encouraged women to look inwards through a variety of cultural infrastructures that provided their members with spaces to articulate a liberated self, which spoke not only to the shared diasporic experience of Black womanhood, but also to their personal experiences of being a Black woman in post-war Britain. While fractures and fissures took place, internal conflicts served Black women with a tool to construct a sense of self by reflecting on their own political beliefs.

Remembering Black women's groups

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[119] LA, DYROM, Interview with Tsele.
[120] LA, DYROM, Interview with Maria Noble, 2009.

Thus far, this chapter has examined the memories of Black women in order to sketch out a history of inner-city Black women's groups and centres in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The final section builds on oral history theory to explore these memories further to reveal how Black women articulated their sense of self when asked to narrate their lives around their engagement in female-centred activism. Given that the women of the DYROM oral history project were all involved in contributing to the history of Olive Morris, it is unsurprising that the political activist played a prominent role in the women's life stories. One of these women was Wilma Deane. Deane was born in 1956, and first arrived in Manchester in 1974 to study Law at the University. Deane had migrated from Nevis in the Caribbean at the age of five to Leeds, where she passed the eleven plus and went on to study in a 'traditional English grammar school'.[121] At the beginning of her second year of university, after attending one of the infamous student nights at the West Indian Social Club in Moss Side in 1975, Deane met Morris. It was through her friendship with Morris that Deane also became more politically active, and the two young women joined the BWMA. Moreover, it was through Morris's contacts in London that Deane was able to get her first placement with a law firm in Brixton.

In her interview, Deane pivoted her transition from a shy law student to a political activist and social welfare lawyer around her first meeting with Morris. Reflecting on her years as a student, Deane noted: 'I grew up in, in Leeds, in Yorkshire. I was very shy, coming to university was just an enormous thing, I'd had a very sheltered upbringing, *and then I met Olive*… So I really sort of quite liked, tagging along sort of thing because she just seemed so fired up and, and so on, yeah'[122] In her recollection, Deane's encounter with Morris (italicised) served as an 'epiphanic moment', which Abrams describes as an incident

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[121] LA, DYROM, Interview with Deane.
[122] LA, DYROM, Interview with Deane. Emphasis added.

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or event that bridges a respondent's past self to their mature adult self.[123] Deane was almost self-deprecating about her timidity and somewhat embarrassed about her lack of political education prior to meeting Morris. To make sense of this past self, Deane employed her encounter with Morris to reconcile her past self as an ordinary student with the politically-engaged woman she was at the time of narrating. Morris thus became a thread that was woven through Deane's multiple selves as she passed through her youth into adulthood.

Throughout her oral history interview, Deane continued to give Morris a central role in her life story. Asked whether Morris taught her to be more vocal about political issues, Deane remarked:

> Yes…I think so certainly…I might have stayed as this, you know, little law student, but she sort of introduced me to sort of ways into the community, I mean, I might have got, got in there anyway… what she did for me with working in that law firm was fantastic because it actually made me see yes, you could, I could do that and it gave me that experience as well, so it was, it was a fantastic experience, and she, you know, really put herself out for me, you know, was putting me up in her house, I mean we'd only, you know, met as students, and she was really helping me, so, so yeah, she did, and it was, it was an inspiration, and like talking about some of the, 'cause I've spent all my career doing, you know, sort of social welfare law areas, and I think Olive's part of that.[124]

Deane's reflections on her other life courses and her repeated use of self-deprecating language demonstrated her sense of discomfort at hypothesising about what might have happened had she not met Morris. As such, Deane was assertive in giving Morris a starring role in navigating her life story, whether that was providing Deane with the confidence to

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[123] Abrams, 'Liberating the Female Self', p. 22.
[124] LA, DYROM, Interview with Deane.

pursue law, housing her, or simply serving as a source of inspiration. However, rather than considering this as disempowering, her concluding affirmative remark indicates that Deane reached some clarity about the positive and transformative impact that this interpersonal relationship had on her sense of self.

Although enjoying a close friendship with Morris, Deane remembered feeling lacking in self-confidence in her presence because 'she was just so damn confident, she was energetic, things were happening'. Reflecting both admiration and envy, Deane remembered, 'I used to think, "Gosh, I wish I could speak up the way that she could"'.[125] Diana Watt, a member of the MBWC, and later Abasindi, also articulated similar memories. When asked to reflect on her first interaction with Olive, Watt commented that her vast political vernacular 'was a bit scary…you kind of closed down rather that [sic] opened up'.[126] This introversion was not because of Morris, Watt recalled, but was due to her 'own sense of inadequacies'. In these reflections, Morris's own confidence and eloquence encouraged both Deane and Watt to be introspective and examine themselves and their own identity later in life. However, it is likely that external cultural factors played a role in shaping both these memories. By the early 2000s, Morris had garnered a status among many activists as an articulate and outspoken young woman. For instance, photographs of the activist often show her at protests confronting police officers or with placards openly criticising the state. The front cover of the Squatters Handbook also famously shows Morris scaling the front of a terraced house.[127] Such visual representations have held up Morris's overall reputation as a fearless activist, and they may have fed into these women's recollections of her. Yet, rather than interpreting these feelings as false or a product of

[125] LA, DYROM, Interview with Deane.
[126] LA, DYROM, Interview with Watt.
[127] LA, Olive Morris Collection, IV 279/1/20/10, *Squatter's Handbook*, 1979.

external factors, these memories demonstrated the way in which the interview process aided both women in actualising deeper understanding of their past selves.

Indeed, the way in which both women spoke of Morris was indicative of the broader pattern among the DYROM contributors to provide Morris with an almost ethereal status. This status came across through the women's tendency to describe Morris in abstract terms. For instance, Deane remembered, 'she was a person if she came into the room, she had like this really, the way she used to laugh or, you know, if she saw something…', remembered Deane.[128] Similarly, Maria Noble, who was influential in the foundation of the Abasindi Co-Operative, remembered the 'great sense of energy from Olive, you know, just great'. [129] Both Noble and Deane were unable to state what it was about Morris that made her so enigmatic: Deane was unable to finish her sentences, and Noble provided her with an ill-defined 'energy'. Both descriptions gave Morris an almost godly status, similarly for Elouise Edwards, Morris was one of a kind: 'I never met anybody like her, somebody who was prepared to give their all, to help, she was a steadfast Black woman, proud, beautiful, not afraid to speak her mind'.[130] In this way, Edwards situated Morris at a protracted distance from the everyday individual, elevating her to a higher and almost celebrity-like position.[131] Indeed, by giving Morris celebrity status in their memories, the women work together to construct a cultural memory of Black female activism. The collective memory of Morris served as the juncture where women's individual memories come together to create a shared discourse of Black female history that they could all participate in.[132] In this way, the women

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[128] LA, DYROM, Interview with Deane.
[129] LA, DYROM, Interview with Noble.
[130] LA, DYROM, Interview with Edwards.
[131] For the history of celebrity, see Sharon Marcus, *The Drama of Celebrity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), p. 50.
[132] Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith, 'Feminism and Cultural Memory: An Introduction', *Signs*, 28 (2002), 1–19 (p. 7).

were not simply elevating Morris's status as an individual, but were carving out and affirming their own version of Black British womanhood.

One must also question the extent to which the women knew Morris, particularly considering her brief stay in Manchester. It is likely the women exaggerated their accounts of Morris in a way that she could serve 'counter-memory', a site or figure of remembrance that challenges official historical narratives.[133] As noted in this thesis's introduction, Morris's fame still circulates only within certain activist and academic networks, which may suggests that the hagiographic memories of Morris were an attempt on behalf of the women to challenge hegemonic accounts of Black British history. As Rob Waters has noted, official narratives of Black British history have often failed to include women's lives.[134] For instance, in *Staying Power* (1984), the ground-breaking history of Black people in Britain by white historian Peter Fryer, the only mention of a Black woman was the nurse Mary Seacole. This omission, as Waters has argued, constructed an image and legacy of Black resistance that was both young and male.[135]

From the 1970s, there was a distinctive shift among Black female activists to forge a shared history of Black British womanhood that came from the voice of Black women themselves. In the introduction to *Heart of the Race,* the authors wrote: 'over the past ten years, we had seen the appearance of volume of material documenting our struggles as Black *people*, and of course we welcomed this for we had relied for too long on the version of our story put forward by white historians and sociologists'.[136] The need to document a history of Black British womanhood was central to the aims of the early Black British feminism and

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[133] Hirsch and Smith, 'Feminism and Cultural Memory', p. 4.
[134] Rob Waters, 'Thinking Black: Peter Fryer's Staying Power and the Politics of Writing Black British History in the 1980s', *History Workshop Journal*, 82 (2016), 104–20 (p. 113).
[135] Rob Waters, 'Thinking Black', p. 113.
[136] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, p. 1.

these themes are carried through in the DYROM interviews, which worked as part of this effort to construct a Black-female constructed history of Black female resistance.

Furthermore, there may have been a generational aspect to the need to preserve the history of Morris. For instance, Mary Seacole continued to be an important figure. In Brixton, there was a Mary Seacole Crafts Group, and she was also the celebrated historical figure at the 1983 Roots Festival, the women-run festival aimed at educating Moss Side's Black children about their identity and heritage.[137] Seacole was important to Black female activists, particularly those first-generation migrants such as Edwards, as she represented a form of Black female respectability that conformed to modern British values and that was necessary for those attempting to integrate into post-war British culture. She was a nurse to the British army, and her portrait in the National Portrait Gallery demonstrates her approval from the British establishment.[138] However, it is in relation to Seacole that Morris has served as a 'counter-memory', becoming a figure of Black female resistance and anti-statism that Black female activists of the late 1970s and 1980s embraced, but which was, and is, rarely portrayed in British cultural discourse.[139] Thus, Morris largely operated as a cultural icon for the period and a vessel of the individual life-stories of the women who knew her and the product of a collective process of female storytelling. However, in turn, by participating in the process of constructing this collective memory through their own life stories, these women's self-identities also became intertwined with, and constituted by, a collaborative, female-centred narrative project. In this way, both individual and collective identities became rooted in the memory of female activism.

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[137] BCA, Runnymede Collection [hereafter RC], RC/RF/23/02,'Why a Black Women's Centre, *GLC Women's Committee Bulletin,* 14 March 1984, p. 21; AIU, EE, GB3228.5/2/6, Roots Festival Programme, 1983.
[138] 'Mary Seacole - National Portrait Gallery'
<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw84190/Mary-Seacole> [accessed 8 January 2020].
[139] For more on the antagonism between Black women's groups and the state, see Stella Dadzie's oral history testimony, BL, SAA, Interview with Dadzie.

While the women used their memories of Morris as a rhetorical device to construct a collective identity of Black British womanhood, there is some tension over the elevation of someone like Morris to such a significant status. In an interview in 2019, Stella Dadzie, who co-wrote *The Heart of the Race*, dismisses the notion of celebrity-making within Black female networks:

> One of the things that was pounded into me was never ever to speak on my own behalf…to some extent to subvert the endeavours of the state to pick us off by not naming ourselves…it was a conscious endeavour to hide behind the collective because that was a form of safety, particularly in this celebrity culture which consciously tries to divide and rule by picking certain people out at the expense of others.[140]

Dadzie's statement, which is indicative of the wish to bring Morris's status to a human level, was not motivated by her wish to downplay her status. Indeed Morris has her own section within *The Heart of the Race*. Rather, Dadzie it is likely wanted to remain loyal to the ideals of Black activism. Dadzie's resistance to 'celebrity culture', so often associated with the West, shows the continuation of Black female-centred thought in her later life.

In a similar vein, Diana Watt, one of the co-founders of Abasindi, positioned the Manchester Black Women's Co-Operative, rather than Morris, as playing a central role in changing the course of her life story. Watt had trained as a secretary in the 1970s, and after she met Kathleen Locke, she became involved in the MBWC and was a co-founder of Abasindi. Later in life, she returned to higher education and became an academic, writing a history of the Abasindi centre. In her life story, Watt had a distinct sense of her limited opportunities as a young woman in the 1970s, tied to the context of the deindustrialised

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[140] Cambridge Sociology, *Black British Feminisms: The Heart of the Race*, 2019
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qU2ns_nKbds> [accessed 5 July 2021].

North where professional corridors to Black women were restricted to service sector clerical work:

> I left school – the main thing was to train as a secretary, I didn't had [sic] any aspirations beyond that because I saw that as the limit, 'cause my parents – again they are from the same period as Olive's parents, and my parents, their main advice was, "we work in a factory, you work in an office", so I thought, "I have achieved, you know, I work in an office". When I became involved in the MBWC, then you hear the voice saying… unlike the voice that you heard at school, which says, "you can't", the voice that you were getting in the community was "you have a responsibility to". And it's through my involvement in community activity that influenced me to get back to education, yeah.[141]

In this statement, Watt's inner voice was a narrative device that allowed her to construct and cohere different versions of her past selves.[142] Through her inner dialogue, she transitioned from a young woman with limited opportunities, to an assertive individual who had a social responsibility to induce change in her area and re-enter into higher education. She positioned this modern sense of self as distinct from her parent's generation, and her involvement in the MBWC was the turning point that allowed this transformation in her subjectivity.

While Watt saw the MBWC as playing a transformative role in her life story, she credited her long-term personal development to Abasindi. When asked about the impact of the MBWC and Abasindi to her life, Watt remembered, 'so the Black Women's Cooperative was a catalyst to me in terms of becoming politically involved in the black community, but my maturity came through the Abasindi Cooperative'.[143] The longer-term impact that Abasindi had on Watt's personal growth was demonstrated in the way in which the core

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141 LA, DYROM, Interview with Watt.
142 For coherence, see Abrams, 'Liberating the Female Self', p. 13.
143 LA, DYROM, Interview with Watt.

values and aims of the Co-operative permeated her life story. Remembering that Black women's centres were intent on challenging representations of Black women and the Black community, it would be expected that Watt framed her life around constructing a positive identity of the Black community. When discussing her involvement in setting up a supplementary school for young Black children at Abasindi, she noted that, 'so we had throughout the place images, positive images, reinforcing images, you know, which the young people can begin to see that "OK. This is about us"'.[144] Moreover, at the end of her interview, when asked why she got involved in the oral history project, Watt said that, 'lots of our contribution as women, or just generally as black people in this country, is not recorded, never mind that of women. So, I just thought it was important for the organisation and the people who took part in creating it to be recognised as an important part of our history in this country'.[145] Watt thus framed her life story around working to improve the representation not simply of Black women, but of Black people in the historical record. She reverted to the central aims of Black women's centres to be self-defining and self-determining, demonstrating the longevity of the Black women's centre in the construction of her life story.

In the same way as Watt, Elouise Edwards considered Morris as having a significant, but not transformative, impact on her life story. When Morris arrived in Manchester, Edwards already had an established reputation in Moss Side for her community politics, having begun her political life as a housing activist in the late 1960s campaigning against insufficient council housing and inadequate play facilities for children. By the time she met Morris, Edwards had established the Black Women's Mutual Aid, and was running the yearly Roots festival. And yet, Edwards considered Morris's arrival as a particularly potent

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[144] LA, DYROM, Interview with Watt.
[145] Ibid.

moment in her life: 'yes, one of the best days of my life was when I met Olive, yeah'.[146] On

the other hand, there are points in Edwards's life story where her memory of Morris

generated some discomfort in her sense of self. Demonstrating a similar form of reflexivity

to Deane, Edwards reflected, 'sometimes in my moments you know, I think about

her…[and] what would have, what would life have been like if we were still together as a

group, after she died you know things, things just went pear-shaped'.[147] Unlike Deane,

whose hypothesising allowed her to reach a sense of composure, an oral history term to

mean a satisfaction with one's life story, Edwards's reflexivity was more despondent,

indicating a sense of unfinished business that came about through Morris's premature

death.[148]

Similarly, Maria Noble, who was a member of Abasindi, demonstrated a similar

sense of nostalgia and loss with the direction of contemporary Black activism in her

interview when she reflected, 'I kind of think where is that tradition [of activism], where has

it gone?'[149] There are some reasons for this sense of futility in these women's narratives. By

2008, Abasindi had closed its doors permanently, as many of its organisers left to pursue

careers and have families. Moreover, on a national level, many Black women's centres had

closed. After Thatcherite policies dismantled the financial and regulatory infrastructures that

allowed these groups to function, local authority grants were increasingly hard to come by in

the deindustrialised North and in a post-GLC London. This lack of funding, coupled with

the personal priorities of its founders, made Black women's centres unable to survive. These

smatterings of despondency are therefore likely to be a product of having to recall a vivid

period of activism within the context of neoliberal Britain. However, while displaying a

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[146] LA, DYROM, Interview with Edwards.
[147] Ibid.
[148] For composure, see Summerfield, 'Dis/composing the subject', pp. 91–92.
[149] LA, DYROM, Interview with Noble.

sense of disappointment with the shape of contemporary community activism, these rose-tinted glasses allowed the women to distinguish their sense of self from successive generations. Both women's sense of nostalgia gave them a means to construct a sense of self that identified with the positive attributes of past activists, whose identities, they considered, were defined by sacrifice, solidarity, and tradition.

Indeed, Edwards's life-long history of helping people, particularly women, was the dominant theme of her life story. When she reflected on growing up in Guyana in the 1940s, Edwards remembered, 'I used to run the house, look after the children and everything, and of course that was when I realised you know, that there were things that women are more capable of doing'. [150] Later in her story when discussing her professional transition from her role as a kitchen worker to her job at Moss Side welfare advice centre, she reflected:

> I was working in the kitchen on the pot machine, and they would actually come to me to ask me how to do so-so-so-so-so, yeah and after a while I got a job at the advice centre, and things just took off from there, you know, I'd had enough background, and I felt strong enough you know.[151]

Edwards rooted her life story in her early experiences of helping people, a trait that accompanied her through her early memories of migration, and then into her eventual community role in Moss Side. While she wanted the listener to know that her job at the advice centre was the turning point in her life, her history of aiding people was in fact a recurring theme that enabled Edwards to construct a coherent life story structured around helping others.

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[150] LA, DYROM, Interview with Edwards.
[151] Ibid.

Not all women in the oral history project displayed the same sense of narrative continuity in their story. Lindiwe Tsele came to England from South Africa as part of a theatre group in the 1950s and decided to stay rather than return to South African apartheid. The first part of Tsele's life story has some narrative coherence, moving through a storyline that transitioned from racial exclusion to belonging. Asked to comment on her first impressions of Britain, she commented:

> It was such a disappointment because when we first came…you came with high expectations that England has not apartheid [sic]…and then you come here and that's not the case, you try to get rooms, you try to get rooms, there used to be little cards in windows saying no Irish, no dogs, no blacks.[152]

Tsele's feeling of exclusion and disappointment was not unique, but was representative of most of the testimonies of migrant workers who came to Britain in the post-war years. In particular, 'no Irish, no dogs, no blacks' is a familiar refrain echoed in most histories of post-war Britain, and is demonstrative of the informal 'colour bar' that greeted most migrant workers looking for housing in Britain.[153] Ironically, despite her feeling of exclusion, by repeating this refrain, Tsele situated herself within this narrative tradition associated with the Black experience, demonstrating, whether consciously or not, her belonging to the Black migrant community in Britain.

Tsele used these initial narratives of exclusion to set the scene for the eventual sense of belonging she found among women and in women's groups. When she finished a diploma in London, Tsele moved to Manchester, and like Edwards and Watt, she framed her

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[152] LA, DYROM, Interview with Tsele.
[153] Julia Drake, 'From "Colour Blind" to "Colour Bar": Residential Separation in Brixton and Notting Hill, 1948-75', in *Consensus or Coercion? : the State, the People and Social Cohesion in Post-War Britain*, ed. by Lawrence Black (Cheltenham: New Clarion, 2001), pp. 82–106 (p. 92); Webster, *Imagining Home*, p. xiii; Perry, *London is the Place for Me,* p. 83.

encounters with Black women as having a transformative effect on her life. Reflecting on getting a secretarial job in Manchester, she commented:

> That's where everything was happening and I was very pleased with that because it was Caribbean women who had appointed an African as their manager, now that meant that they had moved psychologically… when I got a job in Manchester it was a big boost of confidence between us, the Caribbean's, the Africans and I dare say after all these years, I think it's nearly thirty years , isn't it? I'm still friends with those women.[154]

Tsele's initial narratives of exclusion contrasted with her feelings of belonging that she found upon meeting other women. While this was not a political role, this initial encounter with Black women served as an important precedent for pinpointing her burgeoning involvement in Black female politics, and Tsele's life story tells of an extraordinary tour of several Black women's centres in Britain. She held a job at the BWG, and she then helped to establish Abasindi Co-Operative in Manchester, and later returned to work at the Camden Black Sisters.

As Tsele's story progressed, she outlined some of the struggles she encountered when her personal beliefs came against some of the dominant ideals of Black female politics. For instance, the subject of lesbianism featured heavily in Tsele's narrative and was closely tied up with the construction of her sense of self. In one instance, Tsele spoke about how her opposition to women's marital oppression meant fellow female activists labelled her a lesbian:

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[154] LA, DYROM, Interview with Tsele.

A lot are now embarrassed to say they were lesbians, others are out and out

lesbians...but there's a lot of others who are like me, who wanted their independence,

but has nothing to do with lesbianism and I think we have fallen into those categories

by choice, because it doesn't mean that if you can't stand repression in your marriage,

you are ipso facto a lesbian…All we were thinking we were doing was to stop

women being so subservient in their marriages.[155]

Tsele's testimony revealed her difficulty in constructing a sense of self through her

involvement in OWAAD. She struggled to articulate where she sat within the Black female

activist history and ultimately, she was unable to find any coherence in her statement. She

moved from associating with the lesbian faction to admitting to choosing the category of

'lesbian' as a subject position, but then rejected the label altogether. Although she did not

identify as lesbian, throughout the rest of her testimony Tsele constantly gravitated to the

'lesbian issue' and 'the thing of lesbianism' that plagued her memory of OWAAD. While

the initial conflict showed her own efforts at distinction and selfhood during the period, her

memory of OWAAD also indicated that the organisation ultimately failed in allowing her to

articulate her sense of self in later life.

While she struggled to find a sense of self within her memory of OWAAD, Tsele

was more certain of her position as a part of a legacy of Black activism. Throughout her life-

story, Tsele continuously identified with politics and activists in and of the African diaspora.

Commenting on her social milieu upon arriving to Britain, where her life story began, she

remembered:

That's how we got involved with everybody, in fact, I think staying over here has

made the dream of Pan-Africanism a reality because we were able to meet black

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[155] LA, DYROM, Interview with Tsele.

people from all over the world, from America, from the Caribbean, from West

Africa, Central Africa, East Africa even Australia and New Zealand.[156]

Later, when reflecting on the in-fighting that took place between Abasindi and the male

activists in Moss Side, Tsele commented, that:

> We had to do those fights, but it made me very, very aware like, when I was
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> interviewing women in Zimbabwe, where they fought with their men even though
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> they were fighting, it was always the men that wanted to bully the women, so it was
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> internationally there.[157]

Tsele framed the defining conflicts of her life within a narrative framework that aligned her

experiences with other women in the Black diaspora. Similarly, when commenting on what

she had learned from other women in the various organisations she was involved in, she

chose to focus on Claudia Jones, the deceased communist exile who lived in London and set

up the *West Indian Gazette*. She noted, 'I don't know anybody clearer politically than

Claudia Jones. I don't…I've been smitten since'.[158] Thus while she often found conflict

through her involvement in Black politics, Tsele maintained narrative continuity in her life

story through anchoring her experiences to a global framework structured by women's

experience of Black activism.

Recalling their encounters with Olive Morris, the women of Abasindi and

Manchester's Black activist network constructed life stories in which being a female-centred

activist was a pillar to their sense of self. Through their self-narration, they created what

Abrams has called a 'feminography', where their personal stories are rooted in their woman-

centred political praxis, rather than traditional life markers, such as childrearing or marriage.

Moreover, the women filled their narratives with stories of their political engagement with

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[156] LA, DYROM, Interview with Tsele.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.

other Black women, displaying the fundamental role that these homosocial groupings had on the construction of Black female selfhood in late twentieth-century Britain.

Conclusion

This chapter has shed light on inner-city Black women's centres and groups in the 1970s and 1980s. It has shown how these groups catered for a generation of politically-engaged inner-city Black female activists who sought autonomous spaces that bolstered their sense of independence while allowing them to engage in anti-racist campaigns in the local area and in the country. It has demonstrated that these groups enabled women to centre their own experiences, largely through cultural mechanisms such as poetry and writing. These mechanisms celebrated Black women's identities, and provided them with a sense of pride in their African Caribbean heritage, while also providing a safe space for women to articulate their negatives intersecting experiences of sexism and racism in Britain. Moreover, while Black women's groups waned from the 1980s, this chapter has demonstrated that their physical disappearance did not negate their lasting impact on Black women's lives. While each of the women who contributed to the DYROM oral history project had unique life stories, all of them saw their engagement with Black women's centres and groups as having a transformative impact on their life course. Thus, despite Black women's centres being almost invisible in the literature on Black Britain, their centrality to many Black women's sense of self indicates that their significance in the history of the British inner city.

This chapter is significant as it has demonstrated the impact of global diasporic culture and politics on inner city living. It has shown that, by encouraging a female-centred engagement with the political and cultural output of Black diaspora, Black women's centres also promoted an image of Black British womanhood that transcended temporal and geographical planes. This fusing of local and diasporic identities aligns with the research of

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Kieran Connell, who has demonstrated the way in which Black residents Handsworth in Birmingham embraced the transnational networks and movements that made up the 'black globality' in their everyday life, drawing from movements such as Rastafarianism and Pan-Africanism.[159] This insight also corresponds with the work of Mary Chamberlain, which has shown how the life stories of migrant women of Caribbean descent are 'boundless, a permeable membrane through which emotions, subjectivities, identities flow so that global identities fuse with the local'.[160] In the same way, by using these centres inner-city Black women rooted their sense of self in the shared experience of being a woman in the global Black diaspora. The next chapter will build on this theme further by exploring the way in which transnationalism disseminated into the public life through the Caribbean carnival.

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[159] Connell, *Black Handsworth,* p. 5.
[160] Chamberlain, 'The Global Self', p. 164.

Chapter 3.

'The whole object will be defeated if we don't see any white people': Caribbean carnivals, identity, and the performance of multiculturalism

In 1974, *The Guardian* printed a photograph in which two women, one white and one Black, dance alongside each other at the Notting Hill Carnival (Figure 3.1). A police officer had joined them, and the caption read, 'another kind of beat as a policeman gets the carnival spirit in Notting Hill, London'. In this photograph, the newspaper sent an important message about inner-city ethnic difference to its readers. While the presence of the police officer evoked the tense history of race relations in Notting Hill, from the 1958 Notting Hill Race Riots to the targeting of Black British activists at the Mangrove restaurant in 1970, he also represented a ceasefire. In this moment, as he got 'the carnival spirit', he was able to hide past tensions and dance in a procession where racial conflict was ostensibly absent. The women were essential agents in this visual rhetoric of multicultural harmony in Britain's cities. They acted as signifiers of the transformed demographic of Notting Hill following mass migration to the area from the Caribbean, while also inverting contemporary perceived threats of violent young Black men that were often associated with the inner city.[1] *The Guardian* thus deployed the women's gendered and racial identities to portray a comforting image of ethnic difference in Britain, offering an insight into the complex relationship between gender, national identity and the ideological project of 'multiculturalism' in Britain's inner cities. Using the example of the Caribbean carnival as a springboard, this chapter examines the material and visual culture associated with British carnivals to demonstrate the

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[1] Connell, 'Photographing Handsworth', p. 128.

way in which inner-city women's performance of multiculturalism both enabled them to practice forms of individual and collective identity formation, while aiding the tabloid media to communicate positive messages about Britain's multi-ethnic population.

ANOTHER KIND of beat as a policeman gets the carnival spirit in Notting Hill, London, yesterday. Picture by Frank Martin. West Indian festival, Leeds, picture page 7. Open File, page 13.

Figure 3.1: 'Another kind of beat as a police gets the Carnival spirit in Notting Hill, London', *The Guardian*, 27 August 1974, p.1.

The previous chapter demonstrated that inner-city Black women's centres allowed Black women to construct empowered personal identities that were informed by the resistance struggles, experiences, and intellectual currents of global Black diaspora. It argued that from the 1970s, inner-city Black women in Manchester and Tottenham constructed spaces where they could forge identities that pivoted around, and celebrated, their African and Caribbean heritage. While the previous chapter explored the influence of the culture and politics of the Black diaspora in certain spaces, this chapter examines how these diasporic undercurrents trickled out beyond the intimate settings of Black women's groups into the community through the performance and practice of multiculturalism, particularly carnival.

The meanings of the term 'multiculturalism' are contested and ever changing and an analysis of the word's intellectual, political, and cultural framings are beyond the scope of this study.[2] This study, however, finds the most succinct definition to be that provided by Barnor Hesse, who refers to it as the 'particular discourses or social forms which incorporate marked cultural differences and diverse ethnicities'.[3] There were two types of multiculturalism in late twentieth-century Britain: multiculturalism experienced as official policy, and multiculturalism experienced through chosen activities. Multiculturalism as a state policy grew largely out of the explosion of racial violence against ethnic minorities in Notting Hill and Nottingham 1958. In these so-called 'race riots', members of the white working class, provoked in large part by competition over housing, attacked the homes and hostels of the local African Caribbean working population.[4] As Perry has shown, the riots prompted fears of a 'race problem' in Britain among the political elite, who worried that the country's international reputation as a liberal and progressive democracy would be marred by these outpourings of physical violence.[5] As Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis noted, it became clear that in Britain 'the melting pot doesn't melt'.[6]

With Britain's moral superiority hanging in the balance, as well as the potential for further unrest, both Labour and Conservative governments introduced immigration controls and anti-discrimination legislation to reverse racist attitudes towards Britain's Black and South Asian inhabitants.[7] For instance, the 1965, 1968, and 1976 Race Relations Acts banned

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[2] For a good overview, see Ben Pitcher, *The Politics of Multiculturalism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
[3] Barnor Hesse, 'Introduction: Un/Settled Multiculturalisms', in *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, Transruptions*, pp. 1–30 (p. 2).
[4] Perry, *London is the Place for Me,* p. 89; Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain,* pp. 204–9.
[5] Perry, *London is the Place for Me*, chap. 3.
[6] Quoted in Hesse, 'Introduction: Un/Settled Multiculturalisms', p. 7.
[7] For an excellent overview about the development of 'multiculturalism' as a state policy, see David Feldman, 'Why the British like Turbans: Multicultural Politics in British History', in *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History*, ed. by David Feldman and Jon Lawrence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 281–302.

racial discrimination in public settings, housing, and in the workplace.[8] These acts also introduced local Community Relations Councils in ethnically diverse areas, like Notting Hill and Handsworth, whose responsibility it was to improve local race relations through encouraging inter-ethnic interaction. Local authorities also altered school curricula to incorporate the cultural differences of settled migrant communities.[9] These policies marked the origins of multiculturalism in Britain, stressing the centrality of ethnic difference to the country's social infrastructure. However, as Elizabeth Buettner has alluded, 'multiculturalism' can encompass not only a state policy, but also a practice undertaken by individuals of embracing ethnic difference.[10] For example, as part of their bid to improve race relations, the state introduced several financial incentives, such as the Urban Aid programme in 1968, which encouraged local residents to organise and participate in events and activities, like the Caribbean carnival. Across Britain, individuals made efforts to celebrate the various cultures that made up Britain's urban areas.

It is important to stress that Caribbean carnivals never evolved from the state's multicultural project but formed as autonomous events set up by Black activists (outlined further below). However, their popularity in Britain with white residents was often dependent on the financial support and cultural backing from the state, as well as people's desire to practice multiculturalism. It is for that reason that while carnival came from Black cultures of resistance, it is used here a jumping off point to explore practices of multi-ethnic celebration in the inner-city Britain. While there are numerous histories of state multiculturalism, there is

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[8] Radhika Natarajan, 'Performing Multiculturalism: The Commonwealth Arts Festival of 1965', *Journal of British Studies*, 53 (2014), 705–33.

[9] Feldman, 'Why the British like Turbans', p. 295.

[10] Elizabeth Buettner, '"Going for an Indian": South Asian Restaurants and the Limits of Multiculturalism in Britain', *The Journal of Modern History*, 80 (2008), 865–901.

little literature on how individuals, particularly women, performed multiculturalism.[11] Moreover, despite the literature on cosmopolitanism and conviviality, this literature has focused on 'contact zones' between different ethnicities, and has navigated away from more explicit and concerted efforts to bring ethnically diverse communities together.[12] For the large part, some scholars have dismissed the project of multiculturalism as simply a by-word for 'race' that masked white supremacy in post-war Britain, overlooking the fact that, when explored from the bottom up, the performance of multiculturalism can deepen our understanding of women's lives in the inner city.

This chapter demonstrates that British multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s was a gendered phenomenon that implicated inner-city women and their identities in three distinct ways. It argues that as race relations legislation legitimated the presence of ethnic difference in Britain's urban areas, the project of multiculturalism provided an opportunity for Black and white women to construct hybrid cultures in the inner city. While this hybrid culture, structured on a combination of Caribbean and British traditions, allowed women to construct a sense of place and to practice inclusivity, it also allowed white women to perpetuate societal racism. Secondly, it examines the costumes and processions of Caribbean carnivals to argue that, by encouraging the performance of Caribbean cultural practices in public spaces, the practice of multiculturalism allowed Black women to communicate both personal and collective identities on their own terms. The chapter finally argues that the press

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[11] Pitcher, *The Politics of Mulitculturalism*; Richard T. Ashcroft and Mark Bevir, 'What Is Postwar Multiculturalism in Theory and Practice?', in *Multiculturalism in the British Commonwealth*, ed. by Richard T. Ashcroft and Mark Bevir (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), pp. 1–22; Richard T. Ashcroft and Mark Bevir, 'British Multiculturalism after Empire: Immigration, Nationality, and Citizenship', in *Multiculturalism in the British Commonwealth*, pp. 25–45; Panikos Panayi, 'Immigration, Multiculturalism and Racism', in *20th Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, ed. by Francesca Carneval, Julie-Marie Strange, and Julie Marie Strange (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 247–61; Buettner, '"Going for an Indian"'; Feldman, 'Why the British like Turbans'.
[12] Judith R. Walkowitz, *Nights Out: Life in Cosmopolitan London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Frank Mort, *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of the Permissive Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Bentel, 'Limits of Conviviality'.

deployed the incidence of carnivals in the self-promotion of a multicultural British identity, using Black women's identities as the vehicle in this process. Multiculturalism was, simultaneously, a hegemonic policy that was imposed by the state and manipulated by the mainstream media to meet certain ideological aims that obfuscated racial inequality in Britain. However, this policy also offered Black women an opportunity to restructure their identities in the public arena. As this chapter demonstrates, multiculturalism was the Janus-faced political idea that both enabled and contained Black women's cultural expression.

This chapter makes use of the coverage of British Caribbean carnivals and multicultural events in local and national newspapers. As Adrian Bingham has noted, newspapers should be 'read against the grain' to reveal the lives and identities of those featured within their pages.[13] Local and national coverage of multicultural events provided women with the opportunity to talk publicly about local events, thus providing a form of personal testimony that illuminates the ways in which women discursively constructed their sense of place and identities in relation to multiculturalism. The chapter also examines news photography of women at multicultural events to expand on these themes. As outlined in this thesis's introduction, news photography sends across a 'photographic message', which can often unpack what goes unsaid into journalistic text. Racially charged language was out of bounds by the 1970s, but the layers of meaning contained within photography was still open to interpretation. As Shirin Hirsch and David Swanson have noted, photography allows 'the acknowledgement of "race" when in contemporary accounts its existence is denied'.[14] As noted in this thesis's introduction, newspapers play a role in the formation of what Benedict

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[13] Adrian Bingham, 'Reading Newspapers: Cultural Histories of the Popular Press in Modern Britain', *History Compass*, 10 (2012), 140–50 (p. 143); see also Adrian Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life and the British Popular Press 1918-1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 6; For local newspapers, see Mary Lester, 'Local Newspapers and the Shaping of Local Identity in North-East London, c.1885–1925', *The International Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, 5 (2009), 44–62.
[14] Hirsch and Swanson, 'Photojournalism and the Moss Side Riots', p. 222.

Anderson has called 'imagined communities', making them useful for examining the construction of national identity.[15] Examining journalism and photojournalism of inner-city multiculturalism in conjunction with one another enables us to, first, make sense of Britain's reconstruction of its identity as a multicultural nation, and second, understand the role of inner-city women in this process.

This chapter begins by examining the way in which ethnicity became embedded into inner-city Black women's sense of belonging in Britain cities. The first section looks at how Black and white women constructed a hybrid culture in their local areas, combining both local and diasporic practices into their practice of multiculturalism. It examines how this hybrid culture became the meeting point of interaction for Black and white women, as well as a selling point for the press in depicting the acceptable face of multiculturalism. The second section explores how the spatial and material aspect of carnivals allowed Black women to challenge these representations and communicate the identities of the Black community, themselves and Black men to others. Finally, the third section examines the ways in which news photographs of Caribbean carnivals reconstituted Black female identities to produce a national identity based on multicultural acceptance. Overall, this chapter makes the case for using the idea of multiculturalism as a useful frame of analysis to explore the complexities of female identity in inner-city Britain.

Between the local and the global: Caribbean carnival as a hybrid culture

The local carnival had long been a staple of community-life in Britain prior to the growth of Caribbean carnivals in urban areas. Dion Giorgiou's extensive research on Edwardian and mid-century urban and suburban carnivals has shown their importance in

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[15] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* pp. 33–35.

community building and delineating the geographical boundaries of an area.[16] These local carnivals looked backwards, involving re-enactments of medieval and Tudor eras, and would embrace motifs of rural life.[17] The Caribbean carnival did not originate from these traditions, but from a Caribbean festival that took place in St. Pancras Town Hall in London in 1959, organised by the anti-racist activist Claudia Jones. After Jones' death in 1964, social worker Rhaune Laslett turned the festival into a Caribbean carnival, including a procession of floats, dancers and music.[18] The Caribbean carnival became a staple multicultural event and spread across inner-city areas with large African Caribbean communities, such as Chapeltown in Leeds, Toxteth in Liverpool, and Moss Side in Manchester.

The state often funded these events. For instance, in 1970 the Manchester City Council's Parks Department provided a band for the first Moss Side Carnival, also called the Alexandra Park Carnival. The Moss Side People's Association, the housing action group explored in Chapter One, started the Carnival and, incidentally, were campaigning against the Council's slum demolition programme in the area. As noted in Chapter One, the Association was concerned that redevelopment would break up the multi-ethnic social infrastructure of Moss Side.[19] The Carnival was a tonic for the plight of urban planning, a show of unity in the face of potential social dispersal. The event was also presented in the national press as a celebration of the ethnic diversity that constituted the area's identity:

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[16] Dion Georgiou, 'Weaving Patterns in the Suburban Fabric: Carnival Procession Routes, Mapping Place and Experiencing Space on London's Changing Periphery, 1890–1914', in *Spatial Cultures: Towards a New Social Morphology of Cities Past and Present*, ed. by Sam Griffiths and Alexander von Lunen (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 95–113; See also, Dion Georgiou, '"The Drab Suburban Streets Were Metamorphosed into a Veritable Fairyland": Spectacle and Festivity in The Ilford Hospital Carnival, 1905–1914', *The London Journal*, 39 (2014), 227–48; Dion Georgiou, 'Redefining the Carnivalesque: The Construction of Ritual, Revelry and Spectacle in British Leisure Practices through the Idea and Model of "Carnival", 1870–1939', *Sport in History*, 35 (2015), 335–63; Dion Georgiou, 'Restaging Mafeking in Muswell Hill: Performing Patriotism and Charitability in London's Boer War Carnivals', *Historical Research*, 91 (2018), 744–71.
[17] Georgiou, '"The Drab Suburban Streets Were Metamorphosed into a Veritable Fairyland"', pp. 231–32.
[18] Sebastian Klöß, 'Representations of Identity at the Notting Hill Carnival in the Late 1970s and Early 1980s', *International Journal of Arts & Sciences*, 4 (2011), 257–79 (p. 259).
[19] Brown and Cunningham, 'The Inner Geographies', p. 103.

And so, Sikh, West Indian, Pakistani, Indian, Irish, Polish, and English are

represented at the festival in Alexandra Park…there will be English Morris dancing

and folk singing, Irish dancing, a West Indian steel band, the Chinese and the

Pakistanis, an international fashion parade, an African witch doctor…[20]

The Carnival merged a variety of international cultures, including English, into the physical

infrastructure of Moss Side. It was thus global in scope while being inherently local.

However, the Caribbean organisers' adherence to dominant stereotypes of different diasporic

cultures (a steel band and the African witch doctor) is indicative of a 'saris, samosas, and

steel bands' practise of multiculturalism, whereby cultures are contained within dominant

signifiers, flattening African and Caribbean culture within this setting.

As the British carnival began to flourish in the 1980s, scholars at the time quickly

recognised the way in which they blended local and global identities and cultures.

Geographer P. Jackson drew attention to the way in which carnival was the construction of a

new cultural tradition that 'saturated' symbols from the Caribbean with the English

experience.[21] Similarly, Rachel Spooner argued that the British Caribbean carnival was

neither entirely British nor Caribbean, but was a fusing of multiple and interconnected

identities.[22] This hybridity was bound up with gender and nationhood, she argued, noting that

carnival was a way for Black British women to contest the ethnic absolutism of British

national identity.

Despite the Alexandra Park Carnival recognising various cultures, it was, for the most

part, a microcosm of the Trinidadian Carnival in situ. It took its origins from the carnivals

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[20] 'Moss Side Story', p. 9.
[21] P. Jackson, 'Street Life: The Politics of Carnival', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 6 (1988), 213–27 (p. 213).
[22] Rachel Spooner, 'Contested Representations: Black Women and the St Paul's Carnival', *Gender, Place & Culture*, 3 (1996), 187–204 (p. 193).

that took place in the slavery era when, in 1784, French colonials introduced Mardi Gras masquerade balls into Trinidad. When slavery was abolished in 1834, freed Africans were brought onto the streets and this colonial Mardi Gras was transformed into an African-Caribbean carnival.[23] The masquerade element of carnival, also called 'playing mas', was, and still is, a key component of the British Caribbean carnival, as was traditional Trinidadian music, such as Soca and Calypso. Throwing a carnival was a way for local women to reconnect with this tradition. The first Caribbean carnival in Manchester was partly organised by Locita Brandy. Brandy arrived in Moss Side in 1957 from the island of Nevis. Brandy said that when she used to take her children to the park in Moss Side, she and other families 'got to thinking, we all miss our carnival so much, why don't we start one in Manchester!'[24] Thus the event became a way for Manchester's migrants to reconsolidate a connection with their shared Caribbean heritage, transcending their daily reality and achieving a sense of belonging within their diaspora, while also bringing this practice to their new home.

The motivations behind Manchester's first Caribbean carnival supplements the literature on post-war migration and belonging. As Wendy Webster has argued, questions about who was 'British' in post-war Britain, and who belonged in Britain, were 'answered in racial terms'.[25] Racial violence, the exclusion of Black migrants from benefiting from the welfare state, particularly in housing, as well as tighter immigration controls, all impeded the ability for Black and South Asian people to make claims to citizenship and assertions of belonging in Britain. However, Perry's study of post-war migrants has demonstrated the way in which Black activists challenged this 'unbelonging', building on their collective experience of imperialism and racial violence in Britain to assert their right to belong in

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[23] Lesley Ferris, 'Incremental Art: Negotiating the Route of London's Notting Hill Carnival', *Social Identities*, 16 (2010), 519–36 (p. 520).

[24] AIU, Carnival Collection [CC], GB3228.9/11/02, 'Brandy – the Spirit of Carnival', *Cultural Collage World Music Festival*, 2012, (n.p).

[25] Webster, *Imagining Home*, chap. 2.

Britain. She has argued that claims to being British citizens 'were refracted through a transnational and diasporic post-war dialogue among people of African descent', and in particular Notting Hill Carnival was an opportunity for Caribbeans to assert a common sense of pride in Caribbean heritage and 'express their intent to belong as Black Britons on their terms'.[26] In the same way, bringing the Trinidadian Carnival to Manchester enabled women like Brandy to assert their belonging in Moss Side through drawing on diasporic traditions.

These claims of belonging implicated those outside of migrant communities. Local press saw the Caribbean carnivals as a vehicle for transporting Caribbean culture to Britain's urban areas. For instance, the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* marketed its 1975 Caribbean Carnival as 'an evening in the land of palm trees and tropical plants', while in 1987 the *Pinner Observer* noted that the 'Calypso carnival brings sun to Brent'.[27] The description indicates how the local media often considered carnivals as the transplantation of cultural practices from the Caribbean islands into the physical infrastructure of the city. While local newspapers wrote in praise of Caribbean carnivals, they were often keen to stress their temporariness. For instance, the *Yorkshire Post* described the Leeds West Indian Carnival in 1973 as 'the day when Leeds became for a short time a calypso city'.[28] By drawing attention to the brevity of the Leeds Carnival, the newspaper spoke to broader fears that the celebration of Caribbean culture could lead to the total segregation of Black communities in Britain's inner cities.[29] Noting the impermanence of the multicultural event enabled the press to accommodate a form of ethnic difference that did not threaten an imagined sense of 'Britishness'. Indeed, the spectacle of carnival participants mimics some of the imperial

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[26] Perry, *London is the Place for Me,* p. 10 & p. 133.
[27] 'Caribbean Calypso carnival', *Coventry Evening Telegraph,* 29 August 1975, p. 15; 'Calypso carnival brings sun to Brent', *Pinner Observer,* 2 July 1987, p. 19.
[28] 'It's the Calypso city', *Yorkshire Post,* 28 August 1973, n.p.
[29] Graham Crow and Graham Allan, *Community Life: An Introduction to Local Social Relations* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd, 1994), pp. 94–95.

exhibitions explored by Sadiah Qureshi, whereby ethnic difference was a curiosity representing Empire, rather than a fact that had to be incorporated into everyday life.[30] The brevity of the local/global enmeshment of the Leeds Carnival rationalised its acceptability for local white readers.

Photographs in the local press did much to create a visual representation of this comforting hybrid culture. For instance, Figure 3.2 shows four women dancing alongside the Lord Mayor of Leeds at the Leeds West Indian Carnival, printed in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* of 1985. In the photograph, the women wear contemporary clothing, including flares and trainers, which stand in stark contrast to the Lord Mayor's staid, ceremonial costume, made up of a medal and a traditional bowler hat. However, the body language of the dancers blends these two juxtaposing sartorial choices. The women place their hands on the Lord Mayor's clothes, while he reciprocates their physicality through mirroring the arm gesture of the woman standing behind him. Elizabeth Buettner has noted that, from the 1970s, certain regions, particularly West Yorkshire, would incorporate multiculturalism into their place identity. Tour guides often named Indian restaurants as local 'institutions' alongside the Dales and the Haworth home of the Brontë sisters.[31] Likewise, by printing a peaceful meeting between Leeds' civic history and Caribbean culture, the *Yorkshire Post* visually incorporated ethnic diversity into its regional identity. Moreover, when located within these civic boundaries, the press could reconstitute an identity of the Caribbean population that appealed to local readers, making the ethnic presence in Yorkshire appear palatable and unthreatening.

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[30] Sadiah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), chap. 5; See also, Qureshi, 'Displaying Sara Baartman, the "Hottentot Venus"'; Sadiah Qureshi, 'Gordon Latham, Displayed Peoples, and the Natural History of Race, 1854–1866', *The Historical Journal*, 54 (2011), 143–66.
[31] Buettner, '"Going for an Indian"', p. 887.

The Lord Mayor of Leeds, Coun. Sydney Simmonds, gets into the carnival spirit as he dances with some of the revellers.

Figure 3.2: 'The Lord Mayor of Leeds, Coun. Sydney Simmonds, gets into the carnival spirit as he dances with some of the revellers', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 22 August 1985, p.4.

Similarly, despite the Caribbean origins of carnivals, the Black women who organised them, such as Locita Brandy, also marketed the events as the integration of their Caribbean identity into the local area's history. In her interview on a BBC radio show in 1992, Brandy made sure to note that the first Alexandra Park Carnival in 1970 marked the centenary of the Park itself.[32] By drawing together these two events into a shared history of Moss Side, Locita recreated her own history of Moss Side that tied Trinidadian culture to Manchester's civic

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[32] AIU, CC, GB3228.9/9/01, Notes on radio talk on roots of West Indian carnivals and BBC Pass, 1992.

identity. Moreover, by noting that the Carnival took place on the centenary of the Park in her interview, Locita Brandy challenged the outside perception of Moss Siders, and perhaps migrant communities more broadly, as rootless. In the 1960s, the national media often represented Moss Side as being home to a transient community. In 1966, Granada Television produced a documentary that featured a reconstructed police raid on a drinking club. The Granada spokesman said that he intended to 'give an impression of Moss Side through its "floating community" of immigrants and foreigners', demonstrating the way in which this inner-city area was ascribed with connotations of rootlessness and deviancy.[33] There were also fears from external observers that Moss Side, like other areas with a large immigrant population, would become an American-style ghetto.[34] However, by discursively linking the Alexandra Park Carnival to Manchester's history, Brandy was able to evoke a palatable version of Moss Side that softened these stereotypes and allayed those fears of ghettoization.

Black women also organised their carnivals in conjunction with nationwide celebrations, such as Bank Holiday weekends or national holidays. For instance, in 1977 Samuel Lee and Sally Henry organised Reading's first West Indian Carnival to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee. '"We thought a lot about it…We felt that this would be a good way of showing people that we have a culture in the West Indies, a culture which we want to share with everybody"', Mrs Lee, from Guyana, told the *Reading Evening Post*.[35] In his examination of the social function of royal ceremonies, David Cannadine has argued that coronations and jubilees invent traditions that provide a deep-rooted sense of historicity to Britain and its institutions.[36] Naturally, such events play a role in creating a collective

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[33] 'Moss Side TV programme brings protests', *The Guardian*, 3 June 1966, p. 3.
[34] Brown and Cunningham, 'The Inner Geographies', pp. 105–6.
[35] 'The carnival comes to town', *Reading Evening Post*, 27 May 1977, p. 12
[36] David Cannadine, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition", c. 1820–1977', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, Canto Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 101–64.

national identity, placing the Queen as the nation's figurehead under which all subjects are united. However, the fact that both Lee and Henry felt inclined to hold their West Indian Carnival on the same day as the Jubilee in 1977 suggests that the ceremonial event was at odds with their own feeling of Britishness. As Spooner explored in her study of the St. Paul's Carnival in Bristol in the 1970s, participation in British carnivals enabled Black British women to assert their own sense of Britishness that incorporated their Caribbean heritage.[37] The women's desire to 'show' people the traditions of the Caribbean demonstrates their attempt to communicate a Black British identity to local residents that adhered to, rather than separated from, national celebrations. However, despite being so close to Windsor the Reading West Indian Carnival went by with no engagement with the Royals, with the then pregnant Princess Anne choosing to take part in the official Reading celebrations with the town's mayor.[38] Thus despite attempting to engage with the symbols of nationhood, Caribbean carnivals were still on the cultural margins.

White women also attempted to combine ethnic differences into an area's social infrastructure through the events they organised, particularly middle-class gentrifiers looking to invigorate community life. As was demonstrated in Chapter One, the slow creeping gentrification of north London was shaping this practice of multiculturalism. Stephen Bentel's analysis of gentrification in the 1980s has demonstrated how young radicals were drawn to 'colonise' areas in London that were considered 'multicultural slums', hoping to build communities with minority-ethnic and working-class groups.[39] He builds on the scholarship of Joy White, Adam Elliot-Cooper, Phil Hubbard, and Loretta Lees to note how this practice was a form of social cleansing, suggesting that conservation movements and

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[37] Spooner, 'Contested Representations', p. 194.
[38] 'Jubilee fun in the rain and son', *Reading Evening Post,* 8 June 1977, p. 10.
[39] Bentel, 'Limits of Conviviality', chap. 1.

shopping and leisure choices usually displaced the very residents who had once been the source of attraction to gentrifiers.

Multicultural events and engagement could also have the same effect. Take one instance of Emily Hope, in Holloway, who ran several community festivals in the 1970s and 1980s for the local WPCA, explored in Chapter One. While not all of Hope's festivals went ahead, her applications for state funding reveal an attempt to include all residents, regardless of ethnicity. In 1973, Hope submitted an unsuccessful application to run a 'village fete' for the Urban Aid programme. Hope's aim was 'to foster good community relations – an important aspect of the fete itself would be the inclusion of the music, dance, food, and crafts of different local ethnic groups'.[40] In 1971, 16 per cent of residents in Holloway were born in the New Commonwealth or Pakistan, in comparison to two per cent in the country as whole.[41] Explicitly opting to include the cultural habits of 'local ethnic groups', Hope was responding to the distinct demographic make-up of the area through advocating the provision of an inclusive range of activities.

While acknowledging the existence of multi-racial difference in her local area, Hope, originally from the United States, played on old tropes of Britishness within her application for urban funding. Hope wanted to 'invoke the spirit of a village fete', with donkey rides, a bowls match and a Punch and Judy Show.[42] The idea that Holloway was once a 'village' was a topic that pervaded local memories of the area. In the WPCA newsletter, older residents would often contribute their memories that referenced a lost rurality of the area. In 1972 Richard Comely wrote, 'imagine a herd of cattle coming down Dartmouth Park Hill! Or a river running along behind Yerbury Road!'[43] Similarly, in a piece called 'Holloway

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[40] BI, WPCA, WPCA/1/1, 'Application for Urban Programme – Holiday Project 1973', 1973, p. 1.
[41] UK Data Service, 1971 Census aggregate data <http://dx.doi.org/10.5257/census/aggregate-1971-1> [accessed: 19 May 2020].
[42] 'Application for Urban Programme', p. 2.
[43] BI, WPCA, WPCA/4/1, 'The Old People's Club', *Whittington Park Community Newsletter*, 3, 1972, p. 4.

Remembered' from 1972, C. E. Willoughby remembered, 'in the area of what used to be the United Dairies, Wedmore Street/Holloway Road, cows were kept; also at the Holloway Road end of Caledonian Road was a field with cows grazing, milk was plentiful in those days I was told'.[44] Although unable to remember the cows herself, the author mourned their loss, 'our locality, from my point of view, has changed sadly, gone are the cottages…'[45]

These memories of lost rurality shaped Hope's community work throughout her time at the WPCA. While paying piecemeal homage to the cultural practices of other ethnic groups, Hope privileged the dominant memories of the white majority through modelling the traditional village fete. For instance, the 1978 Whittington Park Festival featured English Morris dancing and barrel rolling, alongside Capoeira.[46] The evocation of rurality is important. James Greenhalgh has shown that neighbourhood shops on post-war housing estates were employed to evoke rural life because rurality has a 'uniquely British quality', which conjures up nostalgic images of face-to-face village life.[47] Similarly, Georgiou's research on carnivals has demonstrated the salience of rural motifs in evoking the 'countryside fantasy'. [48] The invocation of the British village fete alongside African and Brazilian dancers allowed Hope to create her own hybrid culture within Holloway, albeit one grounded in the memories of the white community with smatterings of non-British cultures. While scholars have scrutinised the diasporic identities of British migrant women, few have explored the way in which white women have also understood their own ethnicity in post-war Britain.[49] In this case, Hope established a link to the area that blended a folkish narrative of

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[44] BI, WPCA, WPCA/4/1, 'Holloway Remembered', *Whittington Park Community Newsletter*, 5, 1973, p. 8.
[45] Ibid., p. 8.
[46] BI, WPCA, WPCA/4/1, 'The sun shone for us this year', *Whittington Park Community Newsletter*, 26, October 1978, pp. 4-5.
[47] James Greenhalgh, 'Consuming Communities: The Neighbourhood Unit and the Role of Retail Spaces on British Housing Estates, 1944–1958', *Urban History*, 43 (2016), 158–74 (p. 166).
[48] Georgiou, '"The Drab Suburban Streets Were Metamorphosed into a Veritable Fairyland"', p. 233.
[49] See Razia Parveen, 'Food to Remember: Culinary Practice and Diasporic Identity', *Oral History*, 44 (2016), 47–56; Herbert, *Negotiating Boundaries*; McDowell, *Migrant Women's Voices*; Webster, *Imagining Home*; Chamberlain, 'The Global Self'.

Britain with the cultures brought about by colonial migration. Thus, multiculturalism was not simply an avenue for Black women to explore their ethnicity, but also a way for white women to establish their own sense of place within a multicultural Britain, even if it remained largely ethno-centric.

While white women such as Hope tried to imbue multiculturalism in their community activism, this could often be a cosmetic gesture. The women from the WPCA often used food as a way to foster inclusivity. In her unsuccessful 1973 application for the WPCA Village Fete, Hope stressed that 'an important aspect of the market would be stalls with produce from, or pertaining to, the local ethnic groups, e/g Greek, African, West Indian'.[50] Moreover, food was also a central component to Black women's involvement in Caribbean carnivals and events. In 1975, Elouise Edwards organised an international food exhibition in conjunction with the multicultural Roots Festival, a small-scale carnival and weekend event aimed at educating local children in Moss Side about their Caribbean heritage. Manchester councillors and civic figures attended the food exhibitions, thereby allowing Edwards to incorporate the various identities of the local Caribbean population with the civic institutions of their locality.[51]

At some of the large-scale carnivals, women would set up food stalls outside their homes and serve home-cooked food, like Mary Donaldson who would serve up yams, plantain and salads on 'over-loaded paper plates' to passers-by at the Notting Hill Carnival.[52] By bringing these gastronomic practices into the street, Donaldson demonstrated the way in which Black women used food to embed their diasporic identities into their immediate local environment. Moreover, the imagery of the bounteous plates of food described by *The*

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[50] 'Application for Urban Programme', p.2.
[51] AIU, EE, GB3228.5/1/21, 'Draft Version of Roots Fives Years On', n.d, p.4.
[52] 'Notting Hill Carnival guide', *The Independent*, 26 August 1988, p. 29.

Independent suggest that Black women used these occasions to perform a model of Caribbean familial life that was defined through homeliness and maternalism, counter-acting stereotypes of the pathological Black family. Food also became the language that allowed Black women to include white Britons in their cultural practices. Donaldson would often invite customers 'into the sanctuary of her prize-winning garden to consume' the saltfish and ackee she served them. Printed in *The Independent* as part of their 'Notting Hill Carnival Guide', this write-up indicates that food was the device that Black women used to welcome the British public, both as readers and as attendees, into their Caribbean community, and sometimes even their homes. However, as Spooner has pointed out, cooking at carnivals allowed Black women to generate extra income.[53] In this way, multiculturalism had a dual role: for some it was the voluntary journey into another culture via food, for other women a means to supplement the household budget in order to survive.

Food gave Black women an authoritative role in involving and educating the British public about their culture. However, over time this role began to diminish in importance as white women encountered Caribbean food through their attendance of carnivals and other multicultural events. After attending the Brighton Caribbean festival, Margaret Daw wrote a piece for *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* on how women could give 'a West Indian dinner of their own'.[54] She included several recipes that she suggested readers try in their own home, with no acknowledgement of where she had found these recipes. Daw's hybrid culture was bound to presenting her own status as a sort of exotic traveller, while her encouragement that readers cook Caribbean food at home was so they could also acquire this same status.[55] Such

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[53] Spooner, 'Contested Representations', p. 198.
[54] 'Cook up a spot of West Indian sunshine', *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 25 February 1971, p.9.
[55] For cooking and status, see Emma Casey, 'From Cookery in Colour to The Great British Bake Off: Shifting Gendered Accounts of Home-Baking and Domesticity', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 22 (2019), 579–94 (pp. 585–86).

a reworking of Caribbean cooking inadvertently dissuaded attendance at multicultural events, and turned a process of education into one of status making.

Elsewhere the *Coventry Evening Telegraph* covered a Mothers' Union event in 1976, where a white woman spoke of her experience migrating to Barbados.[56] The Mothers' Union members later spent the afternoon making 'West Indian' food (Figure 3.3). In Coventry, five per cent of the population were born in the New Commonwealth and Pakistan and while this was still small, it was larger than the national average.[57] However, the fact that the Mothers' Union got their culinary instruction from a white woman shows the lack of incentive on behalf of white women to interact with Black women, or acknowledge how this may have been problematic. As a conservative group associated with the Anglican Church and formed mostly of older women, it would have been unlikely that the group were engaging with the ethics of their practice, indicating that not only did whiteness play a part in governing relations with ethnic minorities, but so did age, religion, and perhaps class. These demographic boundaries meant the white women of Coventry constructed a hybrid culture by cooking Caribbean food within their own regulated British setting. Ironically, this in turn dissuaded social interaction with the African Caribbean community and defeated a key component of the multicultural project.

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[56] 'Mothers hear woman from Barbados', *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 11 May 1976, p. 42.
[57] 1971 Census aggregate data.

Members of St Martin's, Finham, Mothers' Union, with
some of the West Indian food they prepared.
From left are: Mrs Beth Bostock, Mrs Ethel Sidwell,
Mrs Barbara Vincent, Mrs Mary Sanders, Mrs Connie Reid,
and Mrs Betty Baynes, chairman.

Figure 3.3: 'Members of St Martin's, Finham, Mothers' Union, with some of the West Indian food they prepared', *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, 11 May 1976, p. 42.

The coverage of a Mothers' Union meeting also offered an example of the way in which the local press deployed the hybrid culture of white women cooking Caribbean food to portray an unthreatening image of multiculturalism to readers. The *Coventry Evening Telegraph* standardised the food by referring to the cuisine as 'West Indian', removing the regional uniqueness of Barbadian food that the speaker (although white) had sought to illuminate. Moreover, the photograph of the women holding plates of food anglicised the

cuisine, with the dishes arranged in a buffet-style manner that harked back to institutionally British events such as church cake sales or street parties. Furthermore, the photograph encoded the women as servers of food, indicating the way they embedded Caribbean cuisine into their own performance of white domesticity. As Emma Casey has explored, the history of cooking in Britain is bound up with gender and national identity, with women's role in the kitchen seen as essential to upholding the strength of the nation.[58] In a similar way, the photograph of the white women with plates of food, and the visual code that associated this image with established British institutions such as the MU helped to market the 'safety' of Caribbean food within British society. As a result, ethnic difference, implied through the plates of Caribbean food, was tolerated by the newspaper, and it was only accommodated insofar as its native producers were made absent in this process.

In her essay, 'Eating the Other', bell hooks has argued that, in mainstream culture, ethnic and racial difference is 'commodified and offered up as new dishes to enhance the white palate'.[59] This embrace, almost festishization, of ethnic difference forms a part of liberal progressiveness, allowing the public to announce their break with a white supremacist past and demonstrate their affirmation of cultural plurality.[60] However, it is through this contact with the Other, whether through fantasising about eating, or even 'fucking', the Other, that white people reinscribe the status quo. Fantasising about the Other reflects an imperialist nostalgia, reflecting and re-enacting the power structures of white domination. hooks's essay is useful here in relation to food as it demonstrates the way in which the white reading audience could engage with ethnic difference while also overriding these cultures.

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[58] Casey, 'From Cookery in Colour', p. 581.
[59] bell hooks, *Black Looks : Race and Representation* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 39.
[60] Ibid., p. 24.

This 'Eating the Other' is also demonstrated in a feature in the *Birmingham Daily Post* from 1971, which also exemplifies the role that white women played in silencing Black women through embracing Caribbean food. In the article, journalist Barbara Crossette wrote about Rosie Edwards, a Trinidadian woman from Edgbaston, Birmingham, who provided Crossette with her favourite recipes from her home.[61] Yet Edwards's voice was absent in the piece and it was only through Crossette that readers learnt about her cooking. Edwards's personal identity was of little importance, although her food was the focal point to the article's instructional purpose. Elizabeth Buettner has shown that white British politicians would mention the Indian dish chicken tikka masala in their speeches to evoke a British hybrid identity, but using phrasing that positioned South Asian producers as passive agents in this process.[62] In the same way, Crossette eliminated Edwards's personal role in the creation and production of Trinidadian food, in turn eclipsing Edwards as the key mediator in the creation of a hybrid culture, transporting global culinary practices into the local public sphere.

The photograph of Edwards (Figure 3.4) also demonstrates the way in which the silencing of Black women in culinary instruction could inform the broader cultural construction of Black identities. Edwards poses rather awkwardly over her baking iron, her lips shut, and she is only smiling slightly. She holds a passive pose that is unthreatening and portrays little in terms of her personality. Moreover, the food occupies a similar amount of space in the photograph, of equal (if not more) compositional importance than Edwards. As Ravi Arvind Palat and others have suggested, food can often become the cultural identifier of ethnic groups to white outsiders.[63] By diminishing the visual importance of Edwards, the

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[61] 'Rosie tempts us into a West Indian kitchen', *Birmingham Daily Post,* 25 March 1971, p. 38.
[62] Buettner, '"Going for an Indian"', p. 871.
[63] Ravi Arvind Palat, 'Empire, Food and the Diaspora: Indian Restaurants in Britain', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 38 (2015), 171–86.

Birmingham Daily made food the dominant device with which the Birmingham public could

engage with, and construct their own impressions of, both Black Britons and British

multiculturalism as an idea.

Figure 3.4: 'Rosie tempts us into a West Indian Kitchen', *Birmingham Daily Post,* 25

March 1971, p. 38.

This section has explored the way in which women combined global and local

practices to create a hybrid culture. The Caribbean carnival transported the practices of the

imagined Caribbean diaspora into mainstream British cities. Black female organisers tied the

carnivals to civic anniversaries, enabling them to forge a sense of Britishness and market the

acceptability of their event. White women also began to construct a hybrid culture through

their practice of multiculturalism, as they ran community festivals that tied together ethnic

diversity and British cultural traditions. While this hybrid culture sought to foster a sense of inclusivity, it often fell short of these aims. Food was central to the construction of a hybrid culture, allowing Black women to embed Caribbean traditions in their local area, yet it could also act as a cultural buffer that prevented human interaction. While this hybridity made the event palatable and acceptable to the observer, the material and spatial aspects were integral components of carnival that made the event, an empowering form of identity, work for Black women.

Projecting identity: processions and processionists

The main event of the Caribbean carnival was its procession. The processional route of the Leeds West Indian Carnival, which first took place in 1968, passed through Chapeltown, home to most of the city's Caribbean population, before finishing in Potternewton Park. Figure 3.5, printed in the *Yorkshire Post,* demonstrates the popularity of the Leeds procession not simply for those involved, but for spectators as well. The photograph, taken in 1981, also reveals how the material and spatial aspects of the procession structured the social dynamics between the different ethnic groups in Leeds. In the photograph, the distinction between processionists and spectators is identifiable not simply by the different ethnicities (most of those in the procession are identifiable as Black), but through the costumes worn. In the centre of the image, we can make out the ornate and large-scale costume and headdress worn by Theresa Thompson, the winner of that year's Carnival Queen Competition.[64] On the right-hand-side of the image, the white and unadorned hands of two spectators point towards the procession, maybe at Thompson's costume or maybe just the

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[64] 'Hats off to a butterfly beauty', *Yorkshire Post,* 31 August 1981, [n.p]. Unable to access page number due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

crowd. The sartorial distinction between processionists and the spectators exemplifies the Caribbean carnival as a performance. The photo shows the Black woman as the celebrated protagonist, with the street as her stage, while the pavement and windows are vantage points for interested spectators. This section will examine these material and spatial aspects of the Caribbean carnival. It demonstrates the way in which the processional aspect of the carnival, and the costumes involved, shaped the relationships and identities of those living in urban centres.

The West Indian Carnival in full flow down Chapeltown Road, Leeds.

Figure 3.5: 'The West Indian Carnival in full flow down Chapeltown Road, Leeds', *Yorkshire Post*, 1 September 1981, [n.p].

Most Caribbean carnival processions, barring Notting Hill Carnival, began and finished at a local park. The Leeds Carnival centred on Potternewton Park in Chapeltown, while Manchester's procession route took place around Alexandra Park in Moss Side. Structuring these urban festivals around a local park provided a geographical focal point where attendees could congregate, while grounding the carnival in the civic identity of the

city. The Caribbean carnival generated a shared space for locals to gather temporarily and thus make visible the imagined community of residents. The procession itself also helped in this regard, as Georgiou has shown, because it served as a boundary-making exercise.[65] For instance, in 1983 the Toxteth Caribbean Carnival stayed within the Liverpool 8 postcode because the organisers wanted 'to keep the route within the community', thus allowing participants to sketch out the geographical borders to their so-called 'community'.[66] Taking place two years after the 1981 Toxteth Uprisings, following which Toxteth was stigmatised in the national media, the decision to keep the route within the postcode would have enabled Toxteth's processionists to claim back their own space, rebuild a community identity, and assert group belonging.[67] Processional routes printed in carnival programmes and local papers also aided in this respect (Figure 3.6) as they gave cartographic legitimacy to these shared boundaries. Thus carnival processional routes used space to create both 'mental and physical maps' that forged a relationship between residents within their shared urban environment.[68]

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[65] For the role of processions in local identity, see Georgiou, 'Weaving Patterns'.
[66] 'Calypso time at city carnival', *Liverpool Echo*, 15 August 1983, p. 5.
[67] Alice Butler, 'Toxic Toxteth: Understanding Press Stigmatization of Toxteth during the 1981 Uprising', *Journalism*, 21 (2020), 541–56.
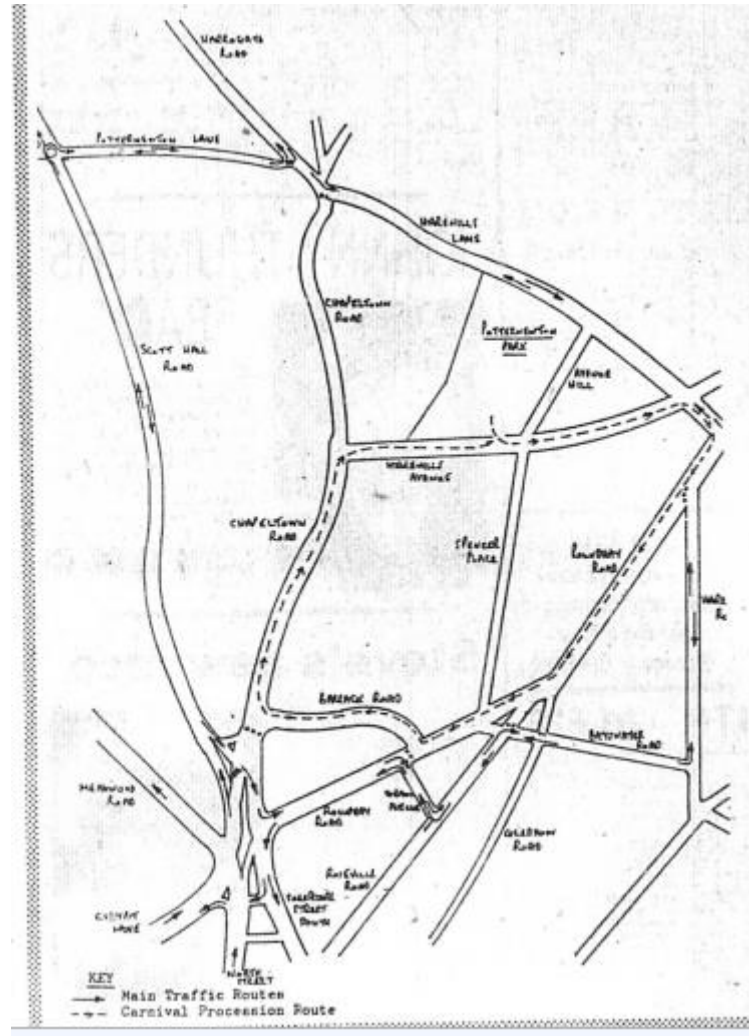[68] Georgiou, 'Weaving Patterns', p. 97.

Figure 3.6: 'Carnival route', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 25 August 1984, p. 3.

While street processions outlined the geographical territory that local residents and

participants shared, the street was also the site of struggle between different social groups, as

Krista Cowman has explored.[69] Local tension over procession routes was most acute

surrounding the Notting Hill Carnival, following two consecutive years of looting and

fighting in 1976 and 1977. As the Carnival increased in popularity, welcoming over 250,000

attendees by 1983, residents and business owners of Notting Hill were increasingly anxious

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[69] Krista Cowman, 'The Battle of the Boulevards: Class, Gender and the Purpose of Public Space in Later
Victorian Liverpool', in *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850*, ed. by Simon
Gunn and Robert J. Morris (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001), pp. 152–64.

about the threat posed by its procession.[70] Following the 1977 Disturbances, local newspapers

isolated the street as a causal factor in the violence, with the *Kensington Post* noting that 'the

most obvious cause for concern is the physical layout of North Kensington's narrow streets,

particularly Portobello Road, which have been the flashpoint of troubles for two consecutive

years'.[71] Likewise, Conservative deputy leader William Whitelaw MP stated that, 'criminals

and hooligans have once again ruined an occasion…it would be totally unfair to those who

live and work in the area to hold the Carnival on the *streets* again next year'.[72] Whitelaw was

a vocal proponent of tight law and order measures and proposed the deployment of combat

troops following the 1981 Disturbances that took place across Britain.[73] His use of racially

charged 'criminals and hooligans' repeated a script that encoded inner city Black people,

especially young Black men, as deviant. Such comments indicate that the public's unease

over Notting Hill Carnival did not centre on the event itself or its participants, but its location

in the inner-city streets, with politicians at the forefront of generating this unease.

Space, according to Simon Gunn, is the arena where various groups negotiate power,

and that conflict within and over space forms boundaries which allows individuals to

establish social identities.[74] While the comments from Whitelaw and the *Kensington Post*

indicate that the spatial aspect of the Notting Hill Carnival was the apparent cause of the

unrest, the tactic of blaming the physical layout of the street was shorthand for the conflict

between different social groups within Notting Hill. Notting Hill was, as Schofield and Jones

have noted, home to 'multiple communities…sharing the same space but experiencing…the

"very visible hand of the state" in unequal ways on the basis of race'.[75] Notting Hill had an

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[70] 'Notting Hill dresses up for a Roman Carnival', *The Times*, 30 August 1983, p. 24.
[71] 'Cuckoo Carnival'*, Kensington Post,* 2 September 1977, p.11.
[72] 'Whitelaw in call for ban on Carnival', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 31 August 1977, p. 5. Emphasis added.
[73] Elliott-Cooper, *Black Resistance to British Policing,* p. 42.
[74] Simon Gunn, 'The Spatial Turn: Changing Histories of Space and Place', in *Identities in Space : Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850*, ed. by Simon Gunn and Robert J. Morris (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001), pp. 1–15.
[75] Schofield and Jones, '"Whatever Community Is, This Is Not It"', p. 169.

established white working-class population, but it was also home to some of the most overcrowded and dilapidated homes in London, which were mostly occupied by Black residents. The conflict between these two groups played out in 1958 with the Notting Hill Race Riots, where white youths attacked the homes of Black residents over the course of several days.[76] Furthermore, by the 1980s, Notting Hill also had a growing number of professional middle-class residents, who had begun to outnumber those in traditional working-class occupations such as manufacturing.[77] Over time, the differences between these social groups played out through a public conflict over who had greater ownership over the streets of Notting Hill during its carnival.

Throughout the early 1980s, the Notting Hill Carnival became synonymous with 'mugging', a term the press media took from the American context in the 1970s to signify a collection of street-based offices, including theft, threatening behaviour, or assault, implicitly committed by young Black people.[78] Each year, Notting Hill residents became increasingly anxious about the event at its approach. In a letter to *The Independent* in 1987, Notting Hill resident Sheila Mitchell wrote:

> A few years back at the Notting Hill Carnival my husband and I were mugged by a very large gang of Black youths and two years later a couple were mugged outside our house…Cause enough to join the anti-[carnival] lobby?...This year, residents' cars were leafleted ordering us not to leave our vehicles in the street and informing us that they would be removed if necessary.[79]

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[76] Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain,* pp. 206–7.
[77] Chris Hamnett, 'Gentrification and the Middle-Class Remaking of Inner London, 1961-2001', *Urban Studies*, 40 (2003), 2401–26 (pp. 2405–2505).
[78] Elliott-Cooper, *Black Resistance to British Policing,* p. 38.
[79] 'Time to reappraise the Notting Hill Carnival', *The Independent*, 5 September 1987, p. 8.

Mitchell's letter was critical of the police's handling of the Carnival. However, her resistance to the procession centred on the threat it posed to her private property- her home and her car. Hirsch and Swanson, as well as Connell, have explored the impact of news photographs of looted or damaged property following inner-city uprisings in the 1980s, arguing that these images represented an affront to the increasingly salient British values of private ownership.[80] In the same way, Mitchell's concern for her private property (and *The Independent's* decision to print this letter) created a chasm between residents and participants in the Carnival based on ownership of capital.

The racial aspect of Mitchell's comment also carried some weight. In her letter, she identified herself as a white resident in opposition to her muggers, who have a racial identity but no origin - they are simply 'Black youths', a term that, by the late 1980s, had enough symbolic weight to hark back to the 'mugging' panic of the previous decade. After the Notting Hill Disturbances of 1977, some local publications made sure to deflect attention away from the racial aspect to the incident, noting that the looting was simply down to 'a few hundred rampaging youths'.[81] However, Mitchell's letter reveals that, for residents, the conflict over the Notting Hill streets was racialised. The organisers of the Notting Hill Carnival also believed the Disturbances were linked to the broader issue of race relations in the area. Black organisers rebutted proposals to ban the event with arguments that if Notting Hill Carnival should be banned, so too should National Front Marches.[82] Some popular tabloids also saw the matter as race related. The *Daily Mail* believed it was the responsibility of the Caribbean community to prevent future Carnivals from falling into violence. 'If the West Indians wish to preserve what should be a happy celebration', the paper noted, 'then it

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[80] Hirsch and Swanson, 'Photojournalism and the Moss Side Riots', p. 227; Connell, 'Photographing Handsworth', p. 134.
[81] 'Cuckoo Carnival', p.11.
[82] 'West Indians must find the solution', *Daily Mail*, 31 August 1977, p. 6.

is up to their leaders, drawn from all groups who attend it…to take steps necessary to ensure its survival'.[83] Therefore, while processions could blur the identities of processionists and spectators, the street could also be a site that distinguished carnival participants along ethnic lines.

Elsewhere, the street also played a role in symbolic battles surrounding urban redevelopment and social dispersal. In Moss Side, the Alexandra Park procession went through those streets in Moss Side that had seen demolition, and photographs of the event in the 1970s reveal the Carnival taking place amidst bulldozed homes. However, over time, the procession began to include new streets and take in new sites. By the 1990s, the procession included a lap of the Alexandra Park Estate, one of the most neglected housing estates in the area and a notorious hotspot for crime. [84] The Estate was a site of transience that lacked established familial networks, becoming a memorial vacuum that represented the new Moss Side. Over the years, the Carnival turned these new Moss Side streets into a commemorative site of previous carnivals. In a leaflet for the 1977 Carnival, T. L. Rayner noted that the Carnival began with 'no band and no money' and that 'seven years later we still hav'nt any money [sic]'.[85] As Georgiou has suggested, carnivals in newly built environments can imbue urban areas with 'positive specific temporal significances' by embedding shared memories into sites that previously may have had none.[86] In the same way, while Moss Side underwent large-scale urban and social change throughout the 1970s, Manchester Carnival became the immutable link between the old Moss Side and the new.

What role did women play in the processional aspect of carnival? While the street represented the fixity of Moss Side, women, who formed the majority of processionists,

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[83] 'West Indians must find the solution', p. 6.
[84] Brown and Cunningham, 'The Inner Geographies', p. 111.
[85] AIU, CC, GB3228.9/1/1, 'Reflections on Carnival by T. L. Rayner', 1974.
[86] Georgiou, 'Weaving Patterns', p. 111.

represented the steadfastness of its residents. Figure 3.7, taken at the Moss Side Carnival in 1977, illustrates this fixity. The photograph shows the procession moving through a street that had both new and old housing. The buildings are visual reminders of the physical change that Moss Side had witnessed, serving as symbols of the transience of the area's urban infrastructure. However, women negated this transience. The female participants remain rooted to Moss Side, walking its streets amidst the signs of physical transformation. The Black female processionists projected the embeddedness of Moss Side and Moss Siders. Moreover, the grizzly weather enhanced the assertiveness of this performance. The young girl on the far left looks particularly cold, overcoming the typically Mancunian wet weather by wearing a warm coat over her costume. Thus, as Adela Ruth Tompsett has noted, 'Carnival performance says, "I am here"', regardless of the weather. [87]

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[87] Adela Ruth Tompsett, '"London Is the Place for Me": Performance and Identity in Notting Hill Carnival', *Theatre History Studies*, 25 (2005), 43–60 (p. 46).

Figure 3.7: Moss Side Carnival, 1977, Manchester Archives +,

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/manchesterarchiveplus/6000174642/in/photostream/>

[accessed 4 May 2020]. Courtesy of Manchester Archives & Local Studies.

The processional aspect of carnivals also gave Black female processionists agency over communicating a collective identity of the Black carnivalists. Carnival Queen costumes played an important role in this regard. In 1977, as part of its series *Countdown to the Festival,* the BBC broadcasted an episode dedicated to carnival, in which the viewer follows Hebrew Rawlins preparing a carnival costume for his girlfriend, Patricia Wilkes, to enter into the Leeds West Indian Carnival Queen competition.[88] Rawlins noted that the traditional outfits worn at the Trinidadian Carnival inspired his butterfly design. However, when Wilkes won the Leeds Carnival Queen Competition that year, the *Yorkshire Post* described her as

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[88] *Countdown to the Festival, '*The Carnival' (BBC, 1977).

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'dressed as a butterfly'.[89] The description implied that Wilkes was simply 'dressing up', as opposed to undergoing a performance of identity work that referenced her diasporic belonging. Here, the ability to read the symbolic cues of Patricia's costume distinguished those who were members of the Caribbean community from those who were not. Black women became cultural bearers for the Caribbean diaspora, their bodies serving as canvases that enabled knowledgeable onlookers to confirm their membership of the Caribbean community.

Dancers also communicated a collective Black British identity through their specific sartorial language. Unlike the Carnival Queens, who tended to wear unique or distinctive outfits, female dancers in processions wore the same costumes. At times, these outfits were distinct, often referring to distinct historical periods, such as ancient Rome or Egypt.[90] However, costumes became more abstract and did not necessarily link to conveying Caribbean culture. By the late 1970s, it was common to see female dancers at carnivals across the country wearing all-white clothing (Figures 3.8 and 3.9) and the repetition of these outfits across different regions highlights Black women's role in the construction of collective identities. In her study of interwar Whit processions, Charlotte Wildman has shown how Catholic women would use simple items such as slippers and socks to distinguish themselves from Protestants and assert a Catholic identity.[91] Similarly, while the outfits on display demonstrate each troupe's originality, wearing something as simple as white allowed the women to speak to the larger shared cultural practice among Black female processionists, while also demonstrating their membership to this cultural grouping. Moreover, it was

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[89] 'Causing a Flutter', *Yorkshire Evening Post,* 29 August 1977, [n.p]. Unable to access page number due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.
[90] 'Sun and Peace Shine on Carnival', *The Guardian*, 31 August 1981, p. 16; 'Notting Hill dresses up for a Roman Carnival'.
[91] Wildman, *Urban Redevelopment and Modernity*, pp. 159–60.

through occupying public space and wearing these outfits that Black women could project a distinctive Black British identity from within, offering them agency and assertiveness.

Dancing in the streets : The happy faces of carnival as it began in Notting Hill yesterday.   Pictures : BARRIE BEATTIE and MARTIN ARGLES

Figure 3.8: 'Dancing in the streets: the happy carnival as it began in Notting Hill yesterday', *Daily Mail*, 29 August 1977, pp. 14-15.

Some of the whistle-blowing carnival dancers.

Figure 3.9: 'Some of the whistle-blowing carnival dancers', *Yorkshire Post,* 31 August 1982, [n.p].

While the costumed Black women participated in the visual construction of collective identities, costumes also enabled Black women to communicate their individual identities. As Figure 3.7 demonstrates, carnival costumes were intricate, featuring a variety of materials, components, and colours. In her analysis of the link between material culture and identity, Carolyn Steedman reminds us that the intricacy of clothing, the adornments and finite details are used 'to show that one-and-only, striking, originality of personhood'.[92] While women's costumes were generic in their subject (it was common to see women dressed as butterflies or octopuses), each outfit was always unique and made to order. Thus, despite each procession

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[92] Carolyn Steedman, 'Englishness, Clothes and Little Things', in *The Englishness of English Dress*, ed. by Christopher Breward, Becky Conekin, and Caroline Cox (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), pp. 29–44 (p. 36).

featuring hundreds of adorned Black women, the costumes worked as a public display of each woman's individuality to onlookers.

The opportunity to present one's individuality was particularly important for Black women in the 1970s. Female processionists, particularly the Carnival Queen, actively invited spectatorship from onlookers, as this section's opening demonstrated. In her study of Black youth culture in Brixton, Tanisha Ford has explained that young Black bodies in the 1970s, particularly women's, were marked undesirable, rarely portrayed in the mainstream media in a positive light.[93] However, the carnival procession was a rare celebration of Black female identity, and Black women's role as decorated and unique processionists enabled them to project a positive image of Black womanhood. Moreover, when Samuel Lee spoke to the *Reading Evening Post* about her own Caribbean carnival she noted that 'the whole object [of the carnival] will be defeated if we don't see any white people'.[94] Lee's comment indicated that the Carnival Queen was meant to be seen, and that being the Queen was a mode of identity work that only functioned when it was in dialogue with white spectatorship. Costume wearing thus provided Black women with the unique opportunity to perform an identity of inner-city Black womanhood to outsiders on their own terms.

The Carnival Queen Competition could also be a process for Black women to perform a coherent Caribbean identity that might otherwise had been prohibited. While there was a long tradition of white Carnival Queens at local festivals and fetes, the origins of Black Carnival Queens lie in the Caribbean Black beauty contests that Rochelle Rowe has studied.[95] In her study, Rowe has highlighted the significance of beauty to 'the wider social and political context of the transformation of the Caribbean within the twentieth century', arguing

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[93] Ford, 'Violence at Desmond's Hip City: Gender and Soul Power in London', p. 213.
[94] 'The carnival comes to town', p. 12.
[95] Rochelle Rowe, *Imagining Caribbean Womanhood* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

that women played a role in the construction of coherent Caribbean national identities both during colonialism, and following the independence movements of the post-war years.[96] While the best part of Rowe's book is dedicated to contests in the Caribbean, her chapter on the Carnival Queen competition set up by Claudia Jones in London has demonstrated that they served the purpose of presenting an empowering image of Black womanhood.[97] Beauty contests in the Caribbean were shaped by pigmentocracy, the privileging of lighter skin complexions over others, and had several categories dedicated to ranking women according to their different skin tones. However, Jones challenged this aspect of Caribbean society, rooted in colonialism, by having only one category in her contest, thereby not marginalising Blackness and celebrating all Black women. The Carnival Queen competitions in Britain served as, in Rowe's words, 'an unlikely project for a communist feminist, to affirm Black femininity in Britain as a mark of cultural and racial resistance'.[98]

After winning the Leeds West Indian Carnival Queen Competition in 1981, Theresa Thompson reflected, 'I have never won anything like this before and I still haven't got over it yet. But I knew I would win with such a beautiful costume'.[99] Thompson tied her achievement to the Caribbean costume she was wearing, her newfound confidence bound up in performing a traditional model of Caribbean womanhood. Similarly, Figure 3.10 shows Locita Brandy, the main organiser of the Alexandra Park Carnival, taking part in the Moss Side procession wearing traditional Trinidadian dress. Her body language is assertive as her hand points towards the photographer, as if beckoning them to move out the way for the float behind her. Like Thompson, her outward gestures indicate a sense of ease and confidence in performing a 'traditional' Trinidadian identity through her sartorial choices. In his

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[96] Rowe, *Imagining Caribbean Womanhood,* p. 3.
[97] Ibid., chap. 5.
[98] Ibid., p. 153.
[99] 'Hats off to a butterfly beauty'.

examination of identity, Stuart Hall explored the importance of difference to the construction

of individual identity and ethnicity, noting that once a person is Othered by another, that they

themselves understand their identity as split between the self and the Other.[100] In these

images, the women's ease is constituted from their performance of being the Other, both in

their role as performing a non-British identity, but also through the act of photography itself

that positions them as objects of fascination. In some ways, it was by being Othered that these

women could project a confident form of selfhood and identity.

[100] Stuart Hall, 'Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities', in *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, ed. by Anthony D. King (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 41–68 (pp. 47–48).

Figure 3.10: AIU, CC, GB3228.9/1/02, Locita Brandy at the Alexandra Park Carnival, 1976. Courtesy of the AIU.

While both Brandy and Thompson communicated a sense of ease in performing a particular mode of Caribbean womanhood, this performance was only sanctioned on one weekend of the year. As has been demonstrated throughout this chapter, British society only tolerated multiculturalism insofar as it was temporary and contained. As Connell has shown, Black families in Britain rarely wore 'traditional' Caribbean clothes in their photographic self-portraits, opting for their Sunday best to demonstrate their advanced status and

respectability.[101] Outside of Carnival, it was rare to see Black Britons present their identity through traditional Caribbean attire. While carnival gave Black women the opportunity to perform a certain model of Caribbean womanhood, it was temporarily limited. British multiculturalism was thus not a fluid and expansive practice of ethnic toleration; rather, it was contingent, temporary, and prohibitive.

The inter-generational aspect of the costume-making process also enabled women to communicate their elevated status as Black women. It was common to read stories about mothers making costumes with, and for, their relatives. In an article from 1979, the *Yorkshire Post* featured an article on the costume Mrs Edris Browne and her daughter Cavell were making for Browne's niece for that year's Leeds Carnival.[102] Browne had been a winner of the same prize in 1973 (Cavell would also be a winner in 1983) and Figure 3.11 shows her preparing her niece's costume, accompanied by her daughter. In the newspaper photograph, Browne is the most active agent as she adjusts something with her hands, able to work and pose for the camera simultaneously. Connell has argued that posed self-portraits of African Caribbean migrants in Britain allowed them to communicate an image of prosperity, while also challenging dominant portrayals of Black people living in inner-city deprivation.[103] In this photograph, Browne presented her own status as a productive Black woman contributing to her local community. Her role as a mother is also important. As Razia Parveen has noted, the maternal instructional voice provides authority and authenticity to cultural practices, and in turn allows mothers to construct a diasporic identity in their new homeland.[104] While she is not at the centre of the photograph, the composition places Browne above both her daughter and her niece, giving her a status of familial authority. It is through her identity as a mother in

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[101] Connell, *Black Handsworth,* pp. 144–45.

[102] 'All set for city's big Caribbean carnival', *Yorkshire Post,* 24 August 1979, [n.p]. Unable to access page number due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

[103] Connell, *Black Handsworth*, pp. 144–45; See also Connell, 'Photographing Handsworth', pp. 135–43.

[104] Parveen, 'Food to Remember', pp. 52–54.

the photograph that Browne communicates her status as an authentic Caribbean woman with authority within her family.

Figure 3.11: 'Mrs Brown and her daughter Cavell, with Mrs Brown's [sic] niece in the foreground, putting finishing touches to the Octopus costume', *Yorkshire Post*, 29 August1979, [n.p].

Men also had a hand in making women's costumes, which provided them with an opportunity to communicate their 'authentic' Caribbean identities. In his interview with the BBC, Hebrew Rawlins noted that:

It's not a very large costume, in comparison to some of those that's in Trinidad [sic]. I've used various types of materials on this costume itself, mainly to bring out the shine in the costume so when the lights hit it on the night, it will give it a dazzling effect.[105]

Here Rawlins showed his 'authentic' identity as a man of Caribbean descent by presenting himself as a connoisseur of the Trinidad Carnival. As Arjun Appadurai has noted, authenticity is a criterion that 'emerges just after a subject matter has been transformed' and it allows individuals to claim an elevated status by showing their superior knowledge of a subject.[106] As Caribbean carnivals became increasingly standardised and, as the BBC's coverage suggests, institutionalised, they were rebranded as a symbol of 'multiculturalism' that flattened a Trinidadian tradition into a marker of a homogenous 'West Indian' identity. However, by claiming superior knowledge of Trinidadian costume making, Rawlins demonstrated his authenticity as a man who was familiar with the island's culture. Wildman has demonstrated that the Whit processions in Manchester allowed Italian and Irish migrant communities to have a temporary moment in which to express an overt shared Catholic identity in a public space in which they were otherwise marginalised.[107] Similarly, while Black male assertiveness was derided and considered threatening in mainstream culture, Rawlins could perform expert knowledge in this acceptable space and scenario. Thus, while multiculturalism threatened to mask a liberatory practice for the British Caribbean community, costumes could give its members some agency over their identity.

Rawlins's discussion of the costume's details is also significant, forming part of a broader tendency of male costume designers to stress the labour involved in the process. In an

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[105] *Countdown to the Festival.*
[106] Quoted in Buettner, '"Going for an Indian"', p. 883.
[107] Wildman, *Urban Redevelopment and Modernity*, pp. 152–54.

interview with the *Yorkshire Post,* Hughdon Condor, who designed the costume of the Leeds

Carnival Queen Theresa Thompson in 1981, said the costume 'took a year to design – and

one and a half months to make. The materials alone cost £80'.[108] Paying attention to the

intricacy behind their work allowed the men to communicate their Caribbean identities. In her

analysis of the role of the Other in the creation of identity, Steedman has commented on the

importance of littleness in the construction of collective identities. She argues that while the

idea of the Other is too indistinct in the construction of collective identities, littleness can be

held and can be 'incorporated' into who we are.[109] Similarly, diasporic identities are vast.

Yet, for both Rawlins and Condor, it was the little things - the small details, the hours of

work - that allowed the men to incorporate an intangible Caribbean identity into their

personal identities.

This identity work would have been particularly relevant in the cultural context of

Britain, in which the press often portrayed young Black men as lazy or perpetrators to

crime.[110] Following the 1976 and 1977 Carnival Disturbances, images of young Black men

running from the police, or fighting one another, marked the beginning of media

representations of disillusioned young Black men lacking a sense of identity.[111] For both

Rawlins and Condor, their roles as costume designers enabled them to subvert these

persistent stereotypes. The men's dedication to the craft, outlined through the hours of labour,

cost and attention to detail, demonstrated their hard work, financial stability, and their

devotion to their cultural heritage. Yet crucially, these communicated messages were

contingent on the actions of Black women. In the BBC documentary, Rawlins's narrative arc

only finished once Patricia Wilkes wins the Carnival Queen competition and Rawlins was

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[108] 'Hats off to a butterfly beauty'.
[109] Steedman, 'Englishness, Clothes and Little Things', p. 35.
[110] See Connell, 'Photographing Handsworth', pp. 129–30.
[111] 'Not quite fun for everyone at the carnival', *Economist*, 3 September 1977, p. 15; See also Klöß, 'Representations of Identity', pp. 260–62; Jackson, 'Street Life', p. 214.

credited in the awards ceremony. Likewise, it is the accompanying photograph of Thompson in the winning costume that gave visual evidence of Condor's labour in the *Yorkshire Post* article. Therefore, while costumes could aid Black men in challenging negative stereotypes in the press, Black women were required for this process.

This section has demonstrated how the spatial and material aspects of the Caribbean carnival played a role in the identity formation for carnival processionists. Whether space was the arena for solidarity or conflict, carnival processions allowed residents to make visible the collective identities of its participants. This section has also shown that women were essential agents in this process of collective identity formation in their role as costumed processionists. Finally, this section has indicated that costumes enabled Black women to communicate individual identities on their own terms, even those of men. Black women were thus inadvertently responsible for the exhibition of various identities relating to place, womanhood, and ethnicity. However, despite these opportunities for agency and fulfilment afforded to Black women, the next section examines the role of the media in undermining these emboldening aspects of carnival.

Visualising a multicultural Britain

In 1977, the *Kensington Post* covered the Notting Hill Carnival, which had ended in a night of lootings and conflict between youths and the police for the second year in a row. There was no mention of race in the local paper's coverage of the Carnival, with the leading articles noting that the cause of the conflict was a group of 'trouble makers' who set out with the 'intention of stealing'. [112] However, as Hirsch and Swanson have noted, photography allows 'the acknowledgement of "race" when in contemporary accounts its existence is

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[112] 'Now Who Do We Blame?', *Kensington Post*, 2 September 1977, p. 1.

denied'.[113] Figure 3.12 shows a photograph, featured in the *Post,* of two police officers cowering against a wall during the night's unrest. On the right-hand side, a man flees the scene, and though he is faceless, his arm is enough to identify him as Black. The caption read, 'here comes trouble…police and bystanders avoid attacks in Portobello Road on Monday night'. Never explicitly pointing the blame, the newspaper's photograph and caption came together to give a distinct message of who the newspaper believed to be the reason for the night's unrest.

Figure 3.12: 'Here comes trouble…police and bystanders avoid attacks in PortobelloRoad on Monday night', *Kensington Post,* 2 September 1977, p. 11.

On the same page as the faceless sprinter was a photograph of five girls laughing in the street, mid-stride, their arms draped around each other's shoulders (Figure 3.13). The women are at ease in their environment and happy with each other, there is no sign of tension

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[113] Hirsch and Swanson, Photojournalism and the Moss Side Riots', p. 222.

in the streets behind them and certainly not with one another. The caption noted, 'not every Black teenager came for trouble. These five were out for some fun in the sun'. On its own, the photograph has little significance other than five girls enjoying themselves, but it conveyed a deeper meaning when juxtaposed with the faceless sprinter (Figure 3.14): a racial threat is real, but ethnic difference can still thrive in British society. The smiling women represented the face, or the hope, of a multicultural Britain.

Figure 3.13: 'Not every Black teenager came for trouble. These five were out for some fun in the sun', *Kensington Post,* 2 September 1977, p. 11.

Figure 3.14: *Kensington Post*, 2 September 1977, p. 11.

In his study of the photography of the Handsworth Riots in 1985, Connell has argued

that news photography helped to elaborate stereotypes of Black male youths as bloodlusts

and 'proto-insurrectional'.[114] While the photography of the faceless sprinter confirms this

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[114] Connell, 'Photographing Handsworth', p. 133.

notion, exploring news photography of Black women adds nuance to this argument. This section examines how positive portrayals of Black women at Caribbean carnivals conveyed Britain's contradictory relationship with ethnic difference in the late twentieth century. While scholars such as Marin Conboy have noted the importance of newspapers in generating discourses of national identity around racial exclusion, the press also used photographs of Black women at carnivals to represent the 'acceptable face' of multicultural Britain.[115]

As noted in this thesis's Introduction, by the 1970s, multiracial co-existence and acceptance was a fact that Britain had to incorporate into its national identity in a post-Nazi world. As Perry has shown in her analysis of the 1958 Notting Hill Race Riots, Britain had to marry its public-facing international reputation as a racially tolerant society with its with its efforts to restrict colonial migration and a growing non-white presence. [116] Moreover, Denise Noble monograph *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom* has argued that the changing facets of British liberalism, a tenet to its national identity, have targeted the Black Caribbean woman as subject, while all the while reproducing and initiating colonial practices of power.[117] This final section demonstrates how this dualism played out in the press.

In the *Kensington Post* photographs, the women sashaying down the street appear non-confrontational and well behaved as they actively pose for the photograph. The well-behaved Black woman, or what Noble has alternatively named 'the safe Black', was a common trope in news photography of carnival, most visible in the plethora of news photographs of Black women alongside local police.[118] Figure 3.15 captures an embrace between a police officer and a Black woman at Notting Hill Carnival in 1977, the same year that conflict broke out between Black youths and the police for the second year in a row.[119]

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[115] Buettner, '"Going for an Indian"', p. 865; Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Britain*, pp. 94–122.
[116] Perry, *London is the Place for Me,* p. 103.
[117] Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom*.
[118] Ibid, p. 71.
[119] Klöß, 'Representations of Identity', p. 260.

The photograph is vague. While the caption suggests she is kissing him, it also appears as though the woman is saying something into the officer's ear. It was likely that the noise of the carnival necessitated this close interaction, yet the body language also mimics a whispered exchanged, conjuring a sense of intimacy between the two. Meanwhile, the candidness of the photograph provides an air of authenticity. These visual elements of the photograph humanised the police, encouraging the viewer to think they are witnessing an 'authentic' moment of intimate and relatable interaction. This individuated snapshot also de-institutionalised the police, removing the accusations of heavy-handedness and indiscriminate policing that Black community leaders levelled at the police force following the 1976 Disturbances the previous year.[120] The photograph makes invisible the narrative of police neglect and racism towards Notting Hill's Black residents.

A mark of affection for the law.

Figure 3.15: 'A mark of affection for the law', *Daily Mail,* 29 August 1977, p. 14.

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[120] 'The festival of fun that turned into a bitter riot', *Daily Mirror*, 31 August 1976, p. 2.

As Jackson has noted, the 1976 Disturbances marked a turning point in the ideological construction of 'Black youth' in Britain as an 'implicitly male, homogenous hostile group'.[121] However, photographs of women dancing with the police were the inverse of images of riotous, antagonistic young Black men at that year's carnival (Figure 3.16), and as a result they aided the press in upholding what Perry has called 'the mystique of British anti-racism'.[122] This 'mystique', Perry stated, was the invested notion that Britain was a tolerant and liberal society, an identity that rested on projected denials of deep-seated societal racism by the government and media alike.[123] When Black women were photographed next to the police, the press were able to suggest that accusations and stories of police mistreatment were not a result of racism. Gender cut through the cultural construction of race to validate Britain's national identity as a liberal and tolerant society.

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[121] Jackson, 'Street Life', p. 214.

[122] Connell, 'Photographing Handsworth', p. 1; See also Hirsch and Swanson, 'Photojournalism and the Moss Side Riots'.

[123] Hammond Perry, *London is the Place for Me*, pp. 83–125.

Figure 3.16: 'Not quite fun for everyone at the carnival', *Economist*, 3 September 1977, p. 15.

The necessity of Black women to this construction of British identity is significant. Newspapers did not print photographs of Black women with the police at random but chose them because the image of a Black woman dancing alongside a white police officer carried a distinctive symbolic weight concerning Britain's relationship with ethnic minorities. Had the women in these photographs been white or South Asian, the photographic message would be different and would tell an alternative narrative, if any, about multicultural Britishness. Inner-city Black women conjured up the narrative of tense relations that the Caribbean community had with the police in a way that other women could not. In counter-acting these traditional narratives through engaging with police, Black women's racialised identities had a unique

power within news photography in protecting the idea of British racial acceptance. Thus, while historians like Zoe Anderson have noted that the British identity in the 1980s circulated around the protection of whiteness, these photographs suggest that there was, in fact, a contingent relationship between British national identity and the African Caribbean presence.[124]

Likewise, on a local level, representations of police officers with women allowed local newspapers to project an acceptable place identity. For instance, both the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Yorkshire Evening Post* often displayed images of Black women with the police. Figure 3.17 not only shows a Black woman with a police officer, but the woman is older, which, coupled with her less revealing costume, suppressed any suggestion of a sexual encounter between the two figures. The platonic relationship demonstrated in the photographs muted accusations of social divides in the area, despite personal testimony from Black women elsewhere suggesting otherwise.[125] Therefore, as the press projected an image of solidarity between Black women and the British police, it constructed an identity of a multiculturalism in the local area that hid the existence of police racism.

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[124] Zoe Anderson, 'Empire's Fetish: Sexualised Nationalism and Gendering of the Falklands War', *National Identities*, 13 (2011), 189–204 (p. 191).

[125] Chapeltown Black Women Writers' Group, *When Our Ship Comes in: Black Women Talk* (Castleford: Yorkshire Art Circus, 1992), p. 33.

A scene that sums up the Caribbean spirit of the Leeds West Indian Carnival in Chapeltown. Community constable Billy Gilmore is swept along in the dancing by Mrs. Mildred Charles.

Figure 3.17: 'A scene that sums up the Caribbean spirit of the Leeds West Indian Carnival in Chapeltown. Community Constable Billy Gilmore is swept along in the dancing by Mrs. Mildred Charles', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 28 August 1979, p. 7.

These photographs conveyed another deeper message about the agency of Black women in constructing new performances of British identity. Figure 3.18 portrays a young Black woman wearing a police helmet, connoting the blending of ethnic difference and British institutions. Figure 3.19, similarly, depicts a police officer with his arms around three Black women. As Paul Gilroy has argued, and as will be explored fully in Chapter Four, the maintenance of law and order in Britain has been considered a particular cultural

achievement, thus legality, and by extension, the police, are bound up with nationhood.[126]

Figures 3.18 and 3.19 demonstrate the way in which symbols and markers of national identity were manipulated by the press to include the presence of ethnic minorities. Through this appropriation, as Noble has also suggested, these women could be accepted by the 'community of whiteness' because of their distance 'from the trouble some menacing stereotypes of unsafe Blacks'.[127] As such, Black women became essential agents in performing a new discourse around nationhood, representing the existence, or at least the potential, of a multicultural Britain.
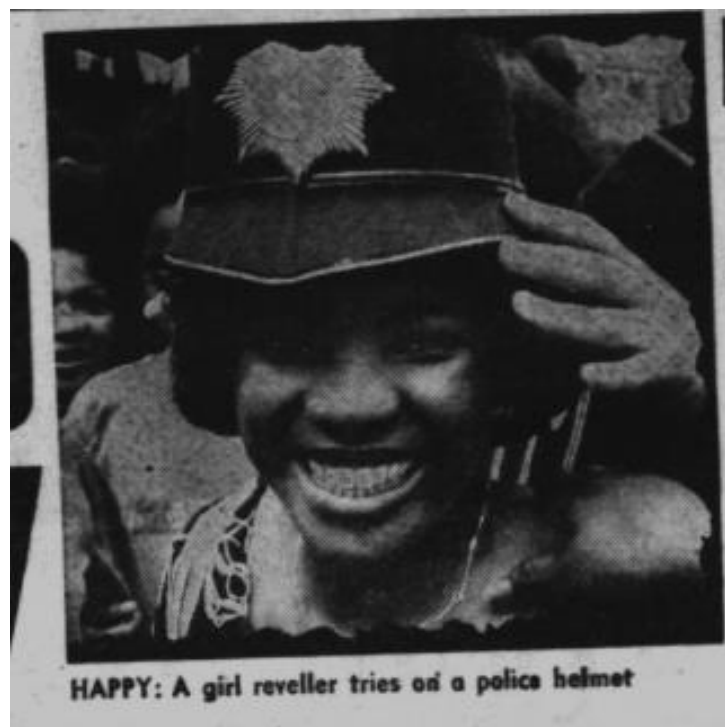

HAPPY: A girl reveller tries on a police helmet

Figure 3.18: 'Happy: A girl reveller tries on a police helmet', *Daily Mirror*, 30 August 1978, p. 7.

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[126] Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, 2nd edn (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2002), pp. 87–88.
[127] Noble, *Decolonizing and Feminizing Freedom,* p. 71.

Revellers at the fourth annual Merseyside International Caribbean Carnival, Liverpool. One highlight was a procession of dancers and steel bands which wound through the city centre from Toxteth.

Figure 3.19: 'Revellers at the fourth annual Merseyside International Caribbean Carnival, Liverpool', *The Independent*, 7 August 1989, p. 3.

As they interacted with police officers, Black women posed no threat to the stability of Britain. As Shirley Anne Tate has examined, racialised discourses and representations of Black women's bodies render them docile. Building on Michel Foucault, her study has argued that racialised discourses inscribe onto Black women's bodies practices of discipline, such as diet and exercise.[128] Embedded within this of disciplinarity is the idea of white superiority that Black women's bodies helped to sustain. For instance, Figure 3.20 shows four teenage girls dancing at the Oasis Caribbean festival held at a youth centre in Acton in 1970.

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[128] Shirley Anne Tate, *Black Women's Bodies and The Nation : Race, Gender and Culture*, Genders and Sexualities in the Social Sciences (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), Introduction.

In the photograph, the young women, as in most photographs, are smiling. This visual signifier of happiness appealed to the gendered emotional norms of post-war Britain, where ideal womanhood rested on performances of positivity and 'so much smiling'.[129] The smiling women also conjured up the longer visual history of the humorous and childish 'pickaninny', which, as Juanita Marie Holland has noted, reassured 'the white population with codified images that reaffirmed the superiority of the dominant culture'.[130] Moreover, the women are also mid-routine. Rather than showing unbridled female sexual energy through their dancing, their synchronicity represents an engineered and controlled Black female sexuality that did not threaten Britain's sexual mores. The synchronicity also implied a preparedness and productivity to female dancing that allayed fears of a restless Black youth. Finally, the women's sartorial symmetry signifies these women as entertainers; they are there for the enjoyment of not only the unseen audience, but also for the newspaper's reader. It is in these ways that Black women dancing presented a comforting image of a peaceful multicultural Britain: they are smiling (not angry), they are working (not lazy), they are entertaining (not antagonising). In offering a comforting image of Black docility through the Black female body, British newspapers could present an image of a Black presence in Britain that could maintain an illusion of white superiority.

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[129] Sarah Stoller, 'Forging a Politics of Care: Theorizing Household Work in the British Women's Liberation Movement', *History Workshop Journal*, 85 (2018), 95–119.

[130] Juanita Marie Holland, 'Mary Edmonia Lewis' Minnehaha: Gender, Race and the "Indian Maid"', in *Diaspora and Visual Culture : Representing Africans and Jews*, ed. by Nicholas Mirzoeff (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 45–56 (p. 50); Bridget R. Cooks, 'Fixing Race: Visual Representations of African Americans at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 41 (2007), 435–65.

Four Soul Sisters groove to the reggae beat at the Oasis Youth Club's Caribbean Festival on Thursday. They are from left to right; Corrine White, Dawn Henry, Chrystal White and Carolyn Peters

Figure 3.20: 'Four Soul Sisters groove to the reggae beat…', *Acton Gazette*, 3 September 1970, p. 6.

News photographs of Black women as Carnival Queens also allowed the press to present an image of ethnic difference that did not threaten hegemonic British cultures. Despite the origins of beauty contests, mainstream news coverage overwrote the politicised

and empowered aspects of Caribbean beauty contests that Claudia Jones had set out when she imported the tradition to Britain. Newspaper photographs presented the Carnival Queens in different ways. Firstly, both regional and national newspapers emphasised the overtly Caribbean identity of the Queens. In these images, the material aspect of Black women is often prioritised, and their Caribbean identities pushed to the forefront and celebrated. For instance, Figure 3.21 shows Theresa Thompson after she won the Carnival Queen competition at the Leeds West Indian Carnival in 1981. The focus of the photograph is her headdress, and her body is hidden from view. Likewise, Figure 3.22 shows the powerful image of a woman at the Leeds West Indian Carnival in 1975. The woman's outfit dominates the frame and directs attention away from her face. Newspapers often described these Caribbean Queens as 'resplendent', as a 'beauty', or as adding a 'touch of elegance and splendour' to the weekend proceedings, reducing the women to objects of fascination and aesthetics.[131] Thus, while the Queens were celebrated and portrayed in a positive way, they were simultaneously Othered by being exoticised and situated on the outside of an imagined, homogenous national identity. By celebrating the novelty of the Caribbean identity of the women, newspapers could place Caribbean culture within British culture but at a protracted distance that posed no threat to national identity.

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[131] 'A super fun-in-the-sun day', *Yorkshire Evening Post,* 28 August 1979, p. 7; 'Hats off to a butterfly beauty'.

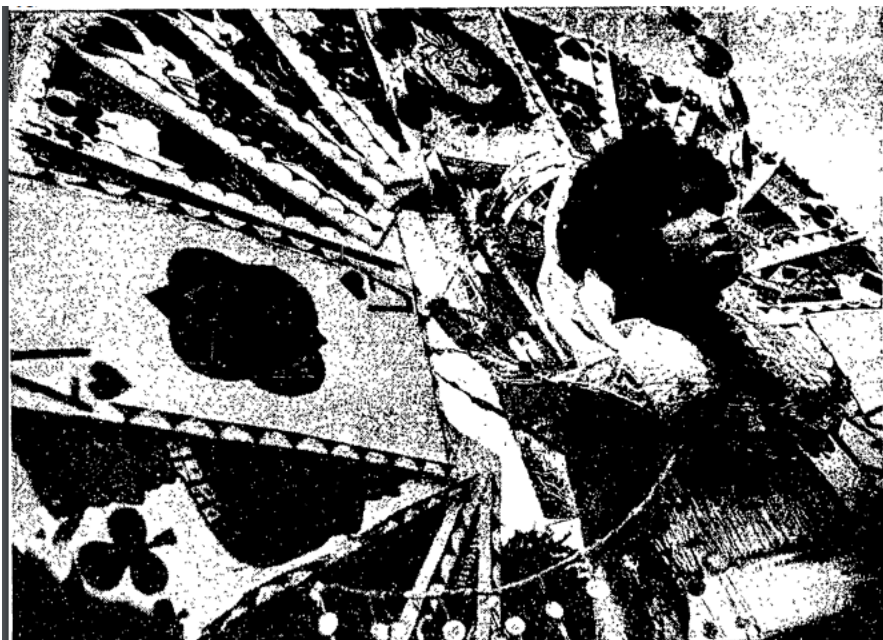Figure 3.21: 'Hats off to a butterfly beauty', *Yorkshire Post*, 31 August 1981, [n.p].

Figure 3.22: 'Caribbean Carnival at Chapeltown, Leeds', *The Guardian*, 26 August 1975, p.

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Local newspapers tended to publish sexualised photographs of Caribbean Carnival Queens. The local press were not immune to Britain's appetite for sexual newspaper content in the late twentieth century, and would often print sexual content in order to compete with the popular dailies, such as the *Daily Mirror* or *The Sun*.[132] Figure 3.23 shows Greta Elias, who won the Caribbean Overseas Association's Grand Annual Carnival Dance in Ealing in 1971. The photograph conveys the visual rhetoric of the traditional pin-up model found in the mainstream British press. Elias is, naturally, smiling, and she projects her chest forward, her nipples visible through her sheer bra. Moreover, the accompanying text belies the Caribbean aspect to the competition. There is no mention of Elias's ethnicity, and the paper even included her 'vital statistics' (34-23-34).[133] The inclusion of her vital statistics mimicked the text that accompanied pin-up models, and spoke to late twentieth-century western tastes for 'busty' female bodies (it was also around this time that Black and South Asian women began to be included in Soho striptease sets).[134] Such coverage sexualised Black British Carnival Queens and denuded them of their Caribbean identity, reshaping it in a way that could easily slot into British cultural tastes.

[132] Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*, pp. 202–22.
[133] 'Greta is Queen of the Dance!', *Acton Gazette*, 25 February 1971, p.1.
[134] Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*, p. 211.

Figure 3.23: 'Greta is Queen of the Dance!', *Acton Gazette*, 25 February 1971, p.1.

By placing representations of Black women within the framework of Britain's sexual

mores, the local press presented an image of British multiculturalism built on shared sexual

habits. For instance, in the *Acton Gazette*'s coverage of the Oasis Youth Festival in 1970, the

paper noted, 'it was the wonderful fashion show that captured the evening. Obviously, the

clothes that the girls wore were the most popular with the predominantly male audience'.[135]

Through drawing attention to the men's enjoyment of the event, *Acton Gazette* created a

point of similarity between British Caribbean and 'traditional' British cultures: the display of

female bodies for the titillation of a male audience. In this instance, the press presumed the

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[135] 'Oasis youth in festival of fun', *Acton Gazette*, 3 September 1970, p. 6.

male sexual tastes of the British public were universal, and sexual innuendo became the vehicle through which the tabloid press could portray the similarities between British and Caribbean cultures. Moreover, as hooks has argued, by openly stating their willingness to 'name their desire for the Other', the newspapers can demonstrate their affirmation of cultural plurality, all the while reinforcing the dominance of Western sexual profiteering off Black women's bodies.[136] Thus Black women, and their bodies, were the agents in allowing the projection of a multicultural harmony and a new British identity, all the while maintaining the status quo.

Yet Black women were also susceptible to portrayals of Black deviance, which usually coincided with the newspaper's political slant. For instance, following the 1976 riots, the *Daily Mirror* printed a photograph of two women running through Notting Hill (Figure 3.24). The photograph is ambiguous. Had the caption been missing, the photograph could be read as two girls fleeing. The girl on the left could be struggling to get her coat back on her arm as she runs away from a threat, while her friend could be checking to make sure her purse is still in her pocket after the spate of pick-pocketing that marred the day's proceedings.

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[136] hooks, *Black Looks : Race and Representation*, p. 24.

Figure 3.24: 'ANGER: Two girls, who came to the carnival to dance the night away, join the fury of the riot', *Daily Mirror*, Tuesday 31 August 1976, p.1.

Yet this was not the story that the *Mirror* chose to tell. The photograph's caption reads 'ANGER: Two girls, who came to the carnival to dance the night away, join the fury of the riot'. While the hand of the young woman on the left is blurred, the caption implies that she is throwing something out of rage. The friend, reaching for something in her pocket, could be about to follow suit. The photograph and its caption in turn becomes unsettling to readers. The women are rioters fuelled by 'anger', an emotion that contravenes gender norms, especially those of the 'happy' Black women that have been explored in this section. The women had initially come to 'dance the night away', however, at some point, they were led astray. The caption removes the women's agency and begs the unanswerable question: who changed their mind? By raising the prospect of a breakdown in gendered codes of behaviour, the *Mirror* played on the assumed vulnerability, or potential criminality, of Black women to depict the threat, indeed the limits, of multiculturalism.

The *Daily Mirror* was the country's most popular national daily, with a circulation of around six million. [137] While the paper was a left of centre tabloid that targeted a working-class readership, as Paul Gilroy has noted, the blurring of discourses of race and nationalism occurred on both the left- and right-hand sides of the political spectrum.[138] The *Daily Mirror* articulated an imagined national community through the triumph of British values, particularly those of law and order, in the face of racialised disorder. Police officers are absent from the photograph of the two girls, despite the eight-fold increase in the number of officers at the Notting Hill Carnival from 200 in 1975 to around 1600 in 1976.[139] Following the 1976 Disturbances, the *Daily Mirror* sided with the Metropolitan Police. In their coverage of the incident, the paper placed greater emphasis on the number of hospitalised police

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[137] Bingham, *Family Newspapers?*, p. 19.
[138] Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, p. 50; See also Conboy, *Tabloid Britain,* p. 99.
[139] Jackson, 'Street Life', p. 219.

officers rather than civilians.[140] While some columnists blamed the 'bloated police force', the main angle of the paper suggested that the violence was the result of societal problems to deflect accusations of racism within the police force: 'many local police chiefs believe that the Black trouble-makers are just society's failures – like their white counterparts- who drift into crime'.[141] Photographs in the *Mirror* depicted police officers either helping children or carrying harmed carnivalists, sustaining the argument that racism within the police force was not the cause of the Disturbances.[142] By selecting a photograph of two Black women involved in the riots, the *Mirror* could protect the identity of the police officers as heroes, and inner-city dwellers as criminals. This absence allowed the *Mirror* to repeat a traditional media script that celebrated traditional British values and to uphold the 'mystique of British anti-racism'.

The lack of police officers in Figure 3.24 demonstrates the importance of absences in news photography in conveying a deeper meaning on the British national identity. Black men were also absent from photographs of Black women at Caribbean carnival. It was only by the late 1980s that it was common to see Black men and women photographed alongside each other. This separation allowed two important stereotypes to persist in the media: Black men were riotous and Black women were well behaved. Through these visual stereotypes, the mainstream press were able to maintain the myth that race was not the root cause of social unrest, particularly around carnival. Moreover, there is a sexual element to this omission. In his examination of a Conservative campaign poster from the 1980s that featured a photograph of a solitary Black man, Paul Gilroy noted that the image 'avoids the hidden threat of excessive fertility which is a constant representation of Black women'.[143] In a similar way, by

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[140] 'Carnival fury', *Daily Mirror,* 31 August 1976, p. 1.
[141] 'The festival of fun', *Daily Mirror,* 31 August 1976, p. 2; Jackson, 'Street Life', p. 219.
[142] 'Battle of Notting Hill', *Daily Mirror*, 31 August 1976, pp. 14-15.
[143] Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, p. 65.

removing the implicit suggestion of heterosexual relations between Black men and women, the press were able to mute the threat of 'swamping' from the Black community. Thus, in order for multiculturalism to be acceptable, the sexual satisfaction derived from Black women's bodies could only be available to the British reading public, but not to Black men.

This section has drawn attention to the way in which the press printed photographs of inner-city Black women to communicate an image of British multiculturalism. This national identity largely rested on a visual discourse of anti-racism within British society. For example, photographs of Black women alongside the police depicted a vision of multicultural harmony and muted discussions of police racism. Black women stood in opposition to photographic depictions of Black men, represented as adhering to British cultural, emotional, and sexual values. Therefore, photographs of Black women implied that ethnic difference was not a cleaving social force, but could be incorporated into Britain's identity. Black women were the acceptable face of multicultural Britain, and their visual representations enabled the British reading public to make sense of a British identity in which ethnic difference was a fact, but not a threat.

Conclusion

Scholars have overlooked the importance of British multiculturalism in shaping women's everyday lives in late twentieth-century Britain. This chapter has argued that the Caribbean carnival allowed inner-city Black women to construct a hybrid culture made up of both local and global cultural practices. Inner-city carnivals were not simply the transportation of a Caribbean practice into Britain, but were the product of merging colonial migration with Britain's cultural infrastructure. This hybrid culture allowed Black women to find a sense of belonging in Britain, while also allowing them to present the acceptable face

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of multiculturalism to the British public. White women also attempted to construct hybrid cultures in their practice of multiculturalism. However, they often missed their inclusive targets and silenced Black women in the process. Moreover, carnival was a process that allowed Black women to become the cultural bearers of their collective Caribbean identity. Processions challenged stigmatising narratives, while costumes conjured up a sartorial language that drew Black Briton into an imagined community, playing on the shared histories and habits of Caribbean migrants. Costumes were also important in allowing Black women to communicate personal identities on their own terms. At times, the costumes worn by women also enabled Black men to construct identities that challenged negative portrayals of Black masculinity. However, this identity formation was also contingent on women wearing the outfits. Thus, the Caribbean carnival of the 1970s and 1980s was an affirmation of the identities for its participants, with Black women as central actors in the process.

However, this chapter has also demonstrated that multiculturalism was a broad social project that brought different, often conflicting, actors into a process of individual and collective identity formation. The hybrid culture of Caribbean carnival was a way for the British press to understand and construct an identity of Britishness that made ethnic difference acceptable. Moreover, news photographs of Black women at Caribbean carnivals also allowed the press to present an identity of multicultural Britain that was palatable to the reading public. Black women were visual signifiers of a functioning multi-racial Britain, and thus allowed the press to uphold the 'mystique of British anti-racism' and foster a national identity in which race was both central, but also highly obscured. Indeed, this image of British harmony was fragile. The next chapter demonstrates that when inner-city Black communities came up in conflict against the police, a central element constituting Britain's collective sense of self in the 1980s, Black women's role in upholding a positive image of national identity floundered.

Chapter 4.

'Riot mums' and 'Mama Queens': Cultural depictions of inner-city womanhood following the 1985 Broadwater Farm Disturbances

The previous chapter addressed the way in which multicultural activities enabled women to navigate ethnic difference in Britain's inner cities. It argued that the performance of multiculturalism, in the shape of Caribbean carnivals, provided Black women with the opportunity to construct their public identity on their own terms, particularly one which celebrated, rather than marginalised, their Caribbean heritage on a public scale. It also suggested that this identity work could be curtailed through the temporariness of carnival. Furthermore, once carnival was represented in the mainstream media, it began to meet a different purpose: to signal the ethnic tolerance of Britain. It argued that photographs of Black inner-city women were essential in communicating this cultural message. This final chapter, however, demonstrates the fragile nature of this message. It argues that when Britain's Black communities positioned themselves against the law and order system, an institution embedded in Britain's imagined sense of self, this image of multicultural toleration became tenuous and unsustainable.

On 6 October 1985, a night of fighting took place on the Broadwater Farm Estate in Tottenham, London, between residents and the police. During the conflict, local Police Constable Keith Blakelock was stabbed to death, leading to national outrage and widespread press coverage. The Disturbances were prompted by the death of local Black mother Cynthia Jarrett (Figure 4.1), who had died the day before, after a police raid on her home on nearby Thorpe Road. The police had arrived at Jarrett's home looking for stolen goods belonging to her son, Floyd, who had been found driving an unlicensed car and later been charged with

assaulting an officer.[1] Having taken Floyd's keys to his mother's home, DC Randall entered

the Jarrett home with four other officers (without a warrant) and 'accidentally' (according to

the jury's decision some months later) pushed the 49-year-old Cynthia to the floor, where she

proceeded to have a fatal heart attack. Jarrett's death did not take place in isolation, it

followed months of ramped up policing on the nearby Broadwater Farm Estate, a presence

that local Black residents, who made up almost half of the Estate's population, felt was

intrusive and discriminatory.[2] Moreover, two weeks prior, the police had shot and paralysed

Black mother Cherry Groce in Brixton following a similar house raid in a search for her son.

Representing another manifestation of police racism, Jarrett's death marked a final straw for

Broadwater Farm's Black community.

Figure 4.1: 'Cynthia Jarrett', *Daily Mail,* 5 December 1985, p. 9.

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[1] Lord Gifford, *The Broadwater Farm Inquiry,* pp. 66–68.
[2] Ibid., pp. 59–65.

In the weeks following Jarrett's death, the press homed in on the various figures

implicated in the Disturbances, including Jarrett herself, Bernie Grant, the Black councillor

who supported the Broadwater Farm Estate, as well as Jamaican-born resident and

community activist Dolly Kiffin.[3] By the 1980s, the tabloid media in Britain had reached its

zenith of influence and readership. The commercial success of outlets such as the *Daily Mail,*

the *Daily Mirror,* and *The Sun,* whose circulation reached figures of four million per day,

resulted from their exploitation of the massive popularity of human interest stories, sex,

political scandal, and, naturally, crime.[4] Crime had long been a staple of the popular press,

whose close ties with the police shaped the positive portrayal of police officers in the tabloid

press.[5] However, by the 1980s, as Margaret Thatcher's promise to 'crack down' on crime put

'law and order' on the political agenda, crime news served as the arena for right-wing

tabloids such as the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* to put forward their own political agenda.

This agenda was largely in support of policies and measures that helped the country

recover from the 1970s, a decade that had been marked by several national strikes, an

international fuel shortage, a relaxation of attitudes towards homosexuality, and a rise in

personal robberies, or 'muggings'.[6] Tabloids were thus largely in support of Thatcher's

'common-sense' approach to politics, which included tighter immigration policies and

stronger police controls in inner-city areas. Moreover, Thatcher came from humble

beginnings, supported traditional family values, and was sceptical of elite institutions, traits

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[3] With some exceptions, for discussions on masculinity see Connell, 'Photographing Handsworth'; Hirsch and Swanson, 'Photojournalism and the Moss Side Riots'.

[4] Adrian Bingham and Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Century: The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the Present* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), pp. 17–21; See also Conboy, *Tabloid Britain*, pp. 113–34.

[5] Robert Reiner, Sonia Livingstone, and Jessica Allen, 'From Law and Order to Lynch Mobs: Crime News since the Second World War', in *Criminal Visions: Media Representations of Crime and Justice*, ed. by Paul Mason (Cullompton: Willan Publishing, 2003), pp. 13–32; Ryan Erfani-Ghettani, 'The Defamation of Joy Gardner: Press, Police and Black Deaths in Custody', *Race & Class*, 56 (2015), 102–12; Eloise Moss, 'The Scrapbooking Detective: Frederick Porter Wensley and the Limits of "Celebrity" and "Authority" in Inter-War Britain', *Social History*, 40 (2015), 58–81.

[6] Bingham and Conboy, *Tabloid Century*, p. 86; For the 'Crisis' years, see Robert Saunders, '"Crisis? What Crisis?" Thatcherism and the Seventies', in *Making Thatchers Britain*, ed. by Ben Jackson and Robert Saunders (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 25–42.

which married well with the 'everyman' image the tabloid press painted of her.[7] The tabloids

pursued an aggressive and jingoist style of journalism to attack any institution that went

against popular right-wing sentiment. When it came to stories related to law and order, vocal

journalists such as the *Mail's* Richard Littlejohn and Lynda Lee-Potter used crime stories

involving ethnic minorities to bemoan interventionist anti-discrimination policies, 'soft'

policing, anti-racist and social justice campaigners (the 'Loony Left'), and state bureaucracy.

They scapegoated these policies for restricting freedom of speech, while also leading to anti-

white hostility, a breakdown in law and order, and by extension, patriotism. Inner cities,

particularly Tottenham, became an object of scorn, encompassing all that these publications

disparaged.

The Broadwater Farm Disturbances, with its cast of Black single mothers, police

officers, young Black men, left-wing counsellors, and anti-racist activists, was fertile terrain

for the tabloid media to discuss a host of politicised themes, and Black women were at the

centre of this interest. And yet, in comparison to the uprisings of 1981, the press coverage of

the Broadwater Farm Disturbances has evaded historical interrogation, not least the

representation of the women involved.[8] The obvious reason for this absence is that the 1981

Disturbances, which began in Brixton, had a domino effect across Britain's inner cities,

causing greater material damage. The Disturbances of 1981 also had greater political

ramifications, in terms of initiating the government's Scarman Report, as well as the wave of

grassroots anti-police defence campaigns among Black communities.[9] However, when

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[7] Bingham and Conboy, *Tabloid Century,* p. 87.

[8] Jennifer Davis, 'From "Rookeries" to "Communities": Race, Poverty and Policing in London, 1850–1985', *History Workshop Journal*, 27 (1989), 66–85; Teun A. van Dijk, *Racism and the Press* (London: Routledge, 1991). This omission mirrors the larger tendency in the historical literature on the relationship between the Black community and the police in the post-war decades, which has largely focused on the hostility experienced by young black men. Scholarship in other disciplines has been more yielding, see Ashe, '"All about Eve": Mothers, Masculinities and the 2011 UK Riots'; Adam Elliott-Cooper, '"Our Life Is a Struggle": Respectable Gender Norms and Black Resistance to Policing', *Antipode*, 51 (2019), 539–57.

[9] Peplow, *Race and Riots*; Butler, 'Toxic Toxteth'; Hirsch and Swanson, ' Photojournalism and the Moss Side Riots of 1981'; For the significance of the Scarman Report, see Stuart Hall, 'From Scarman to Stephen Lawrence', *History Workshop Journal*, 48 (1999), 187–97 (pp. 189–90).

analysed in detail, the cultural output following the Disturbances also offers an insight into the broader anxieties and ideas around white Britishness in the 1980s, and how discourses around British national identity were channelled through the gendered and racialised depictions of Black and white women.

The first section of this chapter demonstrates how Black women, such as Cynthia Jarrett and Dolly Kiffin, were at the centre of the media's coverage and served as cultural signifiers of broader national concerns around rising youth unrest and race relations policies. They were the victims of misogynoir, a term used to describe how 'racism and anti-Blackness alter the experience for Black women'.[10] Using this Black feminist framework, this section draws on the scholarship of cultural theorists Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, and Kobena Mercer who have demonstrated that crises around (white) Englishness are culturally constructed, largely via the print media, through the categories of race and crime.[11] It also follows on from the work of historians such as Lucy Bland, Alexa Neale, and Lizzie Seal, who have demonstrated that, in moments of national crisis, Englishness was defined in opposition to criminality inflicted by the Other.[12] For instance, fears about miscegenation in 1919 came about following World War One when a large number of demobbed soldiers were competing with men of colour for employment.[13] Building on this research, this chapter demonstrates that when the reputation and behaviour of the British police was called into question, inner-city Black women became symbols of external threats to British national stability and security.

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[10] Palmer, 'Diane Abbott', p. 512.

[11] Stuart Hall and others, *Policing the Crisis : Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education UK, 2010); Gilroy; Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1994); Solomos, *Black Youth, Racism and the State*, chap. 3.

[12] Lucy Bland, 'White Women and Men of Colour: Miscegenation Fears in Britain after the Great War', *Gender & History*, 17 (2005), 29–61; Lizzie Seal and Alexa Neale, '"In His Passionate Way": Emotion, Race and Gender in Cases of Partner Murder in England and Wales, 1900–39', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 60 (2020), 811–29.

[13] Bland, 'White women and Men of Colour', p. 51.

Yet while Black women represented the Other that a collective readership could oppose, it was the favourable portrayal of white women that created an imagined national community of British tabloid readers. The second section of this chapter explores the representation of white women such as local beat officer Woman Police Sergeant Gillian Meynell, and PC Keith Blakelock's widow, Elizabeth, to scrutinise the salience of white femininity in the furore following the Disturbances. It draws on the work of Raka Shome, who has argued that the cultural representation of white femininity conveys meanings of morality, heterosexuality, and domesticity, all of which reproduce racialised and patriarchal myths of national identity and essentialism.[14] In turn white women, she argued, take to the stage 'in the performance of a nation's sense of self'. [15] Examining the representation of white women in the press coverage of Broadwater, this chapter shows that while the framing of the Other was necessary to the cultural construction of Britishness, so too was the valorisation of white femininity within this discourse.

While mainstream newspapers and television depictions were largely negative of the Black residents who lived on Broadwater Farm's, the wave of cultural output from the Black community following the Disturbances, in the form of film, art, documentary film, poetry, and writing provided an outlet to challenge these representations. The final section of this chapter interrogates these forms of expression, to analyse how Black women constructed personal identities in relation to crime that contorted the hegemonic representations found in the national media. It draws on the scholarship of cultural scholars Kathleen Starck and Ifeona Fulani, whose research has demonstrated that Black female cultural expression in the 1980s allowed Black women to construct identities that operated on their own terms and were

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[14] Shome, *Diana and Beyond*.
[15] Ibid., p. 21.

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distinct from the negative representations of the Black community in mainstream culture.[16] Looking at the experience of policing from the Black female perspective offers a holistic view of the constitution of inner-city Black female subjectivities.

The vilification of inner-city womanhood

As outlined in this thesis's Introduction, Broadwater Farm was comprised of twelve blocks and housed a population of around 3,000 (half of whom were of African descent), and fell into physical disrepair shortly after completion in 1973. By the 1980s, Haringey council were only housing its most vulnerable inhabitants on the Estate - sixty per cent of its young population were unemployed and half of the families were single parent households – a demographic which earned its reputation as 'a problem estate'.[17] Haringey Council was a left-wing borough and was part of those local authorities in the 1970s and 1980s that were at the forefront of New Left progressive local politics. In the 1970s, the Borough created an Ethnic Minorities Consultative Committee, set up to consider the obstacles to 'equal opportunities, racial justice, and harmony in Haringey'.[18] Furthermore, following the 1982 local elections, they had a considerable number of Black and Minority Ethnic councillors, including Bernie Grant, who advocated for the needs of the eastern part of the Borough, where Broadwater Farm was situated. It was this left-leaning reputation of the Borough that made it the object of attacks from the right-wing press.

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[16] Kathleen Starck, '"Black and Female Is Some of Who I Am and I Want to Explore It" : Black Women's Plays of the 1980s and 1990s', in *Alternatives Within the Mainstream : British Black and Asian Theatres*, ed. by Dimple Godiwala (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006), pp. 229–48; Ifeona Fulani, 'Celluloid Documents: Migrant Women in Black Audio Film Collective's Handsworth Songs and Twilight City, and Sankofa Film and Video Collective's Dreaming Rivers', *Atlantic Studies*, 15 (2018), 1–15.
[17] 'Softly softly, ordered the police chief — and the bullies took over', *Daily Mail,* 20 March 1987, pp. 22-23, (p. 22); The Women of Broadwater Farm, 'Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign: Into Our Homes', in *The Boys in Blue: Women's Challenges to the Police* (London: Virago, 1989), pp. 123–48 (p. 124).
[18] Dillon, Fanning, and Haughton, *Lessons for the Big Society,* chap. 3.

Jamaican-born resident Dolly Kiffin, explored throughout this thesis, was at the forefront of drawing attention to the Estate's dire social and physical condition. In 1983, concerned by youth unemployment, Kiffin set up the Broadwater Farm Youth Association (BWFYA), which employed local young people to make improvements on the Estate, run a food co-op, and to take part in a 'buddy' system between young and older residents. So vocal and active was the BWFYA that in 1984, the Borough set up the Broadwater Farm subcommittee of the local housing committee, chaired by Grant, to ensure that tenants' needs were met. As a result of the successes of the BWFYA, Kiffin was credited with the physical, social, and economic improvements of the estate, which even warranted a visit from Princess Diana in 1985, an event that shifted some of the public's perception of the people who lived on Broadwater Farm.[19] In a case of unfortunate timing, in the summer of that same year, drug traffickers from nearby Hackney and Stoke Newington had moved their trade to the Estate.[20] The Tottenham police had initially had a soft policing approach as part of the council's policy to improve community relations between Black residents and the police, however, following the arrival of the traffickers, the police ramped up their stop and search measures, and carried out drug confiscations and raids (including one on the BWFYA centre), measures which were levelled mostly at the Estate's Black residents.[21] By the time Jarrett's home was searched in October, tensions between residents and the police were high.

When the police entered Jarrett's home and pushed her over, they were looking for stolen goods that ostensibly belonged to her son. And yet, despite her innocence, the tabloid press painted her as responsible for her own death. Prior to the verdict of 'accidental death' two months later (which placed some culpability onto the police for prompting her heart attack), the initial response in the national and regional press was to speculate that her ill-

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[19] Williams, *Keeper of the Dream,* p. 46.
[20] Ibid., p. 38; Lord Gifford, *The Broadwater Farm Inquiry,* pp. 57–60.
[21] For Broadwater farm residents' experiences of the police, see Lord Gifford, *The Broadwater Farm Inquiry* pp. 165–68.

health was the cause of her death. The *Daily Mail* noted that, 'Mrs Jarrett, who was understood to have been ill for some time, collapsed when one of her sons began complaining angrily about the police presence'.[22] The insinuation was that Jarrett's health and consequential death was either simply an unfortunate coincidence, or, buying into stereotypes of Black male aggression, a result of her son's 'angry' complaints, rather than having to do with the shock of the raid.

Jarrett's death mirrored similar coverage of an incident that took place in 1993 in the same Borough of Haringey. On 28 July, the police entered the home of Joy Gardner, an immigrant from Jamaica, to arrest and deport her. Unable to restrain Gardner, the police handcuffed and gagged her with tape, leading her to fall into a coma and die some days later in hospital.[23] Like the coverage of Jarrett, the press deflected blame from the police, by framing Gardner as pathologically aggressive. Shortly after her death, the *Daily Mail* featured an article with Gardner's ex-husband, who admitted he 'feared for his life' after she beat him during their marriage.[24] The *Mail* also engineered Gardner's self-defence as a form of aggressive attack, using headlines such as, 'raging Joy Gardner sank her teeth into me, PC tells court'.[25] Such language served as a device that shifted attention away from the police's actions and towards the 'negative' traits that were constructed around the victims. Moreover, the emphasis that the statement was told 'in court' gives an added level of credibility to the PC's statement, thereby framing these traits as true, rather than constructed.

The language around Jarrett's weight was also part of a longer press tradition of misogynoir that served to dehumanise and ridicule women who had been the victims of police violence. For instance, *The Guardian,* although less inflammatory than the tabloids in

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[22] 'Riddle of how mother died in police raid', *Daily Mail*, 7 October 1985, pp. 2-3.
[23] 'Suffocation verdict of second Gardner post-mortem', *The Independent,* 1 August 1993, p. 1.
[24] 'I feared for my life after she beat me, says husband', *Daily Mail*, 4 August 1993, p. 5.
[25] 'Raging Joy Gardner sank her teeth into me, PC tells court', *Daily Mail*, 19 May 1995, p. 37.

their coverage, crudely noted, 'the detective in charge of the search of the Jarrett house swept Mrs Cynthia Jarrett aside because he thought she was a big fat West Indian woman obstructing the search', suggesting that the police deemed it acceptable to use force against Jarrett simply because she was a larger Black woman.[26] In the Gardner case, the *Daily Mail* featured a story from court proceedings in which a police officer on the scene admitted that Gardner was 'the most violent woman I have ever encountered…I have dealt with either sex'.[27] Transcending feminine gender norms, Gardner was framed as existing outside of normal human civility. These descriptions of Jarrett and Gardner characterised them as aggressive, bestial, and masculine, playing on colonial stereotypes that were grounded in pseudo-scientific assumptions of the sub-human nature of Black men and women. In turn, as Lewis suggests, this reporting de-gendered both women, making them 'invisible' as women.[28] By portraying Gardner and Jarrett in these dehumanising terms and de-gendering terms, the press could justify the police's harsher treatment of them and discredit the women's causes.

These moments of de-gendering and gendered racialised violence are central to misogynoir, and served as a form of entertainment, which, Lisa Amanda Palmer has argued, are part of the way in which 'White supremacy and White hegemonic rule are understood'.[29] She has argued that there is a historical precedent originating from the period of enslavement where sexualised violence against Black women became rooted to Britain's project of self-understanding as a white imperial nation, and that, even in post-colonial times of crisis, violence against Black women's bodies continues to serve as the locus for Britishness.[30] Palmer's theorising helps us understand the way in which the discourse surrounding Jarrett

[26] 'Detective in Jarrett search "over-zealous"', *The Guardian,* 4 December 1985, p. 4.
[27] 'Raging Joy Gardner sank her teeth into me'.
[28] Gail Lewis, 'Questions of Presence', p. 10.
[29] Palmer, 'Diane Abbott'.
[30] Ibid., p. 219.

and Gardner helped to underscore a sense of white Britishness. The reporting on the women's suffering and behaviour did not only conjure up an 'Other' for readers to position themselves in relation to, but it resonated with the 'colonial repository of a dominant white patriarchal British political thought', proffering a sense of white British identity rooted in coloniality.[31] Indeed, as Elliott-Smith has also argued, the colonial project is still central to systemic racism in post-imperial Britain.[32]

The press even used subtle humour in their coverage of Jarrett's death. For example, in January 1986, Jarrett's weight and health formed the basis of an unrelated news item in *The Times* on the dangers of overindulgence over Christmas: 'The death of Mrs Cynthia Jarrett from hypertensive heart failure made headline news last year…Yet the unreported overindulgence of smokers and drinkers this Christmas may cost the country more than the riots, in the long run'.[33] Not only did the article reinforce the notion that her health directly led to the Disturbances, but the article made light of her death by linking it to excessive British Christmas frivolity. Similarly, during the court proceedings into Gardner's death, the *Mail* flagrantly recalled the scene of her death: 'the 13 1/2- stone illegal immigrant, wearing only a pair of knickers, screamed and shouted as they tried to restrain her'.[34] As Tate has demonstrated in her study *Black Women's Bodies and the Nation*, the fat Black woman has always been an object of ridicule to the white British public since the colonial period; those men who desired fat Black women, the inverse of the white slim woman, were ridiculed.[35] While Gardner was not discussed in a sexual context, this gross description of her, battling the police half-naked in her underwear, turned her into an object of almost comedic

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[31] Palmer, 'Diane Abbott', p. 514.
[32] Elliott-Cooper, *Black Resistance to British Policing'*, p. 16.
[33] 'Hypertension: an epidemic with no simple solution', *The Times*, 3 January 1986, p. 7.
[34] 'Raging Joy Gardner sank her teeth into me'.
[35] Tate, *Black Women's Bodies,* p. 86.

entertainment, and it was through this type of language that the popular press discredited the identities of the women and diluted the tragedy of their deaths.

The fact that the press paid attention to both Jarrett and Gardner's weight is an attempt to situate them outside the (white) body politic. As Tate has argued, fat has and is a problem in white western society that must be battled.[36] Not only does 'fat' signify a lack of docility, by being unable to force the body into submission through practices of discipline such as diet and exercise, but the inverse, slimness, is also ascribed to ideals of white female beauty. Even during the colonial period and period of enslavement, the figure of the fat Black woman, while considered essential for reproductive reasons, was 'at odds with the iconic English rose'.[37] Thus as whiteness and slimness is considered the zenith of physical attractiveness, Tate has asserted, Black women who are overweight, or 'fat', are 'triply removed' from the national body politic.[38] In this way, by being situated outside western norms of beauty through their size, Jarrett and Gardner's bodies make visible their placement outside of the idea of Britishness.

A central component of misogynoir is that is makes Black women's pain invisible and creates 'hypervisibility for what are deemed as inherent flaws to Black womanhood'.[39] In the years after her death, the tabloid press continued to focus on the misdemeanours of Jarrett's children to demonstrate her poor skills at mothering. Jarrett's daughter, Patricia, made headlines after she provided different stories about her mother's death to the police and a radio interviewer, and later when she was caught shoplifting in 1986.[40] Similarly, Jarrett's son Floyd first drew press attention following his original arrest for driving an unlicensed car,

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[36] Tate, *Black Women's Bodies.,* chap. 3.
[37] Ibid., p. 85.
[38] Ibid., p. 77.
[39] Palmer, 'Diane Abbott', p. 512.
[40] '"A detective pushed my mother to the floor"', *Daily Mail*, 28 November 1985, p. 9; 'Riot-spark woman "had short time to live", *Liverpool Echo*, 28 November 1985, p. 24; 'Jarrett girl freed', *Daily Mail*, 31 January 1986, p. 17.

and a year later for possession of cannabis, for which he received a suspended sentence.[41]

The *Mail* titled Floyd's release as 'Riot family son freed', wording that would have misled the reader by suggesting that the Jarrett's son had not merely started the Disturbances, but that he was also being excused for doing so. As Fidelma Ashe has noted in her analysis of the cultural discourses around the 2011 Disturbances in Britain, in the eyes of the press, lone motherhood has often represented the cause of youth crime and 'riots'.[42] In the same way, by homing in on the crimes of her children and framing the Jarrett family as the 'riot family', the press vilified Jarrett, who herself was often referred to as 'riot mum', whose poor mothering was responsible for youth crime and the disorder that followed it.[43]

Jarrett was not the only one to blame for prompting the Disturbances. The press also pinned some of the blame onto Dolly Kiffin, who was also subject to hostile press attention. During the trial into Blakelock's death, the *Mail* reported a police officer saying that during the conflict Kiffin had said to a crowd of young residents around her: '"There they are. Get them"'.[44] Although Kiffin was not present or represented at the trial and thus unable to defend herself, the *Mail* still chose to print the accusation as though truth. This strategy of linking Black women to youth crime and disorder was not reserved to the Broadwater Farm Disturbances. In 1984, Jackie Berkeley was arrested for causing a street disturbance in Moss Side, Manchester, which had been the site of the Disturbances involving young residents and the police in 1981.[45] In local press coverage, references were made to the Moss Side 'riots' of 1981 in the coverage of the Berkeley case. The *Liverpool Echo* noted that 'she had been taken to the police station - focal point of the Moss Side riots in 1981 - after being held during a street disturbance in April last year'.[46] Similarly, the *Daily Mail* noted that, 'she was taken to

[41] 'Riot Family Son Freed', *Daily Mail,* 18 April 1986, p. 9.
[42] Ashe, '"All about Eve"', p. 655.
[43] 'Riot Mum "Set to Die"', 29 November 1985, *Daily Mirror,* p. 7.
[44] 'Dolly "ordered a charge on police"', *Daily Mail,* 5 June 1987, p. 5.
[45] For more on the Moss Side uprisings, see Hirsch and Swanson, 'Photojournalism and the Moss Side Riots'.
[46] 'Prison let-off for rape claim girl', *Liverpool Echo*, 11 April 1985, p. 15.

Greenheys police station - focal point of the Moss Side riots in 1981'.[47] Although Jackie's

case took place three years following the uprisings, the reference to the Moss Side

Disturbances situated Jackie's story within a broader narrative of young Black criminality

and restlessness as well as the potential for further disorder. By associating Black women to

social unrest, the press could justify the years of the police's heavy-handedness, which had

initially led to such uprisings and suggest disorder was a trait of the Black community itself.

For the most part, however, the tabloid press considered the uprisings a direct result of

soft policing on the Broadwater Farm Estate. Lynda Lee-Potter for the *Daily Mail* disparaged

the senior police officials who ignored local police officers' claims of increased crime and

said that there 'has been a decision at the highest level that police should turn a blind eye to

drug trafficking among black youths, that they should be allowed to get away with

criminality white youths would be arrested for'.[48] By the 1980s, Lee-Potter had made her

name as a straight-talking journalist and was known as 'First Lady of Fleet Street', after

'escaping' from her northern working-class household in Lancashire.[49] Starting out in

journalism in the late 1960s, she wrote for the *Woman's Mirror* and later got her own column

in the *Daily Mail* in 1972. Her frank journalistic style drew accusations of 'bitchiness', but

she remained an influential columnist, garnering several writing awards and being awarded

with an OBE.[50] Indeed, it was her pedigree in journalism that gave Lee-Potter the licence to

level candid criticism against Haringey, Broadwater Farm, and its residents.

In her accusation of soft-policing, Lee-Potter put forward a common tabloid refrain

that accused community relations policies of allowing anti-white racial hatred to flourish.[51]

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[47] 'Cost of girl's lie about rape in a police cell', *Daily Mail,* 12 April 1985, p. 19.
[48] 'Thank God you have written what we think*', Daily Mail*, 16 October 1985, p. 7.
[49] Roy Greenslade, 'Potter, Lynda Lee- [Née Lynda Higginson] (1935–2004), Journalist', 2011
<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-94390> [accessed 24 May 2021].
[50] Greenslade, 'Potter, Lynda Lee-'
[51] Nancy Murray, 'Anti-Racists and Other Demons: The Press and Ideology in Thatcher's Britain', *Race & Class*, 2016, 1–19 (p. 9).

The journalist bolstered her argument by quoting a phone call she had with a Black mother from the Estate:

> My eldest boy comes back from the Youth Centre and he says, "Black is best", I said, "no son, doing right is best, whatever your colour", but he won't listen. He won't talk to his father and me no more. He thinks we're letting him down because we're content.[52]

Not only did such coverage depict the Broadwater Farm's youth centre as a hub that generated racial hatred, but it also had the subsequent impact of allowing the *Mail* to deny their own racism. By having a Black woman 'on her side', Lee-Potter positioned her demonization of the Disturbances as linked to her dismay at the injustice of race relations legislation, rather than any racial prejudices of her own.

To further deny police racism, and discredit the soft policing approach, the *Mail* focused on the minority ethnic police officers on the Broadwater Farm Estate. For instance, following the Disturbances, WPS Gillian Meynell wrote a 'tell-all' account of the lead up to the uprisings, in which she claimed that her warnings of a potential 'riot' were ignored by the senior chiefs who were advocates of a soft policing policy. To tell her story, Meynell focused attention on local Asian officer, Police Constable Babu. She claimed that 'black youths on the estate said that PC Babu was a traitor to the black race and should be dealt with accordingly. There were rumours that the youths intended to ambush him and stab him'.[53] She later noted that although PC Babu began to feel 'nervous' about patrolling the Estate he 'said he would stay as he felt we should not give into the youths'.[54] In this article, the Asian police officer served as a tool to discredit the bureaucratic and lenient policing that had resulted in the Disturbances.

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[52] 'Thank God you have written what we think*'.*
[53] 'I warned, but they ignored me!', *Daily Mail,* 21 January 1986 (pp. 6-7), p. 6.
[54] Ibid.

The *Mail* also leveraged their disdain for Haringey's soft policing at Kiffin, who they framed as a despotic leader rather than a social justice campaigner. Describing a crisis meeting held by 'Miss Dolly' in the days after the Disturbances, the *Daily Mail* noted that 'the 47-year-old black matriarch was flanked by her young lieutenants as she held court inside the Youth Association hall on the Broadwater Farm Estate. More black youths stood guard at the door checking reporters' credentials'.[55] Flanked by her Black 'lieutenants', the image of 'Miss Dolly' and her 'army' alluded to despotic leaders who perverted the values of Western democracy by upholding press censorship, painting her community work as overturning British liberal values tied to freedom of speech. Such militaristic language mirrored contemporary descriptors of the 'Loony Left', whose leaders and policies were often described in language that referred to their demagoguery and fascistic tendencies.[56] Similarly, following the death of Gardner, the *Mail* bemoaned that 'it is also unacceptable that Left-wing factions should be exploiting this incident to whip up anti-police feeling' and that 'even before her death the demagogues were dusting off their protest banners and preparing to take to the streets'.[57] While this coverage of Gardner was sympathetic to her death, both instances demonstrated how cases involving Black women and inner-city policing could be fertile terrain for tabloids to frame anti-racist causes as leftist lunacy.

The popular press also described Kiffin's community activism in a way that portrayed her as an entrepreneurial criminal. For example, the *Daily Mail* twice referred to her as the 'Godmother' of the Estate.[58] Thus in much the same way that Black motherhood was linked to the cause of the riots, it was also fixed to organised crime, particularly that kind associated with immigrants, as the allusion to the Italian American mafia gang suggests. The use of

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[55] 'Much blame but no shame at the court of Miss Dolly', *Daily Mail*, 10 October 1985, p. 17.
[56] Bingham and Conboy, *Tabloid Century,* p. 89; Murray, 'Anti-Racists and Other Demons' p. 10.
[57] 'Law enforcement and dignity', *Daily Mail*, 6 August 1993, p. 8; 'As she lay on her death bed, the Left was ready to roar', *Daily Mail*, 27 April 1994, p. 6-7.
[58] Williams, *Keeper of the Dream*, p. 2; 'Much blame but no shame'; 'Drugs girl: I was Dolly's secretary on Broadwater', *Daily Mail*, 19 February 1986; pp. 2-3.

derogatory maternal language also allowed the press to paint Kiffin as unfeminine, with the *Evening Standard* branding her 'the mercurial matriarch of Broadwater Farm', a matronly and unflattering description reinforced by other labels that hinted at her aggression such as 'short, fiery mother of six'.[59] She was also insultingly referred to in *The Times* as a 'short, dumpy woman from Jamaica'.[60] The representation of Kiffin as unfeminine and unattractive represented a marked contrast to favourable images of Black women as helpful nurses, as explored by Roberta Bivins, or as sexualised Carnival Queens, as demonstrated in Chapter Three.[61] By diverging from known scripts relating to both racialised and gendered ideal womanhood, the press depicted Kiffin as engineering a form of dystopia that took place under the guise of 'anti-racism', in which gender-distorting women of colour were given the authority to run criminal gangs.

In this way, Kiffin was also a target for the tabloids to project larger and much more unknown fears about gender and race in Britain. Stereotypes were used to paint her as responsible for inciting anti-white racial hatred and hostility, with the *Sun* noting that she was the 'Mama Queen', serving as 'the ruler of a mini-empire where fear and race-hate are the dreadful main exports'.[62] As Gilroy noted, *The Sun*'s use of 'empire' in their description of the 'Mama Queen' took national symbols and 'blacken[ed] them'.[63] Thus described in colonial stereotypes, which exaggerated and demonised Black female aggression, Kiffin had the power to overthrow, or subvert, racial hierarchies in Britain. In a similar vein, the *Mail* noted that Joy Gardner 'posed as a quiet studious young mother to trick Joseph Gardner into

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[59] 'Much blame but no shame'.
[60] 'The estate that Dolly Kiffin rescued from nightmare', *The Times,* 8 October 1985, p. 2.
[61] Roberta Bivins, 'Picturing Race in the British National Health Service, 1948-1988', *Twentieth Century British History*, 28 (2017), 83–109;); Such descriptions were akin to representations of Suffragists as masculine in the Edwardian period Deborah Cohler, *Citizen, Invert, Queer : Lesbianism and War in Early Twentieth-Century Britain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), p. 38.
[62] Quoted in Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack,* p. 332.
[63] Ibid., pp. 332–33.

marriage', thereby allowing her to remain in the country.[64] In the description, the fact that a Black mother could be 'studious' is so beyond the realm of belief that the tabloids accused her of performing this trait. The *Mail* thus portrayed Gardner as exploiting her sexuality to enter Britain in covert ways, playing on stereotypes of Black female promiscuity, while reifying those of Black people's inferior intelligence, to construct the potential threat posed to Britain's immigration system and its national borders. In these descriptions, the press applied stereotypes of Black female aggression or promiscuity onto Black women to raise the alarm of the potential overthrow of racialised hierarchy of Britain, turning Black women into racialised Others who threatened national stability.

Following the Disturbances, the press spent several years covering stories on Kiffin, which continued to undermine her role in the community. For example, a year after the Disturbances, the *Mail* claimed that 'Mrs Dolly Kiffin, matriarch of the notorious Broadwater Farm Estate, has had four members of her family working with her at ratepayers' expense'. They then quoted local Conservative chairman Mr Peter Murphy as saying, '"it smacks of Chicago-style jobs for the boys. It does stick in the throat a bit"', once again accusing Kiffin of a form of illegality tied to immigrants.[65] Later, once the dust had settled on Broadwater, the *Mail* continued to feature stories on Kiffin, including her guilty conviction for interfering into a police investigation in BWFYA funds, as well as her eviction from the 'riot estate' in 1993 after being in rent arrears.[66] As Teun van Dijk has explored in his linguistic analysis of racism in the press, in the 1980s, tabloids often included stories related to theft or misuse of government money to appeal to a collective sense of ownership among readers.[67] Furthermore, Kiffin's ostensible theft of government funds to support her family, and her

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[64] 'Joy Gardner tried to gas me, says husband', *Daily Mail*, 20 May 1995, p. 7.

[65] 'Dolly and her dynasty', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 1986, p. 15.

[66] '£25,000 court bill for guilty Dolly Kiffin', *Daily Mail*, 8 July 1989, p. 9; 'Dolly Kiffin is to be evicted from riot estate', *Daily Mail*, 3 December 1993; p. 26.

[67] Dijk, *Racism and the Press,* p. 207.

inability to cover her housing costs, played into Powellite allegations of Black and minority ethnic communities siphoning off 'taxpayer's money' for themselves. Naturally, the continuous focus on Kiffin's misdemeanour years after the Disturbances served to denigrate her character, particularly as she continued to advocate for the release of the three men accused of Blakelock's death. However, more significantly, under the banner of Kiffin, these representations upheld the negative representation of Broadwater Farm, and other inner-city Black communities, as threats to the imagined nation community of white Britons.[68]

Not all residents of colour were portrayed as villains. As outlined already, South Asians were often used as signifiers to deflect accusations of racism within the press and the police. In a similar vein the South Asian community could also uphold the notion that the African Caribbean population were a distinct 'problem' group. A double-page spread in the *Daily Mail* included stories from residents divided under 'the black view' and 'the white view' (which will be explored in the next section). Under 'the black view', the *Mail* featured the perspective of the South Asian residents on the Broadwater Estate, who had 'with now depressing familiarity…found itself the target of racial violence'.[69] The article described how Jaswenda Sharma and her family had 'packed all the family possessions [and] loaded the whole lot into a borrowed red Transit van…and headed for a new life'.[70] As Matthew Francis has demonstrated, the Conservatives had begun to reach out to ethnic minorities from the 1970s to diversify their party membership, with the South Asian community seen as a more identifiable group due to their ostensible values of 'aspiration and entrepreneurship' that they shared with the Tories.[71] The sympathetic portrayal of South Asian residents had the effect of rebuking accusations of 'racism' in the right-wing popular press, while also serving a broader

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[68] For territorial stigmatisation, see Butler, 'Toxic Toxteth'.
[69] 'We must leave this place of perpetual fear', *Daily Mail,* 8 October 1986, p. 3.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Matthew Francis, 'Mrs Thatcher's Peacock Blue Sari: Ethnic Minorities, Electoral Politics and the Conservative Party, c. 1974–86', *Contemporary British History*, 31 (2017), 274–93.

political agenda that isolated African Caribbean residents as the societal 'problem', rather than structural racism.

This section has demonstrated that the press discredited the identities of the Black women of the Broadwater Farm Estate to meet the ideological aims of the tabloid press, carrying out a form of misogynoir rooted in white colonial thought. The left-wing borough of Haringey had pursued a liberal local policy, particularly centred on a soft-policing approach around the Broadwater Farm area, which went against the pro-policing and anti-political correctness stance of the tabloids. The press blamed Jarrett's death, and the consequent Disturbances, on her ill-health, while she was also portrayed as an irresponsible mother, all of which hid the role that the police played in the build-up to the uprisings. Black women such as Kiffin were also portrayed in an unsympathetic light to undermine the anti-racism activism and community work on the Estate, which had, in the eyes of the press, allowed anti-white racism to thrive. These representations of Black women upheld British values of law and order, while also portraying anti-racist initiatives and legislation as, indeed, racist in themselves. Positing Black women and their communities as the 'enemy within', the press constructed a shared threat among readers.[72] But who were the readers? Who comprised this community of racially tolerant Britons battling against political correctness? The next section will demonstrate the role that the depiction of white women played in generating a collective identity among newspaper readers.

White womanhood and the Broadwater Farm Disturbances

Misogynoir is not created in a vacuum, but rather it is formed in relation to an idealised vision of white womanhood. As Palmer has noted, a binary discourse is set up

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[72] For the cultural construction of inner-city Black communities as the 'enemy within', see Solomos, *Black Youth, Racism and the State*, pp. 43–47.

whereby 'good' white womanhood exists at the top of an imagined hierarchal structure, and 'bad' non-womanhood for Black women lies at the bottom.[73] This binary played out following the Disturbances. For instance, shortly after the Disturbances, *The Mail* included a feature on Dolly Kiffin, in which they visited her office at the Broadwater Farm Youth Centre. When asked about the death of PC Keith Blakelock, it was reported Kiffin 'retorted: "what about Mrs Jarrett? She died first. When the police say sorry for her death, I'll say sorry for the death of the policeman"'.[74] Kiffin's lack of sympathy stood in stark contrast to the suffering of the various 'victims' of the Disturbances: the older white Broadwater Residents being ferried from the Estate (Figure 4.2), the injured police officers, and, most notably, the grieving Elizabeth Blakelock, whose husband Keith was 'hacked to death' during the uprising.[75] As Robert Reiner et al. have argued, in the news reporting of crime, 'the harm done by crime is equated with the distress of victims'.[76] This section will explore how the tabloids represented white women as the victims of the uprising, emphasising their feminine identities to further their anti-race relations legislation agenda, as well as reinforcing traditional stereotypes about the dangers of Black communities.

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[73] Palmer, 'Diane Abbott', p. 512.

[74] 'Much Blame but no shame'.

[75] The term 'hacked to death' was used in broadsheet, tabloid, and regional newspapers, for one example see, 'Hurd backs police over plastic bullets', *The Guardian*, 8 October 1985, p. 1.

[76] Reiner, Livingstone, and Allen, 'From law and order to lynch mobs', p. 26.

Figure 4.2: 'White Victims of Racial Humbug', *Daily Mail,* 9 October 1985, p. 7.

The image of the elderly woman being helped by a London Ambulance worker is resonant of some of the ways in which Broadwater's white residents were represented in the aftermath of the uprisings, particularly white women. As was demonstrated in Chapter Three, images of elderly white women interacting with multiculturalism, through the form of cooking Caribbean food, encoded onto the women meanings about cultural plurality; namely that ethnic difference was safe when engaged with via indirect contact with the Other. In an almost opposite manner, the way in which the Figure 4.2 is composed represents the failures

of inter-ethnic interaction. The elderly woman is bleary-eyed and clutches her coat as though it may be the last thing she was able to grab upon being evacuated from her home. Her frailty as a white woman is emphasised by the paramedic, who buries her into his chest, shielding her from harm. This composition forces the viewer to confront the discomforting vulnerability of an older white woman, and feel negatively towards the perpetrator of this scene. The caption emphasises the fact that the woman is a 'white victim', making her ethnicity a central component in the photographic message, and thereby insinuating that the perpetrator is someone who is not white: the Black residents of Broadwater.

Following the Disturbances, alongside sympathetic depictions of the Estate's white residents, the tabloids also immediately featured extensive coverage of the widow Elizabeth Blakelock, whose grief was carefully managed through scripts of mixed sadness, confusion, and anger surrounding her husband's death. Blakelock's grief was also carefully contained through her sympathy for his murderers. After the Disturbances, she was reported in the *Daily Mail* as saying, 'I feel pity for them. I don't think they can know what they have done'.[77] Similarly, *The Hornsey Advertiser* portrayed her as equally forgiving, 'why Keith, why my husband? I don't hate the people who did this'.[78] By presenting her grief in this controlled and forgiving way, the media positioned her in opposition to the Broadwater Farm 'rioters', who had responded to the death of Jarrett through vandalism and violence. Moreover, the use of direct speech is important. By quoting directly from Blakelock, the newspapers were able to convey a sense of verisimilitude, and therefore make the reader feel that they are not only close to the action, but that they are somewhat emotionally close to Blakelock herself by having intimate access to her thoughts.

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[77] 'Widow: I pity the killers', *Daily Mail*, 8 October 1985, p. 1.
[78] 'The Father: "we all cried"', *Haringey Advertiser*, 10 October 1985, p. 4.

Blakelock's forgiveness reflected her Christian values, which were repeatedly referred to in press coverage over the years. Two years after the Disturbances, the *Liverpool Echo* noted that 'the quiet widow… takes her children to St. James Church Muswell Hill each Saturday'.[79] Meanwhile, after the alleged murderer of Blakelock, Winston Silcott, was cleared of the charge in 1991, she told the *Daily Mail*, 'if you are an upright honest citizen and a good Christian you know where your children are and what they are doing…what is going through my mind is the saying, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lays down his life for his friend". That is what Keith did'.[80] Funnelling Elizabeth's grief through a Christian rhetoric worked to discredit the political nature behind the Disturbances, as it positioned the police officer's sacrifice within a supra-human mode of action, divorced from the everyday quibbles of politics. This rhetoric worked to supersede discussions of police racism that circulated elsewhere following the incident.

In as much as the physical appearance of Jarrett was integral to protecting the reputation of the police, so too was Blakelock's appearance central to generating sympathy and support for the fallen PC Blakelock. The *Daily Mail* reported her as 'looking pale and gaunt', and only included photographs of Elizabeth in mourning attire, often looking down (Figure 4.3) to accentuate her sombre mood. In these images, Blakelock was often accompanied by her sons (Figure 4.4) or within her home (Figure 4.5), with the broadsheet press also repeating this visual rhetoric. Such images demonstrated Blakelock's image as an ideal mother and wife who was still able to carry out her maternal and domestic duties even after her husband's death, her resilience appealing to shared cultural sensibilities around the British stiff upper lip, as Edward Madigan has explored. [81] Moreover, the reversion to an

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[79] 'How did Dad die?', *Liverpool Echo*, 20 March 1987, p. 7.
[80] '"But someone is" says the widow', *Daily Mail*, 26 November 1991, p. 3.
[81] Edward Madigan, '"Sticking to a Hateful Task": Resilience, Humour, and British Understandings of Combatant Courage, 1914–1918', *War in History*, 20 (2013), 76–98.

image of femininity that was modest and demure was not just a product of the anti-feminist standpoint of many right-wing tabloids, but was an indication of the continued salience of traditional, almost Victorian, gender ideals in forging an imagined community of newspaper readers.[82]

Figure 4.3: 'The family who grieve', *Daily Mail,* 22 November 1986, p. 5.

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[82] Frank Mort, 'Victorian Afterlives: Sexuality and Identity in the 1960s and 1970s', *History Workshop Journal*, 82 (2016), 199–212 (pp. 209–10).

Figure 4.4: 'Thank you all', *Daily Mail,* 24 October 1985, p. 6.

No anger: Times have been difficult for Elizabeth Blakelock and her three sons.

Figure 4.5: 'No anger: Times have been difficult for Elizabeth Blakelock and her three sons',

The Independent, 20 March 1987, p. 3.

The image of Blakelock as the ideal wife was reinforced over the years. For example, Figure 4.6 was taken in 1988, after Blakelock accepted the Queen's Gallantry Award on behalf of her husband. In the press photograph, Blakelock poses with her arm resting close to the image on the mantelpiece. As she stares into the camera, Blakelock presented an image of a dutiful wife who remained faithful to her husband, even in death. Ironically, even after it was revealed in 1994 that Blakelock had secretly remarried an old friend, the press reframed the story in a way that drew attention to her continued grief. She told the *Mail*, 'he [her second husband] knows I love him even when what happened to Keith is hurting me...Keith's death...will be with me and his sons for ever. But David accepts that is part of us'.[83] Through reminding their readers of the ways in which Blakelock remained loyal to her husband, she was granted a mode of sexual freedom that may have otherwise had been prohibited. Almost a decade after his death, the press fixed Blakelock's identity as the ordinary domestic housewife, a comforting image that continued to garner sympathy for the police and their fallen soldier.

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[83] 'Blakelock widow weds old friend', *Daily Mail*, 26 July 1994, p. 1 & 5.

Mrs Blakelock with her husband's portrait

Figure 4.6: 'Mrs Blakelock with her husband's portrait', *Daily Mail*, 24 August 1988, p. 17.

This model of gendered normativity was often framed in a way that drew attention to the notable absence of her husband. The *Newcastle Journal* reported that she 'sat pale and gaunt on the edge of her late husband's favourite armchair in the living room of their modest semi'.[84] Such a description conjured an image of the vacant armchair, void of its male owner, in turn evoking the disruption of the gendered order of the domestic realm. Photographs of Blakelock alone with her sons, without the father figure, or standing alongside her husband's portrait drew attention to his ghostly absence. The *Mail* would also include nostalgic and sympathetic statements from Elizabeth such as 'sometimes I just wish the door would open and he would come in like he used to', often shown in a bold font.[85] This evocation of the

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[84] 'Widow: I pity the killers'; '"I can't hate the killers" - Pc's widow', *Newcastle Journal*, 8 October 1985, p. 1.
[85] 'Pride of PC's widow', *Daily Mail*, 24 August 1988, p. 17.

missing husband formed part of a much longer pedigree around the reportage of death in the popular press, in which women's grief is emphasised to bolster her femininity.[86] Given the right-leaning tabloid's support of heteronormative family values, it is unsurprising that they would emphasise the absence of the father figure, which would not only prompt shared dismay among readers, but vilify the Disturbances in causing such familial breakdown.

Blakelock's grief existed within an enclosed editorial zone where the political subjects of race and racism were not broached, or at least not explicitly. For example, the *Daily Mail* launched an appeal on behalf of Elizabeth and her three sons, which prompted readers to donate £102,000.[87] David English, the editor of the *Mail* from the early 1970s until the 1990s, wrote an impassioned write-up about the donations received:

> Something about the death of Police Constable Keith Blakelock reached deep into the heart of the British people and their feelings about our police. It was not just the money. It was the fact that almost everyone wrote a letter as well [to Elizabeth Blakelock]…at a time when there is a concentrated campaign of hateful propaganda against the British police, orchestrated by some elected councillors and some school-teachers, all of whom should know better, these letters from ordinary decent people redress the balance.[88]

English was known for pursuing a more 'aggressive and opinion-driven popular political journalism', and such was the case with his deployment of Elizabeth Blakelock in his campaign against Haringey Council and Broadwater Farm.[89] His managed criticism of 'councillors and some school-teachers' was undoubtedly an attack on the same left-wing figures and activists in the borough, such as Bernie Grant, who had campaigned for greater

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[86] Daniel J. R. Grey, '"Agonised Weeping": Representing Femininity, Emotion and Infanticide in Edwardian Newspapers', *Media History*, 21 (2015), 468–80.
[87] 'Thank you all,' *Daily Mail,* 24 October 1985, p. 6.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Bingham and Conboy, *Tabloid Century,* p. 85.

anti-racist legislation. However, as Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite and Claire Langhamer have shown, his use of the term 'ordinary decent people' moved the subject away from 'politics', namely race, and thus away from the social problems that had led to the initial Disturbances.[90] In turn, he constructed an imagined community of readers, united by their 'ordinariness', perhaps their whiteness, in opposition to Broadwater Farm.

The *Mail* published several letters that accompanied the funds sent to the Blakelock family, containing a variety of views on the Disturbances. The content of the letters varied, with several expressing sympathy for Elizabeth, such as the letter from 'Mr and Mrs J.S.', who wrote that, 'Mrs Blakelock's public attitude in the face of her personal grief was courageous', donating £100 to her fund.[91] However, many of the letters echoed the paper's mission to 'de-race' the Disturbances. One Black woman wrote in saying, 'please don't make us all out to be the same. I am a black mother of three and am as disgusted and appalled as all decent citizens at the recent riots. Absolutely nothing justifies what happened'.[92] The note from 'Mrs C.T.' was accompanied by the sentence from the editor: 'This is one black family that does not want to be associated with Bernie Grant's views', referring to the Labour councillor of Tottenham who was outspoken in his criticism of the police following the uprisings.[93] As was shown in the previous section, by printing a letter by a Black woman, the *Mail* could remove 'race' from the discussion around Broadwater, or at least frame her letter as a question of 'party politics', rather than racism.

Indeed, most of the published letters did not mention Blakelock at all, but rather their support for the police. For example, one writer wrote that, 'without people like P.C. Blakelock we, the ordinary people, couldn't live in some kind of peace'.[94] Meanwhile, M.S

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[90] Sutcliffe-Braithwaite, *Class, Politics and the Decline of Deference,* p. 85; Langhamer, '"Who the Hell Are Ordinary People?" Ordinariness as a Category of Historical Analysis'.
[91] 'Thank you all'.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.

stated that: 'The British people are not fools. We know the police are being made scapegoats for the unrest …when in God's name is someone going to help and back our police [sic]'.[95] That (financial) support for Blakelock was interpreted and articulated as support for the police was indicative of her agency to shape, and be shaped by, public opinion after the incident. Moreover, statements like 'the ordinary people' and the 'British people' underscored these letters of condolence with a powerful shared discourse around the values of British identity as tied to law and order. The letters to Blakelock were such that as she came to represent the police, she also came to represent, in the eyes of the readers, an embodiment of Britishness, becoming the tool with which Britons could perform their membership of national community.

As Blakelock came to represent the police, and the nation, in such a firm way, she found a particular community of support among other police officers' wives. In another letter sent to the *Mail*, 'Mrs J. H. Worthing' from Sussex, wrote 'from one policeman's wife to another. Keith Blakelock will never be forgotten.[96] The *Newcastle Journal* also featured an interview with Eileen Porter, whose police officer husband was shot during an arrest in 1982. Eileen 'another North police widow' sent her sympathy to Blakelock, saying, '"when I saw the reports on the riot, it made me relive what happened to Jim. It's very upsetting"'.[97] The regional northern newspapers displayed sympathy towards Blakelock because both she and her husband had hailed from Sunderland. Newspapers such as the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* felt particularly attached to Elizabeth's grief : 'That remarkable woman Mrs. Elizabeth Blakelock…is able to say that she feels no hatred for the killers…hers, surely, is the most eloquent and most moving response to the horrors of Sunday night', later commenting that 'our hope yesterday was that political leaders...would denounce' the

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[95] 'Thank you all'.
[96] Ibid.
[97] 'Parents comfort tragedy widow', *Newcastle Journal,* 9 October 1985, p. 9.

criminality of the Disturbances'.[98] The generous coverage of Blakelock can be read as the power of female grief to override discussions related to police violence and misconduct, and sought to imaginatively unite a readership in different regions of the country as a result.

A week after the Disturbances, Femail, the *Daily Mail's* women's supplement, featured a segment in which Sara Barrett interviewed police officers' wives on a police estate in south London. Femail was part of the *Mail*'s promulgation of post-feminist ideals, which acknowledged women's agency and earning power, but was suspicious of the feminist movement itself, and often included traditionally feminine stories on fashion, body management, and cooking. Their authors included Barrett as well as Lee-Potter, who covered political subjects, all the while celebrating traditional 'family' values.[99] Barrett's article featured an interview with 'Beverly' who admitted that, 'I see so little of him that I sometimes scrawl on the kitchen noticeboard, "I'm Beverly your wife. Remember me?"' [100] In Beverly's testimony, the 'riots' were framed as disrupting the familial set-up, removing the self-sacrificing fathers from their children and wives, playing on the comforting image of the home-centred father that Laura King has explored in her study of post-war fatherhood and masculinity.[101] Once again, white women were deployed to help frame the Disturbances as a threat to the gendered norms of the home and the sanctity of the family.

In Barrett's article, the white wives are also portrayed as victims of the 'rioters', whose race is not mentioned but only implied. For example, one statement from Ruth O'Connell, demonstrates how ethnicity was implicitly framed as a societal threat:

I was naïve, I thought being a policeman's wife everyone would want to know me, that I'd be a respected member of the community. Ha!...I'm terrified of letting people

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[98] 'Woefully inadequate', *Newcastle Evening Chronicle,* 8 October 1985, p. 8.
[99] Bingham and Conboy, *Tabloid Century,* p. 161.
[100] 'Please God . . . not him', *Daily Mail*, 9 October 1985, p. 12.
[101] Laura King, *Family Men : Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, 1914-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

round here know I'm a policeman's wife because they might hurl a petrol bomb

through the window and kill me and the baby. I cried when I heard about the widow

of the stabbed PC.[102]

O'Connell's confession that she was terrified of telling people about her husband's job

brought her into imagined community with the knowledgeable reader who shared her values

that policing was an esteemed role in the community.

The opposition to this reading community was the unknown theoretical attacker,

hurling 'petrol bombs' through her window. While ethnicity is never mentioned in the

statement, the mention of petrol bombs, which were used by protestors during the

Disturbances, was enough to add a racial hue to the statement.[103] Furthermore, her comment

'round here' separated herself from the locality, as though she lacked any attachment to the

place, thereby marking that place, and its residents, as 'Other'. While it is only noted that she

lived in south London, it is clear from her disdain that she lived in an area with a large

concentration of Black residents, such as Brixton. Elsewhere, Ruth and the other wives made

continued references to the 'Brixton riots' (referring to the 1981 or the 1985 Disturbances),

rather than any other criminals. Such references were enough to indicate that the harm done

to the women was only executed by the young Black people of south London, more than any

other demographic group of lawbreakers. Moreover, the equating of the Brixton uprising with

the Broadwater uprising decontextualized the events, once again making the 'riots' appear

baseless and rooted in needless unrest.

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[102] 'Please God…not him'.

[103] There is a longer history of Black British activism with petrol bombs. As Rob Waters has explored, Tony Soares, leader of the Black Liberation Front, was put on trial for reprinting a recipe for a Molotov cocktail in publication Grassroots, which he had taken from the U.S. Black Panther Party's newspaper, Waters, *Thinking Black*, p. 111.

Blakelock was not the only white female victim of the Disturbances. Younger white residents of Broadwater were also portrayed as victims to the sexual prowess of local Black men. For instance, in the 'white view' column of the article mentioned in the previous section, resident 'Tina' recalled her alleged rape by four Black men the previous Christmas in an article titled: 'Four black guys ripped at my blouse…I screamed but no one took any notice'. [104] The image of a white woman screaming, and going unheard, played on traditional journalistic portrayals of white female rape victims explored by Joanna Bourke, rehearsing a reliable script to gain sympathy for the woman.[105] Moreover, the headline failed to give context, and therefore gave the misleading impression that the rape took place during the Disturbances. Such a title suggested that not merely did Broadwater Farm lack any sense of community support, but it also fed into stereotypes about the uncontrolled sexuality of Black men, and made the uprising appear as though a product of their unquenched sexual desire rather than rooted in political resistance.

In a similar story covering Elizabeth Blakelock's police-escorted visit to the Broadwater Farm shortly after the Disturbances, the *Daily Mail* described the scene:

> "Did you hear they were going to put up a commemorative stone here?" one of the policemen asked. He was told there was a lot of talk about it. More music poured off a balcony where a man and a white girl wriggled their shoulders at each other on the beat. "Fat chance it would have of surviving", the policeman said.[106]

As Lucy Bland and others have shown, arguments against inter-racial relationships in the interwar period were articulated through concerns about the harm done to white women and their sexual morality, concerns which, Bland argued, reflected broader societal anxieties

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[104] 'Four black guys ripped at my blouse…I screamed but no one took any notice', *Daily Mail*, 8 October 1985, p. 3.

[105] Joanna Bourke, *Rape: A History from 1860s to the Present* (London: Virago, 2007), chap. 11.

[106] 'Vigil at the place where flowers speak volumes', *Daily Mail*, 15 October 1985, p. 15.

about white hegemony in Britain.[107] However, in the context of Bland's study, anxieties circulated around the threat to male employment. In this case, the image of the vulnerable white woman dancing with, or being raped by, a Black male evoked fears around the breakdown in law and order, and the sanctity of British constitutionalism.

By having the police officer make the statement above, the *Mail* could be seen to be 'reporting', rather than advocating, any associations with miscegenation and urban unrest. Indeed, having police officers as reported sources of information allowed the tabloid media to circumvent explicit criticism of anti-racist policies and outspoken discussions on race. For example, while the subject of race was not broached by the wives of police officers, white female police officers themselves, as 'experts' on the front line, were given greater scope for discussing the matters related to ethnicity and the Disturbances. One of those police officers was WPS Gillian Meynell, a 28-year-old officer who had been managing the home beats on the Estate in the lead up to Jarrett's death. Shortly after the Disturbances, Meynell wrote a feature for the *Mail,* in which she confessed to having warned her superiors about the potential for a 'riot' for months. In her article, titled 'I warned but they ignored me!', she noted how she and her colleagues on the Broadwater Farm Estate had confiscated drugs to demonstrate the extent of crime on the Estate to Chief Constable Colin Crouch, who ignored her warnings of tension between residents and the police. Meynell told of how relations legislations had led to a 'softly softly' policing approach, and that it 'is a sad fact nowadays some minority groups are allowed to think themselves above the law and act accordingly, and that politics are being allowed to interfere with policing'.[108] As Stuart Hall and others have explained, having an expert contribute to crime reporting allowed publications to mask racialised views as 'the facts'.[109] Meynell's racist comment was allowed to go ahead unedited

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[107] Bland, 'White women and Men of Colour,' p. 33; See also Seal and Neale, "'In his passionate way".
[108] 'I warned, but they ignored me!', p. 7.
[109] Hall and others, *Policing the Crisis,* p. 58.

because she was a police officer, and therefore she was allowed to perpetrate certain views that would otherwise had been framed as unsuitable for publication.

Meynell also upheld the *Mail*'s overarching belief that soft policing was a form of anti-white racism. In Meynell's report, she repeatedly noted how her colleagues were victims to anti-white racial slurs and attacks. When discussing the summer Broadwater Farm Estate Festival, where there were drug dealings taking place, she commented that:

> I cannot help thinking about the other festivals we have in this country, such as the hippie gatherings at Stonehenge and elsewhere, and how to not turn a blind eye to drugs and how we make arrests. But of course the big difference is that these festivals are for white drug pushers whereas the Broadwater Water Farm Estate festival was for black ones.[110]

Meynell's argument posited that white people were the real victims of the soft-policing approach. This line of reasoning was repeated in a reader's letter from 'F. Marsh' sent to the *Mail* a week later: 'I applaud the courage of WPS Meynell. I cannot understand why a Tory Government, the so-called party of law and order, allows this disgraceful discrimination, which criminals obviously take advantage of'.[111] The repetition of Meynell's suggestion that policing measures were discriminatory demonstrates how the press served as the basis for conversations of anti-white racism to take hold among readers, while not making these comments themselves. Meynell was another white woman around which a community of readers came together to articulate their shared beliefs.

The readers of the *Mail* also applauded Meynell's report for revealing 'the truth'. R. Yates wrote in saying, 'let nobody underestimate the courage of Gillian Meynell in insisting on writing the truth not only now, but for months before the riots on Broadwater Farm Estate

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[110] 'I warned, but they ignored me!', p. 7,
[111] 'Bravo, Gill', *Daily Mail*, 27 January 1986, p. 24. Emphasis added.

were orchestrated', while Mrs D. Williams wrote: 'I read of WPS Meynell's report and I felt proud to be a woman…at least, somebody has the guts to stand up and say what is really going on'.[112] Van Dijk has argued that references to 'the truth' appeal to values of liberal freedom of speech that were central to the British tabloid media. [113] Similarly, by framing Meynell as somehow shedding light on anti-white discrimination, tabloids used her to present 'people of colour or race relations as contravening norms of values'.[114] The *Mail* portrayed Meynell as fighting some form of battle, noting that, 'her beat was the Broadwater Farm estate. From the account she gives, she could have been in charge of a small patrol, abandoned by its superior officer behind enemy lines', the use of 'enemy lines' once again feeding into a traditional portrayal of inner-city areas as the 'enemy within', displaced and on the outskirts of society.[115] Therefore, it was through Meynell that the press could frame her as the figurehead of a battle against the corruption and state negligence that race relations legislation had allowed to flourish in urban areas.

As Mrs Williams' letters suggests, Meynell's identity as a woman helped to generate support for her, and not simply among women. For instance, *The Hornsey Journal* newspaper noted that 'WPS Meynell…had wanted to be a policewoman since the age of six but recent events disillusioned her enough "not to care" about promotion and had even thought about resigning'. [116] Similarly, Lee-Potter celebrated Meynell, noting that, 'if she'd been a woman whose goal had been career advancement not justice, she would have stayed silent, as hundreds of police officers before her have unfortunately done'.[117] In both these descriptions, Meynell existed within the palatable confines of conservative white womanhood, with her apparent lack of professional ambition posing no threat to patriarchal dominance. Lee-

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[112] 'Bravo Gill'. Emphasis added.
[113] Dijk, *Racism and the Press,* p. 199.
[114] Ibid.
[115] 'Lost behind enemy lines', *Daily Mail*, 21 January 1986, p. 6.
[116] '"Breaking point" for "shy" WPS', *The Journal*, 24 January 1986, p. 4.
[117] 'Cover-up that harms us all', *Daily Mail*, 22 January 1986, p. 7.

Potter's comment played into the *Mail's* feminist angle, which was to embrace female careerism, but not to the extent that it jeopardised British law and order. Such femininity was also demonstrated in the photograph of PC Keith Blakelock's funeral printed in the *Daily Mail* (Figure 4.7), in which a white female police officer portrays her traditional femininity by wiping away a tear. [118] Moreover, by offering up an image of the police as possessing human emotions and humanity, the woman had the power to uphold the reputation of the police.

Figure 4.7: 'Tribute in Tears', *Daily Mail,* 12 December 1985, p. 17.

This section has demonstrated how the tabloid press represented white women after the Broadwater Farm Disturbances. By framing women as victims of protest, Black sexual prowess, or bureaucratic anti-discrimination policy, the tabloids were able to construct an imagined community of readers who were united not merely by their sympathy for the women, but by their disregard for anti-racism procedures. Moreover, as white women such as

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[118] For the construction of the 'feminine' female police officers, see Louise A. Jackson, *Women Police: Gender, Welfare and Surveillance in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), chap. 3.

Blakelock and Meynell came to represent the side of the police, readers viewed them as the embodiment of a British national identity that favoured the rule of law. Examining white women in this way demonstrates that while Black women were the object against which readers could oppose, it was around white women that they could unite in this opposition.

Broadwater strikes back: challenging representations of 'the Farm'

In the years after the Disturbances, Broadwater Farm Estate became a petri-dish for filmmakers, journalists, and sociologists to examine and report on life on the Estate. In 1988, white ethnographic film director Melissa Llewelyn-Davies visited Broadwater Farm to film her documentary titled *Scenes from the Farm*, which aired on Channel 4 as part of its 'True Stories' series. The documentary was a fly-on-the-wall look at everyday life on Broadwater three years after the Disturbances from the perspective of its Black and white residents. Some of the Black residents of Broadwater were initially hesitant of Llewelyn-Davies's presence on the Estate. In an early scene, a young Black man, smoking in his apartment, asked the filmmaker why she was there:

Contributor: Why Broadwater farm?

Director: Seems like an interesting place, where lots is going on.

Contributor: Why? Why is it interesting?

Director: Well, I suppose partly because of the riots -

Contributor: Right -

Director: - and partly because of the community organisations.

Contributor: Partly the riot. That's the only reason you're here isn't it?...If the riot never took place you would not be here talking to me right now, you wouldn't know I existed, would ya?[119]

This crucial insight from the Black resident is pertinent here. He demonstrates an awareness, also demonstrated by Lindiwe Tsele in Chapter Two, that the media only consider the lives of Black individuals when they have, to quote Tsele 'they've done wrong'. His recognition that perceptions of his identity and residence lie in the cherry-picking hands of the white-centred media is an astute comment and challenge against the tide of cultural misrepresentations of Britain's Black communities. Furthermore, his riposte would have disarmed viewers, most of whom would have tuned in to watch the documentary to learn more about the Disturbances, rather than everyday life on the Estate. This sense of suspicion and antagonism was shown later in the documentary, when one woman, who was telling a newspaper photojournalist to leave the Estate, turned to Llewelyn-Davies, 'don't put the camera on me, I'll fucking break it'.[120]

The two instances described above reflected the frustration of Broadwater Farm's Black residents regarding their objectification by outsiders, unable to have any say in how they were represented, and aware that their celebrity had derived from the publicly criminalised 'riot'. And yet, while both residents were sceptical of Llewelyn-Davies, they also demonstrate two different strategies deployed by Black residents to challenge and modify their representation in the media. While the woman refused to be filmed, taking ownership over her identity, the young man, despite his initial hesitancy, invited Llewelyn-Davies into his life. Throughout the documentary, the audience followed him as he sought employment and looked after his young son. His behaviours challenged traditional

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[119] *Scenes from the Farm.*
[120] *Scenes from the Farm.*

stereotypes of young Black masculinity, as the viewer followed a young attentive father who was eager to work. His case is indicative of the way in which the Disturbances opened an avenue for Black people to reframe their identities in the public eye. The final section of this chapter demonstrates that while the Disturbances led to their greater public scrutiny, the Black women of Broadwater seized these moments to restructure the image of inner-city Black womanhood and the Black community in the public eye.

Scenes from the Farm also featured footage of Dolly Kiffin at a public meeting with Bernie Grant, who had been promoted from councillor to MP for Tottenham in 1987. In the scene, Kiffin vented her frustration at Grant, who had just announced that Haringey Council was no longer obliged to hire local labour to make improvements to the Estate. Resistant, Kiffin threatened that she and the Youth Association would stage a sit-in if the government built a new block without local labour:

> So you can tell the government that Mrs Kiffin from Broadwater Farm Youth Association said that *this* is the time they are going to arrest me and put me behind bars because I'm going to be the first one to take out the youths this time and we are going to sit there and we are going to build a fire underneath there and cook for as long as it takes us.[121]

Kiffin's statement is indicative of the way in which she reframed symbols of her vilification to shape her public identity. Referring to herself as 'Mrs Kiffin' not merely elevated her status, but it recycled and reformulated the derogatory 'Miss Dolly' label that the *Mail* had used to describe her. Her statement '*this* is the time they are going to arrest me' served as a goading technique, hinting at the numerous ways the media and the police had unsuccessfully accused Kiffin of crimes she had not committed. Finally, at the end of her speech, Kiffin smiled subtly and looked directly into camera (Figure 4.8), demonstrating that not only was

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[121] *Scenes from the Farm.*

this speech intended for Grant and the MPs, but it was, in its way, a statement and a challenge to the public's impressions about her identity.

Figure 4.8: Still from *Scenes from the Farm,* 00:15:56.

Yet, prior to Llewelyn-Davies' documentary, Kiffin had already begun her personal mission to challenge representations of her in the popular press. In 1987, Kiffin wrote into the *Daily Mail* following an article in which they reported the claim made in court that she took part in the Disturbances. Her published letter noted, 'I was not represented in court and was unable to refute the allegations, which have been widely reported in newspapers and on television….I would like to deny, most categorically, that I had any involvement in the disturbances'.[122] In 1988, Kiffin later launched a successful libel case against the *Mail on Sunday,* and was awarded £9,000 after they published an article claiming she misappropriated

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[122] 'Trial claim', *Daily Mail*, 12 June 1987, p. 34.

BWFYA funds.[123] Indeed as noted in this thesis's Introduction, in 1994, Kiffin had her own biography published.[124]

Kiffin's biography, *Keeper of the Dream,* was a testament to her identity as an activist and civil rights leader, with a continuous narrative thread that focused on her lifelong history of helping others. Reflecting on her childhood in Jamaica, Kiffin told Williams how 'she would run off to share her "surplus" clothes and other possessions with her less well-off friends. She was never happier than being with them, sharing their…simple food and living their lives'.[125] Kiffin was independent, noting that, upon arrival into Britain, '"I was able to manage without friends. I became self-contained"', allowing her to put others before herself.[126] Kiffin's traits of advocacy, generosity, and selflessness stayed with her throughout her biography. After the arrest and police harassment of her son, Tony Anderson, Kiffin set up the Tony Anderson Defence Campaign. Some years later, concerned about the high youth unemployment, and loneliness among the elderly and young mothers on the Estate, she also set up the Broadwater Farm Youth Association, a food co-op, and the Mothers' Project. Constantly drawing attention to her concern for others and her mission to change the status quo, Kiffin was able to reject the identity she had garnered as the emotionless 'Mama Queen', incapable of remorse for Blakelock and his family.

Kiffin placed this narrative thread within a religious, or somewhat spiritual, framework, undoubtedly influenced by her entry into the Moral Re-Armament spiritual movement in the early 1990s. On the first page of her biography, Williams wrote how she was able to 'gain benefits for the 3,000 odd tenants and families...of Broadwater Farm

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[123] 'Kiffin wins £9.000', *The Times*, 9 December 1988, p. 2.
[124] I struggled to find any information regarding Paul Williams and International Community Talks Publishing, the publishers. I would contend that the publishing house was set up to encourage to people to publish biographies about themselves, much like the Hackney community publishing house, Centerprise.
[125] Williams, *Keeper of the Dream,* pp. 4–5.
[126] Ibid., p. 6.

housing estate', conjuring up religious imagery of Jesus feeding the 5,000.[127] Moreover,

following her son's arrest, Kiffin recalled a dream in which she was visited by 'a tall figure

on a donkey' who 'raised his hand to her and on it she could seek a mark of his nails…'

Kiffin felt the dream was telling her 'that she should have a mission…"What I was to do, I

was to do with faith"'.[128] Kiffin used her religious mission to position herself as a self-

sacrificial individual, often a martyr, who put her own community's needs first. Interestingly,

it drew parallels with the tabloid's representation of Elizabeth Blakelock, whose religiosity

was central to her public image and key to her sympathy and support among readers. Yet,

while Blakelock's religiosity was used to show her humility and ordinariness, Kiffin's

religiosity placed her on another level of social importance, situating her community work in

the same calibre as Christ-like behaviour.

Kiffin also likened herself to other anti-racist activists and leaders in the Black

diaspora. For example, discussing in her biography her decision to set up the Youth

Association, she recalled, 'I knew about the leaders of other struggles and realised I might

have to face attacks and abuse'.[129] Kiffin undoubtedly saw herself as part of a legacy of anti-

racist leaders, quoting from 'Our Brother Martin' in her BWFYA campaign literature,

referencing Martin Luther King Junior's 'I have a dream' speech.[130] Indeed, Kiffin's memoir

was titled *Keeper of the Dream*, suggesting not only her determination to live out her own

religious dream, but to continue the work of King and other civil rights leaders.

The association with global anti-racist leaders was not unique to Kiffin. In her study

of the Black community in Liverpool in the early nineties, anthropologist Jacqueline Nassey

Brown interviewed one Black woman, Cecelia, who campaigned against police resistance

following the Toxteth Disturbances of 1981. Like Kiffin, Cecelia felt an affinity with African

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[127] Williams, *Keeper of the Dream,* p. 1.
[128] Ibid., p. 15.
[129] Ibid., p. 18.
[130] GPI, BPM, BPM/7/1/6/4, Open Letter from D. Kiffin, Broadwater Farm Youth Association, May 1987.

American activists. Reflecting on her participation in an anti-police brutality march, 'Cecelia…wondered aloud whether it must have felt the same for Black Americans in the days of the marches of the civil rights movement'.[131] As was outlined in Chapter Two, Black female activists in Manchester found an affinity with Caribbean activists Amy Jacques Garvey, Amy Ashwood Garvey, and Claudia Jones, and in turn embedded their sense of self in both local and global Black diasporic cultures. In the same way, Cecelia, like Kiffin, framed her resistance against the British police through invoking her belonging to a global community, and the history of anti-racist struggle. Moreover, as the examples above indicate, the women of Broadwater drew inspiration and strength from the Broadwater Farm Disturbances, allowing them to situate themselves in part of a broader diasporic struggle and to voice hope for future change.

Kiffin used her biography to appropriate the rhetorical devices used to stigmatise her, and the Black community, as a tool to portray herself in a positive light:

> Dolly Kiffin has never claimed to be a saint. (Many will likely testify to this!) She admits that she has a hot temper and a rough side to her tongue. "She knows how to speak patois", was how one of her black colleagues put it. But she has been driven by a sense of mission.[132]

Here, Kiffin used her antagonistic character as a tool that, while often used to vilify her in the tabloids, fired her determination to help others. The use of 'patois' was also significant. While patois was often disparaged in the 1970s and was viewed by the government as a signifier of Black migrants and their children's inability to assimilate into school, the language was often used by Black female playwrights to show their belonging to the African

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[131] Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail*, p. 67.
[132] Williams, *Keeper of the Dream*, p. 15.

Caribbean diaspora, as Staarck has demonstrated.[133] Moreover, in *Heart of the Race*, the authors note how through Creole, which came out of the 'bitter experience of the Middle Passage', Black slaves in the Caribbean created 'a means of collective self-expression which would defy intimidation', and that Black women ensured that this language was preserved.[134] Drawing from this, it was in choosing to have this statement included in her biography that Kiffin's marker of difference became her sign of pride, resistance, and future legacy.

While Kiffin's biography is self-aggrandising, she also decided to have her personality flaws published in the book. Kiffin was also open about her weaknesses as a mother. Williams noted that, 'if she [Kiffin] could live her life again, the one part she would change would be "in bringing up my kids better, with more time for them and more patience and understanding"'.[135] Kiffin's self-fashioning as a caring and guilt-stricken mother marked a contrast from the violent and hot-headed demagogue depicted in the press. Moreover, as Stuart Hall noted in relation to Blaxploitation films of the 1970s, Black filmmakers would depict Black characters that had both positive and negative human traits, rather than being either better or worse than white people.[136] In the same way, while Kiffin drew attention to her self-sacrifice, she also outlined her weaknesses as a mother. Such an admission broke down the dichotomous positive/negative representations of Black people as either heroes (nurses) or villains ('rioters') in the mainstream press. By portraying her human elements, Kiffin could pry open her own identity to offer up her 'true self' to the reader.

Overall, Kiffin's biography is not unique, but evokes some of the themes found in Chapter Two. Her drive to counter-act the depictions of her in the press were of course a

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[133] Starck, '"Black and Female is Some of Who I Am and I Want to Explore it"', p. 234; For more on migrant language in British schools, see Nicole M. Jackson, '"A Nigger in the New England": "Sus", the Brixton Riot, and Citizenship', *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 8 (2015), 158–70 (p. 162).

[134] Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe, p. 186.

[135] Williams, *Keeper of the Dream,* p. 78.

[136] Stuart Hall, 'The Spectacle of the "Other"', in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. by Stuart Hall (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 2001), pp. 223–90 (p. 271); This was also the aim of Black British filmmakers in the 1980s, see Fulani, 'Celluloid Documents', p. 2.

means to salvage her reputation in the public eye. But, more so than that, her self-fashioning as a figure of importance in her community, who shared traits with other civil rights campaigners, also enabled her to offer her another history of Black British womanhood told through her own version of events. Echoing the aims *Heart of the Race*, Kiffin's biography demonstrates the importance of knowing and preserving one's past to the Black British female experience. Furthermore, by creating a lasting artefact of the history of her life, she was able to ensure the legacy of her work, therefore looking to the future as well as to the past. Indeed, the title *Keeper of the Dream* is also imbued with a strong sense of futurity.

Kiffin was not the only Broadwater resident intent on reframing the representation of the Broadwater Farm Estate. Local publications provided empowering spaces where residents could (re)shape the identities of the women involved in the Disturbances. For example, the *Broadwater Farm Inquiry Newsletter,* the newsletter produced during Lord Gifford's inquiry into the Disturbances, played a role in reverting some of the demonising representations of Jarret. In an article titled, 'Everybody's Mother', the unnamed author noted, 'the late Cynthia Jarrett earned an enviable reputation on Broadwater Farm as "everybody's mother". She was a loving mum to five children, an adoring granny to ten more children and a secure mother figure to many of their friends on the estate'.[137] Centring Jarrett's identity as a respectable and stable mother ascribed sympathetic maternal qualities onto her which united the community and contradicted the tabloid's depiction of her as poor mother.

Jarrett's esteemed role in the community was demonstrated by her crowded funeral (Figure 4.9), which was filmed for *Handsworth Songs*, another documentary film made for Channel 4 in 1986.[138] The film was made by the Black Audio Film Collective (BAFC) and

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[137] GPI, John La Rose Collection [LRA], LRA/01/150, Broadwater Farm Inquiry Newsletter, 3, July 1986, p. 14.
[138] Handsworth Songs, dir. by John Akomfrah (BFAC, 1986).

directed by the artist John Akomfrah.[139] The documentary centres on the experience of Indian, Pakistani, and Caribbean residents in Handsworth and Tottenham, as both districts witnessed uprisings in 1985. The film combines material from news footage and interviews, as well as testimonial footage and photography of migrants arriving by boat to Britain in the late 1940s and 1950s. Documentaries such as these, made and produced by Black artists, offered the opportunity to carve out a version of events from the Black perspective.

THE FUNERAL OF
MRS CYNTHIA JARRETT
LONDON — OCTOBER 1985

Figure 4.9: Still from *Handsworth Songs*, 00.28.54.

In her study of migrant women's representations in the films of the BAFC, Ifeona Fulani has noted that *Handsworth Songs* was a comment on the disjuncture of migrant women's dreams prior to migration, and their sense of disappointment upon arrival into Britain. Throughout the film, a female narrator reflects on her mother's hopes upon arrival to Britain, which are then intersected with the first-hand experiences of Patricia Jarrett as she recounts her mother's death. Fulani noted that that the collage of 'images and testimonies

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[139] For an outline of the BAFC, see Simone Sessolo, 'An Epic of Riots: The Multitude as Hero in Handsworth Songs', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 47 (2014), 742–59 (p. 743); For more on Black and minority ethnic film in post-war Britain, see Imruh Bukari, 'Journey from the Cold: Rethinking Black Film-Making in Britain', in *Black British Culture and Society: A Text-Reader*, ed. by Kwesi Owusu (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 246–57.

together elaborate a thematic that reveals the tragedy of an experience that begins in innocence and might end in violence or death', but that the final scene, in which a woman walks into the distance, suggests that '…the dreams of this earlier generation were powerful enough to motivate and sustain them through the uprootings of migration'.[140]

Fulani's description of *Handsworth Songs* has demonstrated how the Disturbances brought Broadwater Farm's residents into a broader cultural narrative of Black Britishness built on themes of dreams, disappointment, and hope. This aspect of hope was indicated in other forms of female self-expression by Black women in Tottenham. For example, Nadia Cattouse wrote the following poem for Councillor Bernie Grant four days after the Disturbances:

Bernie

We will walk together Bernie

We will work together Bernie

We will swim together Bernie

We will mourn together Bernie

We will fight together Bernie

We will celebrate together Bernie

The day RESPECT is won

Then and only then we know

This nation will be one [141]

In this poem, despite the trauma that the Black community of Tottenham had confronted, Cattouse aligned Bernie and herself to a greater cause that sketched out the hope of change arising from the Disturbances within a broader hope of national unification. The theme of

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[140] Fulani, 'Celluloid Documents', p. 6.
[141] GPI, LRA, LRA/01/150, 'Poem to Bernie', Nadia Cattouse, 10 October 1985.

hope coincided with the dream motif that is spun through Kiffin's biography, that despite the hardship, Black women were bound by their shared positive outlook on the future.

Less avant-garde or artistic forms of self-expression were also available to Broadwater's residents. White female journalists writing for the feminist publication *Spare Rib* also provided a platform to air Black women's harsher treatment at the hands of the police after Jarrett's death. In 1988, Liz Fekete, who worked for the Institute of Race Relations, also wrote an article titled 'Policing Black Women', in which Black women told personal stories of their violent, and often sexual, abuse, at the hands of the British police.[142] Later that year, the publication included a four-page feature titled 'Communities under Siege', in which Marcel Farry, a white woman, interviewed mothers living on the Broadwater Farm Estate. In the article, Black mothers voiced their own experience as mothers through a narrative centred on police harassment. Joanne George reflected, 'you would just lie there and you would think are they going to come and kick down my door, what's going to happen to my children?' [143] Similarly, Mary Scott, the mother of the later imprisoned Winston Scott noted that:

> The police would come into my house without a search warrant, break down my door saying they were looking for Winston. They were always making trouble for him…they used to tell him all the time that they were going to get him. Right in front of me, they said to him that if so much as a pin dropped on Broadwater Farm they were not going to come for nobody else but him.[144]

Rather than being depicted as the mothers of violent and criminal sons, *Spare Rib* portrayed Black women as the victims of an aggressive form of state terror. Moreover, the women's stories came together to depict the shared reality of being a Black mother to young men, one

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[142] Liz Feketem, 'Policing of black women', *Spare Rib*, 186, 1988, pp. 6-10.
[143] Marcel Farry, 'Communities Under Siege', *Spare Rib,* 197, December 1988/1989, pp. 50-53.
[144] Ibid., p. 50.

which was closely bound to the state itself. While this depiction still fed into negative narratives of the Black female experience in post-war Britain, it projected an alternative image of Black womanhood that departed from the image as portrayed in the tabloids.

Farry and Fekete's articles provided an outlet for Black women to demonstrate the way in which police violence on their sons affected their experience as mothers, but these interviews also enabled Black women to make personal interpretations of feminism. Reflecting on the arrest of her twelve-year-old son, an unnamed mother from the Haringey Black Women's Centre (see Chapter Two), situated on the Estate, said, 'it really shook me up but now I've gotten used to it - it's sad isn't it but you just learn to live with it. I think one of the things that was brought home as a reality to the Women's Movement when Cynthia Jarrett died, is that you can't separate women from their sons'.[145] The woman's statement demonstrated the way in which Black women's subjectivities were closely bound up with the police, and that this shaped their vision of feminism. While the WLM had largely disparaged motherhood, often aligning it with patriarchal dominance, the unnamed Black mother used the interview to reject this framework. Instead, her statement made the obvious assertion: while white feminists could separate themselves from motherhood, the racist state meant that Black feminists did not have the privilege. Such a statement ties in with the conclusions made in Chapter Two that Black women's interactions with racism and sexism drove them to seek a new women-centred ideology distinct from mainstream feminism.

The way in which Black women saw themselves as bound to the state was also demonstrated in a poem sent into the letters section of *Spare Rib* called 'A cry from a Black Heart':

'I feel anger, I feel pain

They shoot my mother while searching for my brother

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[145] 'Communities under siege', p. 50.

They beat my boyfriend and called him a dirty nigger.

They don't understand my anger.

> […]

I feel anger, I feel pain.

O God, I feel the anger.

Yes, I feel pain.

I feel pain from feeling the anger.

I feel anger of being a nigger.

In my country.

Where police rules OK.[146]

The poem, submitted by Pauline Mayne, indicated her self-expression as a Black British woman whose life was shaped by the anger and hurt caused by police violence. The repetition of her anger also took ownership over the negative portrayal of Black female aggression shown in section one, using it as a tool to give shape to her personal experience and outline her solidarity with other mothers. Mayne's anger thereby formed part of a broader transatlantic Black feminist intellectual tradition outlined by African American feminist Audre Lorde in 1981 that deployed anger as a tool against patriarchal oppression.[147] Moreover, the poem indicates that the feminist conversation around Broadwater Farm opened a confessional culture within *Spare Rib* that allowed Black women to share their solidarity with the women of Broadwater Farm. Thus, while scholars have rightly criticised the ethnocentric lens of *Spare Rib,* the publication did, in its later years, offer an empowering space for Black feminists to express their collective sense of self. [148]

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[146] 'Letters', *Spare Rib*, 151, 1985, p. 5.

[147] Audre Lorde, 'The Uses of Anger', *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 25 (1997), 278–85.

[148] Chambers and Worrall, 'The Frontiers of Sisterhood'; For an analysis on ethnocentricity in the Women's Liberation Movement, see Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*, chap. 1.

Black women's fraught relationship with the police was not up for debate among the editorial team at *Spare Rib*. However, the content regarding police racism did not always sit well with some readers. For example, in 1992, Farry wrote an article that called for the release of Blakelock's alleged murderer Winston Silcott. Reader Anne Hughes wrote to *Spare Rib* in response:

> You fail to address the issue of the murderous mob who killed PC Blakelock, and appear to regard attempts to apply the principles of justice to that crime as a mere witch hunt for scapegoats…surely White widows and White fatherless children are as entitled to compassion and justice as Black people…condoning the drawing up of battlelines on racial grounds and the nomination of legitimate targets, eg. White policemen, does nothing to improve race relations.[149]

The letter from Anne Hughes was a manifestation of the criticisms that Black British feminists, such as Claudette Williams, levelled at the WLM at the time: namely that its middle-class and white membership led to its inability to engage with issues related to the Black female experience and to police violence.[150] In her analysis of the charges of racism made against the WLM's Reclaim the Night marches, Finn McKay has argued that Black feminists' criticism of white women's lack of engagement with police racism existed solely in an academic milieu, based on theory, and was not reflective of WLMs members.[151] Despite this, such a letter indicates that, even after the death of Jarrett and the paralysation of Groce, white women still held racially-blind, sympathetic views of the police.

In her response to the letter, Marcel Farry responded that, 'it is not I who condones the drawing up of battle lines on racial grounds, but…the British government and its

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[149] 'Letters', *Spare Rib*, 231, 1992, p .4.
[150] Williams, 'We are a Natural Part of Many Different Struggles'.
[151] Mackay, 'Mapping the Routes'.

repressive police force in their refusal to implement racial equality'.[152] She then later quoted the song by African American Civil Rights activist Ella Baker: 'We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes…until the killing of Black men, Black mothers' sons is as important as the killing of White men, White mothers' sons'.[153] While Farry's support was no doubt genuine, her use of Baker's lyrics encroached on the political cultures of Black feminists and activists who, as this thesis has demonstrated, positioned their subjectivities within a broader community of Black (and female) anti-racist activists from across the Atlantic. While the dialogue between Farry and Hughes is revelatory of the changes in white feminist praxis in the late 1980s, which had become more outspoken in issues regarding race, it also demonstrated the limitations to Black female selfhood. While the publication could often be a space where the representation of Black womanhood and the Black community could be salvaged, this was often contingent on the editorial decisions and spokesmanship of *Spare Rib*'s (mostly white) editorial team.

This section has demonstrated the way in which the Broadwater Farm Disturbances created avenues for female self-expression that resisted stigmatising representations of Black womanhood and eliminated stereotypes altogether by showcasing the human aspects of the Black women who lived on the Broadwater Farm Estate. These forms of self-expression allowed women, such as Dolly Kiffin, to sharpen their personal identities and speak to their own reality, while also participating in a shared discourse of the Black British, and diasporic, struggle against police racism. Moreover, the over-arching nature of the poems, memoirs, and interviews from this section demonstrate that Black women's sense of self was tied up with the British state. While some publications provided a platform for Black women to express

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[152] 'Letters', 231.
[153] 'Letters', 231.

these state-bound subjectivities, this allyship could often extinguish Black women's voices in the process.

Conclusion

By closely examining the multifaceted and intersecting representations of race and gender in the aftermath of the Broadwater Farm Disturbances, this chapter has demonstrated the role that inner-city women played in constructing ideas around nationhood in late twentieth century Britain. Following the Broadwater Farm Disturbances, Black women such as Cynthia Jarrett were ridiculed in the mainstream media. Jarrett was portrayed in a way that placed her weight as the cause of her death, while her abilities as a mother were undermined, which in turn upheld the identity of the police and British values of law and order. Meanwhile, Kiffin was publicly vilified to discredit anti-discrimination legislation and frame anti-racist initiatives as part of a broader anti-white agenda that undermined Britain's liberal values of freedom of speech. These representations of Black womanhood served part of a much wider and longer history of the mainstream media's strategy to posited the Black community as an external threat, the Other, in opposition to the readership, the presumed British citizenry.

But who were the citizenry? In and amongst the various racialised representations of Black women as the Other, the press also engineered a strategy that deployed white woman as the cultural unifier and signifier of the British nation. This chapter has demonstrated that the image of Black womanhood in the Disturbances drew its rhetorical and visual power from its contrast to the image of white womanhood. White women were framed in terms of their 'ordinary' femininity, their domesticity, as well as their sexual vulnerability. White female police officers also provided authorial voices to the notion that 'Britishness' was under threat by anti-racist legislation that was limiting freedom of speech. White women, such as

Elizabeth Blakelock or WPS Meynell, became figureheads for readers to articulate these anxieties within the pages of the tabloid media, in turn aiding in the cultural construction of an imagined nation community that was not simply 'white', but one that adhered to the Thatcherite values of the time, relating to family, morality, and personal freedom. If Black women were 'them', then white women represented 'us'.

While the Disturbances can be used to demonstrate the ways in which British culture vilified Black womanhood and venerated white femininity, they also offer a lens to analyse Black self-expression. While the 'us' versus 'them' dialectic played out in the headlines, the Black community of Broadwater used their own methods of self-expression to challenge, resist, and reformulate their public identities. Self-expression, in the form of biography offered local Black women the opportunity to tease open the dichotomous and flattening perspective of British womanhood, while allowing them to speak to their experiences as part of a broader diasporic struggle against institutionalised racism. Poetry, film, and even local inquiries also provided platforms to give shape to the Black female perspective of police violence, as did white feminist publications, which were beginning to pay close attention to the specificity of the Black female experience. In fact, the forms of self-expression that blossomed out of the Disturbances allowed Black women to perform new versions of personhood and collective identity that could bring women into a shared struggle. Such a conclusion pushes historians to consider the nuances of inner-city living. The Broadwater Farm Disturbances did indeed arise out of the death of a mother, a tragic incident that should not be overlooked. However, analysing the cultural expression around the uprisings demonstrates how such tragedies should be viewed beyond the damage caused, from the perspective of selfhood, to challenge the at times monolithic portrayals of urban life.

Conclusion

'It is often thought that people on an estate like this have given up hope and expect everything to be done for them', says Dolly. 'What we have shown is that they can do things for themselves if they are given the chance'. On Broadwater Farm, Dolly Kiffin, more than anyone else, gave that chance to them.[1]

These were the final lines in Paul Williams's biography of Dolly Kiffin, the text with which this thesis began. Speaking after dedicating years of her life to improving the physical condition of the Broadwater Farm Estate, and providing hundreds of jobs to its tenants, Kiffin was correct in acknowledging that external impressions of the Estate's residents were far removed from the reality of inner-city life. Similarly, urban histories of the inner city that have adopted a top-down approach have also forged the impression that inner-city inhabitants were powerless victims of the structural forces of the state.[2] Those studies which have focused on the inner city from the perspective of its inhabitants have largely focused on uprisings that took place in the 1970s and 1980s, sporadic incidences that obscure the everyday life and reinforce the notion that inner-city residents are only historically relevant when in a state of resistance.[3]

This thesis sought to the illuminate the history of Britain's inner cities from the perspective of race and gender. It has examined the lived experience of women, particularly women of colour, who have all but been absent from recent social histories of the inner city. In doing so, it has painted a rich and significant portrait of inner-city life. It has built on a

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[1] Williams, *Keeper of the Dream,* p. 80.
[2] Rhodes and Brown, 'The Rise and Fall'; Brown and Cunningham, 'The Inner Geographies'; Smith, 'The Inner City Crisis'; Smith, 'Action for Cities'.
[3] Barker, *In the Shadow of the SPG*; Peplow, *Race and Riots*; Neil Wain and Peter Joyce, 'Disaffected Communities'.

wide array of oral histories, visual sources, personal memoirs, and poetry, to argue that inner-city residents are far from the one-dimensional recipients of social and geographical misfortune that top-down histories of the inner city have suggested. It has argued that looking at the inner city from the perspective of its female inhabitants reveals alternative themes of self-determination, pride, and celebration. Moreover, by exploring the intricacies of their lives, this study argued that inner-city women had complex and multi-faceted identities, which were made up of personal, inter-personal, and political experiences that transcended the geographical and temporal realities in which they lived.

This thesis adopted a case-study approach, focusing attention on two inner-city areas: Moss Side in Manchester, and Tottenham in London. Employing this approach demonstrated the way in which inner-city women responded to the spatial and social impact of urban generation to transform their mothering practices. While new research in mothering practices by Helen McCarthy and Lynn Abrams has developed a model of late twentieth-century motherhood that prioritised the mother, as well as her family, this model has not been readily applied to the lives of inner-city women.[4] Chapter One argued that inner-city mothers in the 1970s and 1980s used housing activist groups and tenants' associations to campaign against the state for better housing and tenants' rights. It argued that through their involvement in these groups, Black women were able to make individual demands for freedom and liberty on their own terms. Furthermore, playgroups and mother and toddler groups were set up to account for the spatial and social reconfiguration of urban mothering, but these groups provided Black mothers with the space to prioritise their practical and financial needs, as well as offering them the emotional distance from the everyday realities of mothering. Furthermore, the chapter demonstrated the Black Power roots to these organisations, demonstrating the racial politics that was embedded in these maternal patterns. Through

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[4] McCarthy, *Double Lives*; Abrams, 'The Self and Self-Help'.

examining these organisations, this chapter was significant in demonstrating that inner-city mothers, rather than being powerless and passive, developed a distinctive and novel form of motherhood, one which was empowered, assertive, and adapted to the changing realities of inner-city living.

Ethnicity also played a part in shaping these experiences of motherhood. While Chapter One demonstrated that African Caribbean mothers were at the vanguard of housing groups, it also highlighted how they were also often excluded from mother and toddler groups due to the racism of other white members. Furthermore, in some places in London, white playgroup organisers would overlook the need among Black mothers for full-time care, pushing them to develop their own private childcare support networks that met this need. While motherhood could sometimes be a label that masked labels of ethnicity in inner-city housing groups, it could also serve as an avenue that reified the existence of racial categories of post-war Britain. Thus in the face of racialised exclusion, and amidst the rise of grassroots feminist and anti-racist liberation groups from the 1960s, Black women in Manchester and London required spaces that provided them with an outlet to articulate their intersecting experiences of both racialized and gendered marginalisation. Chapter Two charted the development of local Black women's groups in inner-city areas to demonstrate their role in allowing inner-city Black women to develop an empowered sense of self. While scholars such as Natalie Thomlinson and Julia Sudbury have paid attention to the development of national Black women's organisations, such as OWAAD, local Black women's groups have not been included in their studies.[5] A case study analysis in this chapter of community Black women's groups demonstrated the way in which these organisations prioritised collective Black female autonomy in the face of male dogmatism, while also developing a women-

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[5] Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*; Sudbury, *'Other Kinds of Dreams'*.

centred ideology that shifted away from western feminism's gaze. This ideology drew from the intellectual traditions of Black female activists from the Black diaspora, particularly political figures such as Claudia Jones and Alice Walker. Through these groups, inner-city Black women constructed personal identities constituted by their personal experiences of racism and sexism in Britain, and also by the experiences of women in the global Black diaspora.

Transnationalism thus had an impact on the way in which inner city women defined themselves. In this way, Chapter Two built upon the themes of transnationalism in Black British history, which has isolated the different ways in which a Black diasporan consciousness took hold in post-war Britain.[6] Chapter Two was significant in outlining the presence of a global Black outlook among women in Manchester. Chapter Three then demonstrated the way in which these diasporic undercurrents trickled out beyond the intimate settings of Black women's groups into the community through the performance and practice of multiculturalism. It argued that multicultural events, particularly Caribbean carnivals, were a way for inner-city Black women to illustrate their sense of belonging in Britain. Multicultural events blended both local and diasporic cultures, for instance carnivals were held to celebrate local and national celebrations, such as the Queen's Jubilee, enabling Black women to forge their own sense of 'Britishness'. Carnival was also a process that allowed inner-city Black women to become the cultural bearers of a collective Black identity in Britain. Processions challenged stigmatising narratives, while costumes conjured up a sartorial language that drew Black Britons into an imagined community, playing on the shared histories and habits of Caribbean migrants. Costumes, which drew on the symbols of the Caribbean, were important in allowing Black women to not only perform a mode of

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[6] Perry, *London is the Place for Me*; Waters, *Thinking Black*; Connell, *Black Handsworth*.

Caribbean womanhood that would have been prohibited outside these settings, but also to communicate personal identities on their own terms.

Newspapers published photographs of Black women at Caribbean carnivals to project an image of Britain that embraced ethnic difference and multiculturalism. An analysis of the messages communicated by these images corroborated Perry's argument that the media establishment constructed the 'mystique of British anti-racism', as this vision of British national identity celebrated ethnic diversity, while also masking the narratives of police neglect and racism which took place at multicultural events. However, once members of the Black community positioned themselves against the British police, for instance during the 1976 Notting Hill Carnival uprisings, photographic representations of Black women at carnival took another turn as the British tabloids portrayed them as culpable of generating disorder. Chapter Four demonstrated that ethnic difference in Britain was only tolerated insofar that it was temporary and passive to the forces of British law and order. For example, after the death of Cynthia Jarrett in 1985, whose death at the hands of the police prompted the Broadwater Farm Disturbances and the death of PC Blakelock, the British tabloids portrayed Jarrett as overweight and responsible for her own death in order to protect the reputation of the police. The British tabloid press also levelled accusations of criminality against other Black women who lived on Broadwater Farm, like Dolly Kiffin, the community activist who was named as the 'Godmother' and the 'Mama Queen'. Such language played on racialised stereotypes that positioned these women as enemies to the state. In the tabloids, white women stood in opposition to the criminalised Black women of Tottenham. The popular right-wing media weaponised the salience of white femininity, and the meanings of domesticity and vulnerability that it evoked, to construct a national community of white readers against Black residents in Britain's inner cities. However, Chapter Four also demonstrated the way in which the Black residents of Broadwater resisted the stigmatising representations of their Estate.

Black women used film, poetry, and personal memoirs to articulate assertive images of themselves and of Broadwater, which worked in opposition to the tabloid representations that played out in the press. These images drew on themes of hope and collective struggles, which Black women viewed as not only defining that Black British experience, but also the global Black experience.

Taking its starting point from 'the margins', this thesis has demonstrated the various shades and complexities of inner-city living. It has thus made significant contributions to the history of the inner city, arguing that the 'rise and fall' of the inner city looks less linear when approached from below. The inner city was, indeed, marked by state neglect, blight, and poverty and to suggest otherwise would be gloss over the reality of deprivation and inequality that still exists in Britain's cities.[7] However, this thesis has argued that other traits must be wedded to the inner city. It has demonstrated that self-determination, festivity, and community solidarity emanated from the lives of inner-city residents. It is important to take these instances of joy seriously, as well as those of hardship, because doing so will shift historical representations of these places, and may help to shift the persistent homogenising negative representations of inner-city areas in today's news media.[8] Thus rather than view the history of the inner city as simply rising up to a position of notoriety in the 1970s, and then crumbling under societal stigmatisation by the 1980s, we must understand that the inner city contained multitudes of different narratives, experiences, emotions, and actors.

In Steve McQueen's recent series of films for the BBC, titled Small Axe, one film, *Lovers Rock*, centred on a house party in Notting Hill in the 1980s.[9] The film, which followed the romance between a young man and woman, cast light on themes of love, friendship, and

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[7] White, *Terraformed,* chap. 2.
[8] For contemporary representations of the inner city, see Romyn, '"London Badlands": The Inner City Represented, Regenerated'.
[9] *Lovers Rock,* dir. by Steve McQueen (BBC, 2020).

sexuality, themes that remain subsidiary to historical narratives of Black British life. This thesis has moved towards developing a new framework for exploring the Black British experience that explores similar themes. By exploring subjects such as motherhood, the Caribbean carnival, and feminism, and attaching to these subjects the themes of joy, assertiveness, and solidarity, this thesis offers up new ways to historicise Black Britain, thereby taking account of all facets of human life. Furthermore, by focusing primarily on the lives of Black women on a local level, particularly in the North West, this study has reconfigured narratives of Black Britain towards 'the local'. While women in Manchester were concerned with the national and global anti-racist struggle, they also set themselves to the task of addressing challenges in the local area, whether that challenge was poor housing or police racism. Taking a case-study approach has demonstrated that Britain's Black population in the 1970s and 1980s was not a homogenous and unchanging group, but was made up of distinctive and complex communities that were shaped by their immediate environment.

Race and racism became a key factor in governing women's lives and identities in the late twentieth century, both in everyday life and in the public media. However, gender historians of post-war Britain have largely overlooked this fact. By positing Black women at the centre of this analysis, this study has thus sought to de-centre the white female experience from research into late twentieth-century womanhood. Natalie Thomlinson's eloquent analysis of race and ethnicity in the women's movement in the late twentieth century demonstrated how the experience of ethnicity shaped the women's movement.[10] This thesis has developed Thomlinson's argument to demonstrate how ideas around race and racist attitudes worked beyond female-centred activism to dictate the everyday life of women living

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[10] Thomlinson, *Race, Ethnicity and the Women's Movement in England*.

in inner-city Britain. It has demonstrated that both white and Black women's experiences of motherhood, for instance, were shaped by their race, and their experience of racism. It has also demonstrated that the valorisation of white women in popular culture did not just depend on their identity as females, but as females racialised as white. Moreover, the tabloid press vilified women of African descent if they did not meet the racialised and gendered cultural standards set by white women. Therefore, this thesis has encouraged future historians of British womanhood to no longer take 'whiteness' for granted, but instead to view race and racism as playing a fundamental role in shaping women's history.

Women like Dolly Kiffin, Elouise Edwards, and Kathleen Locke knew that their environment and racialised identities had pushed them to the social and cultural outskirts of British society. They took immediate action to carve out spaces of safety, such as playgroups, women's centres, and carnival processions that centred and nurtured their collective experiences and struggles as marginalised citizens. They also wore clothes, took part in protests, and wrote poems that all facilitated self-examination and personal development. These strategies for survival enabled them to move autonomously and independently through a post-imperial and post-industrial Britain, all the while fostering communities of resistance that undermined the negligence of the British state and media. Inner-city women have played an important role in contributing to British politics and culture. I hope this thesis has not only demonstrated the widespread recognition they deserve, but also, has done justice to their stories.

Epilogue

In 1993, seventeen-year-old Stephen Lawrence was stabbed by seven white youths in a racist knife attack in 1993 in Eltham, south London. Following his death, the police mishandled the case, failing to follow leads on potential suspects, which gave time for incriminating evidence to be destroyed. His mother, Doreen, was at the forefront of a very public national campaign to ensure that Lawrence's murders were charged, and that the police were held accountable. Doreen Lawrence was instrumental in the publication of the Macpherson Report in 1999, which spotlighted institutional racism within the police force, and set out targets to reduce discrimination within public office roles.

The Lawrence Case was a turning point not only in the history of Black Briton's relationship with the criminal justice system, but also a change in the representation of Black womanhood in the British media. Following the surge in public support following Stephen's death, the tabloid press and broadsheets homed in on Doreen Lawrence, who became the canvas onto which new articulations of anti-racist nationhood were mapped. Newspapers tended to pay attention to Lawrence's physical appearance. Several publications commented on her small height, describing her as 'a diminutive figure' or having a 'dainty appearance'. [11] In stressing the smallness of Lawrence, the press was able to reframe an image of Black womanhood that moved away from the representations of Black excess expanded on in Chapter Four. Within these descriptions, Lawrence's appearance was also often contrasted with her personality of 'steel', which fed into the broader construction of her identity as a resilient mother. Rather than portray a sense of overt emotional grief, the press celebrated Lawrence for mourning her son in a particularly dignified way. 'Despite her grief, she has

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[11] 'Murdered boy's mother attacks 'racist' justice system', *The Times*, 11 February 1997, p. 8; 'How a craving for truth turned into a crusade', *The Independent*, 25 February 1999, p. 8.

never been less than a tower of strength…she talks with a natural dignity, fierce pride and little emotion', noted the *Daily Mail*.[12] It was through her unthreatening appearance and emotional steadfastness that Lawrence marked a change from the women in explored in Chapter Four, whose size and seemingly uncontrolled aggression made them deserving of public shame. By presenting her in this way, the British press turned Lawrence into a figure who, in fact, was extremely sympathetic. As the journalist Trevor Philips noted in his op-ed for the Guardian: 'mothers identify with the Lawrences as just an ordinary family who have confronted tragedy with dignity'.[13] Rather than sitting outside the idea of Britishness, Lawrence was brought into it.

Doreen Lawrence also entered seamlessly into mainstream British culture. The Lawrences were represented in primetime television shows, such as in the ITV drama *The Murder of Stephen Lawrence* (1999) and were asked to deliver Channel 4's 'alternative' Christmas Message in 1998.[14] In 1998, Doreen Lawrence was represented in Chris Ofili's painting 'No woman No Cry', part of his Turner-Prize winning collection. In the painting a woman, said to represent Lawrence, cries large tears, in which there are tiny photographs of Stephen. Almost fifteen years later, in the summer of 2012, Lawrence was also asked to take part in the Opening Ceremony for the London 2012 Olympics. The Opening Ceremony was a whistle stop tour of British history. The ceremony, directed by filmmaker Danny Boyle, began with pastoral village scenes of England as a 'green and pleasant land', followed by various fragments of British history and culture, including a theatrical interpretation of the Industrial Revolution and a reading by J. K. Rowling. The ceremony, which was broadcasted

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[12] 'Stephen had massive wounds', *Daily Mail,* 7 March 1997, pp. 16-17.
[13] 'Icon for a sceptical age: Trevor Phillips on how the murdered teenager has become a symbol for a new generation of young black people', *The Observer*, 10 January 1999, p. 12
[14] *The Murder of Stephen Lawrence* (ITV, 1999); *The Alternative Christmas Message* (Channel 4, 1998).

live worldwide, concluded with Lawrence carrying the Olympic flag through the stadium. In the most visible performance of its national identity, a Black woman took centre stage.

But Lawrence's status did not represent a *volte-face* change in public opinion towards Black women in Britain. Indeed, as Palmer has demonstrated, Black female politicians such as Diane Abbott, have been the victim of targeted misogynoir from the British public in the form of harmful social media attacks, as well as press ridicule.[15] Rather, I suggest that the moulding of Lawrence was a form of misogynoir. Doreen's public image slotted perfectly into British values of demureness, emotional restraint, and determination; but in the process her voice was muted, which had the result of upholding white British colonial values. This brand of misogynoir, and a broader examination of the post-Lawrence years, was beyond the scope of this study. However, it is my hope that this thesis has set the groundwork for further research into the developments that took place between 1993 and 2012 that led this development in the public treatment of Black British women.

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[15] Palmer, 'Diane Abbott'.

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GB 3228.9 Carnival Collection

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BV Bishopsgate Voices

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WPCA Whittington Park Community Association

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      WPCA/4 WPCA Ephemera

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