The Thesis Committee for Aretousa Alkmini Bloom
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:

"Quelling Uprisings": respectable bodies and the politics of cleaning

APPROVED BY

SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

Supervisor:

Bjørn Sletto

Sarah Dooling

"Quelling Uprisings": respectable bodies and the politics of cleaning

by

Aretousa Akmini Bloom, BA

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Abstract

"Quelling Uprisings": respectable bodies and the politics of cleaning

Aretousa A Bloom, MSCRP

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Supervisor: Bjørn Sletto

This research examines the ways in which dominant boundaries and identities are (re)defined at the intersection of class, gender, race and nation in the context of the 'cleanups' that took place in the aftermath of the London riots in August 2011. Through a semiotic and discursive analysis of media photographs of the Hackney and Battersea cleanups, I explore how some bodies are allowed to belong in space while others are made 'out of place'. In reading the photographs as a text, I pay particular attention to the performativity of the cleaning body and its relationship with brooms, gloves and other technologies of cleaning. Influenced by Anne McClintock's (1995) analysis of 19th Century cleaning in *Imperial Leather*, I explore the contemporary relevance of her work in 21st Century London and in the context of gentrification. I also use Sara Ahmed's (2004) work on the politics of emotions to explore the way in which fear and love allow bodies to cohere in opposition to the perceived threat of undesirable 'others'.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the days following the street protests of August 2011, 'riot cleanup operations' were staged in a dozen neighborhoods around London, Birmingham and Liverpool, gaining wide support from the mainstream media, politicians and thousands of individuals overseeing the events from their homes. Images of the event show groups of women and men engaged in various acts of cleaning using domestic and industrial brooms, rubber gloves and bin bags, their faces and clothes often painted with words of love for their city.

This research examines the ways in which dominant boundaries and identities are (re)defined at the intersection of class, gender, race and nation in the context of the 'riot cleanups'. Through a semiotic and discursive analysis of online photographs of the Hackney and Battersea cleanups, I explore how meaning is produced through the practice of cleaning, particularly as it relates to questions of belonging and exclusion. In reading the photographs as a 'text', I pay particular attention to the performativity of the cleaning body and its relationship with brooms, gloves and other cleaning technologies. Influenced by Anne McClintock's (1995) analysis of 19th Century cleaning in *Imperial Leather*, I explore the contemporary relevance of her work in 21st Century London and in the context of gentrification. I also use Sara Ahmed's (2004) work on the politics of emotions and the way in which fear and love allow bodies to cohere as a collective and in opposition to the perceived threat of undesirable 'others'.

The riot cleanups were extremely popular in the UK, judging in part by the way they were represented in mainstream media and talked about by politicians and other leaders. However, the cleanups and the representations surrounding them were not subject to systematic critique, and this is the principal reason why I was interested in unpacking their significance. As a resident of London, it was striking to observe how many people aligned themselves in opposition to the protests, expressing their shock and disgust against perceived criminality. Social reactions to the protests were marked by what seemed to me exaggerated fear and intense hostility towards the 'perpetrators', producing the phenomenon of what Stanley Cohen (1980) and Stuart Hall would term 'moral panic' (see Stuart Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Brian Roberts, 1978). The cleanups operated within this period of crisis, visibly exposing the performance of class, race and national formations in London, while also revealing the way in which, in many instances, the Empire is relived in the present. It is in this specific context that I seek to deconstruct the cleanups.

In Chapter 2, I outline my methodology for the research. More specifically, I explain how I approach the medium of photography, how I am influenced by theorists in the field of social semiotics, and how I combine the latter with elements of discourse analysis. I also consider how theoretical perspectives regarding the analysis and role of material culture allow us to think of objects and bodies as being "performative" and having agency.

In Chapter 3, I review a broad collection of literature on embodiment and the way in which bodies are made 'out of place', focusing particularly on the theme of

respectability. I also explore related work on the production of 'whiteness' and the making of the nation at the more intimate scale of the neighborhood through the work of Sara Ahmed, Barnor Hesse and Paul Gilroy.

In Chapter 4, I provide an overview of both the protests and the cleanups. I contextualize Mark Duggan's murder by the metropolitan police in Tottenham within a longer history of institutional racism, police brutality and uprisings in London. I also review the socio-demographic characteristics of the protests, while also exploring some of the underlying reasons why the protests happened at this particular moment in history. Moreover, I examine the principal explanations that were developed in the media and government discourses about the riots. I also explain in more details how the idea of the cleanups was developed and materialized around the country, while examining the key themes that were developed through written discourse about the events.

In Chapter 5, I focus on the Battersea and Hackney Central neighborhoods in London, where some of the most widely reported cleanups took place. I provide an extended overview of the neighborhoods' history, with a particular focus on planning, housing and demographics changes. I also consider patterns of privatization, gentrification and increasing inequality. I then review in detail how the protests started in both neighborhoods and describe the particular characters of the cleanups in both cases.

Chapter 6 focuses on analyzing photographs of the events. I start by documenting and 'cataloguing' a total of 66 photographs from a combination of online newspapers and social media websites like *Flickr*. After analyzing the principal themes that emerge through the representations of bodies and cleaning objects, I focus on four photographs

published in the online editions of the major circulation newspapers *The Daily Mail* and *The Telegraph*. In the first section of my analysis, I explore how exclusive identities are constructed through the performance of the cleaning body, while in the second section I look at the way in which the emotion of love is communicated through physical inscriptions and through the collective alignment of bodies in space.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I discuss the relevance of McClintock's work in understanding how the riot cleanups reproduce historical patterns of domestication through the policing of social and spatial boundaries. I also reflect on the riot cleanups relation to the production of nostalgia, nationalism and whiteness, while discussing the implications of my research for scholarship on cities, embodiment and representation.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1. OVERVIEW

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first part, I outline how and why I decided to narrow down my analysis of the riot cleanups to the study of photographs, while also describing my final choice of images. In the second section, I outline and summarize the theoretical and methodological considerations that have influenced my semiotic and discursive analysis of the cleanup events, while also discussing my positionality and the role it may have played in my interpretation of these events and the representations surrounding them.

2.2. SCOPING ANALYSIS

During the initial 'scoping' phase of my research, I studied a variety of online representations of the riot cleanups. I primarily looked at the way the events were covered by major national newspapers while also observing and participating in social media websites like *Facebook* and *Twitter*. I also examined the two riot cleanup websites[1], as well as websites that promoted similar kinds of activities such as *Operation Cup of Tea*. My search also included secondary representations of the events such as cartoons, paintings and collages that appeared in Google Images when I typed 'riot cleanup'.

I then carried out a systematic and in-depth study of the way the cleanups were represented primarily in national newspapers, but also in government and policy

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[1] http://www.riotcleanup.com/ ; http://www.riotcleanup.co.uk/

discourse. For my newspaper search, I focused on seven major national newspapers, selecting these according to online and offline readership (for example *The Telegraph* and *The Daily Mail*), access (*The Evening Standard,* for example, is handed free on the London subway) and political influence (for example *The Guardian*). I studied primarily the news articles that covered the cleanups, systematically collecting headlines, key words and photographs. My analysis of government discourse included David Cameron's mention of the events in a number of speeches, as well as references to the cleanups made in *5 Days in August* (Singh, 2012), the government report into the riots (an inquiry has not been commissioned).

While most news pieces were broadly supportive of the events, it was also important to examine the articles that took a critical stance towards the cleanups. The most critical essays appeared in independent blogs typically written by students. Articles that were moderately critical appeared in *The Guardian* as well as in left-of-center political blogs like *The New Statesman* and the *Third Estate*.

Finally, I collected key photographs of every event around the country from the photo sharing website *Flickr*. This provided me with a view of how the event was captured from the point of view of participants or amateur photographers who were at the scene of the events. Moreover, this stage of my analysis also confirmed that the Hackney and Battersea cleanups were the largest and most widely broadcasted events in the London. In combination with the interviews that I carried out in January 2012, this phase of my research informed my background chapter (Chapter 4). It is important to note here

that I did not attend any of the cleanup up events and did not visit the locations where they took place.

2.3. INTERVIEWS

As part of this background research into the riot cleanups, I carried out formal interviews with Dan Thompson, the principal online organizer of the cleanups, and Paul Lewis, the reporter from *The Guardian* who is currently directing the Reading the Riots research project with the London School of Economics. While these interviews are secondary to the analysis of photographs, I have used them in order to provide an overview of the ways in which both the riots and the riot cleanups were represented by national newspapers and by government, academic and policy actors.

I wanted to interview Dan Thompson as a way of having a face to face conversation with someone who was heavily involved in the organizing of the riot cleanups. Thompson was instrumental in starting the #riotcleanup hashtag on the social networking site *Twitter*, and in coordinating volunteer activity in the events around London. My interview with Thompson was useful to the extent that it allowed me to gain a more complex understanding of why he was involved, particularly as most newspapers had constructed a dualistic relationship between the protesters and the cleanup volunteers. I also had the opportunity to ask him questions relating to his own historical interpretation of both the protests and the riot cleanups, which is information he has not elaborated in existing interviews with the press and other organizations and online blogs.

My interview with Paul Lewis was informed by the desire to find out more from the perspective of a reporter who covered the riots extensively, while leading one of the most influential projects on the subject. Lewis' critical feedback on my project was informative. As a reporter, Lewis stressed the importance of empirical social research methods, arguing that a discursive analysis of the cleanups may be limiting in that I am relying principally on the media's accounts of the events. This was a decisive point for me as it pushed me to clarify why I was focusing on the events themselves. While an ethnographic research into the intentions of the cleanup participants themselves would have been a worthwhile project, I understood that what I was really interested in was the representational power of the cleanup events – particularly their performative and visual power. In the second part of this chapter, I will review critical literature on the importance of representation in the construction of embodied identities.

Finally, informal conversations with friends and acquaintances from London also informed my understanding of the everyday discourse surrounding the riot cleanups, including the common norms and tropes that shape conversations about the events, including how the events are allowed to be discussed and how they are not.

2.4. ACQUISITION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Overview of existing photographs:

As I became increasingly interested in analyzing the visual and performative aspect of the riot cleanups, I decided to narrow down my analysis to the study of photographs. I repeated the process of sifting through newspapers and social media

websites in order to find the maximum number of photographs that depicted the events in the Battersea and Hackney neighborhoods of London. Although this list is not exhaustive, I collected and analyzed a total of:

- 27 social media photographs for Batttersea

- 14 newspaper photographers from a total of 6 newspapers for Battersea

- 17 social media photographs for Hackney

- 7 newspaper photographs from a total of 5 newspapers for Hackney

By social media photographs, I principally refer to photographs posted on *Flickr* but I also include amateur photographs published on blogs and other independent platforms. In this general analysis of images, I focused on identifying patterns in the ways in which participants were photographed. I was particularly interested in observing the gender ratio, as well as the extent to which the participants appear to be primarily white. Moreover, I was attentive to the ways in which people were photographed cleaning or performing another kind of activity like waiting, sitting or posing. Whether participants were photographed cleaning or not, I also documented their use of brooms, dustpans, bin bags and gloves, as well as any slogans inscribed on their t-shirts or faces.

As the photographic representations of the cleanups were influenced by a number of unknown factors—the photographer's particular perspective, the choice of framing and subject or object to focus on, the distance from the camera, and so on—my analysis in this 'quantitative' phase of my research was based simply on the number of times a subject or object featured in each photograph. More specifically, for each category I calculated the percentage of each indicator as a fraction of the total people counted in

each photograph. I counted only people who appeared engaged in the riot cleanups, as well the number of people whose features were clearly visible. I also excluded people who appear to be reporters or press photographers. The following are the categories that I used:

Demographic information:

- % women
- % men
- % white people
- % black people
- % Asian people
- % white women
- % black women
- % Asian women
- % black white men
- % black men
- % Asian men

Information related to cleaning objects:

- % wearing or holding gloves
- % of people wearing or holding marigold gloves, disposable blue gloves, and garden gloves
- % of people with brooms

- % of people with dustpans

- % of people with bin bags

- % people not cleaning

- % people cleaning

For the purpose of this research, I ended up omitting the Asian category from my findings table as the number turned out to be very low.

Of course, this empirical approach to content analysis is limiting and prone to discrepancies, but it was useful in providing a general overview of the people photographed in the events and the kinds of activities they appear to be engaged in. Importantly, this quantitative analysis allowed me to observe what kind of photographs newspapers were privileging or foregrounding compared to the wider variety of photographs found on social media websites.

Acquisition of final photographs:

As I was concerned with how the cleanups functioned within wider relations of power, I finally selected four newspaper photographs to analyze in detail – two from the Battersea cleanup and two from the Hackney one. My choice of photographs was also influenced by my thematic focus on the cleaning body and the loving body. In the case of Battersea, I found only one newspaper photograph showing people cleaning. For the rest of the photographs, I used a combination of the following criteria for my selection:

- Symbolic and visual power of photograph and the way it relates to my two themes,

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- Popularity of subject(s) (how many times that person or group was featured in various newspapers), and

- The visibility of major elements that appear in other photographs of the same scene.

While I used these four photographs as a starting point of discussion, I also included smaller photographs throughout my analysis as a way to further develop my argument when appropriate. Many of these are social media photographs as they provide additional information that was not necessarily captured by the press.

2.5. SEMIOTIC AND DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS: THEORETICAL INFLUENCES

My analysis of the cleanups is primarily concerned with the way in which meaning is produced through representational practices (Hall, 1997). Using photographs as entry point for discussion, I am influenced by both semiotic and discursive analytical approaches to representation. In other words, I seek to interpret some of the signifying practices generated through the cleaning events, while also connecting them to wider questions of power.

The semiotic approach to representation is influenced by Ferdinand de Saussure's (1960) notion that a sign is formed through the relationship between a signifier and the signified. Signs then become the things that carry meanings. Iconic signs are visual signs as they bear a certain resemblance to the object, person or event to which they refer, while indexical signs are those that bear no obvious relationship to the things to which they refer (Hall, 1997, p.20). However, Stuart Hall (1997) stresses that a sign in itself

cannot produce meaning. From Hall's perspective, meaning is relational in that it depends on the relationship between the sign and the concept it signifies. This relationship is fixed by codes, which work to stabilize meaning within different cultures and languages (Hall, 1997; Saussure, 1960).

Although the structuralist approach to semiotics developed by Saussure provides an important base for thinking through signifying practices, by privileging the internal structure of the text, this perspective risks overlooking questions of power (Hall, 1997). Reacting to these limitations, Hall (1980) argues that if signifying practices are encoded with meaning, they also need to be decoded through the process of interpretation. Hall (1997) stresses that the reader is as important as the writer in the process of representation, arguing that there is a "constant *sliding of meaning* [author's emphasis] in all interpretation…something in excess of what we intend to say…in which other meanings overshadow the statement or the text, where other associations are awaked to life, giving what we say a different twist" (p.34).

Roland Barthes (1972) further developed Saussure's theory of signs by introducing a second level of signification in which signs are elevated to the level of myths. In *Mythologies*, Barthes (1972) described how the first level of signification is created by the combination of signifier and signified. This message then becomes a signifier itself for a second level of signification – the level of the myth. Importantly, Barthes argues that the medium does not determine the production of the myth, stressing that what the reader retains by reading a piece of writing and a picture is "the fact that they are both signs, that they both reach the threshold of myth endowed with the same

signifying function…" (Barthes, 1972, pp.114-5). In *Death of the Author,* Barthes (1977) further argued that meaning cannot be located in the author's intentions as this assigns the text a single corresponding interpretation. Instead, Barthes (1977) advocates for an intertextual approach, which emphasizes that meaning does not solely reside in the text but is also produced by the reader's engagement with the text, and that this engagement is shaped by complex networks of texts. Finally in *Empire of Signs*, and in contrast to *Mythologies*, Barthes (1983) examines the potential of signs to exist independently of any overarching signifiers and thus retain only a 'natural' significance. His analysis of signs in Japan effectively places his latest work within the tradition of orientalist literature. However, the attempt to break down the dualist relationship between signifier and signified is important and I will come back to this later.

It can be argued, however, that one of the principal limitations of semiotic theory is that is does not deal directly with relations of power. Rather than focusing on the production of meaning, Foucault was also concerned with the production of knowledge and discourse. Importantly, Foucault's work is more historically grounded than the work of traditional semioticians, as he argues that "…the history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language" (1980, pp.114-5). As Hall points out, Foucault analyzes texts and representations like semioticians, but he differs from them in that he tends to analyze the whole discursive formation to which a text or practice belongs (1997, p.51). Moreover, Foucault argues that while subjects may produce particular texts, they operate within a discursive formation which itself produces knowledge, or a 'regime of truth' (Hall, p.55). Importantly, Foucault blurs the distinction

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between speech and action, as he defines discourse as both language and practice (Hall, 1997). Thus, like Laclau and Mouffe (1990) reiterate, linguistic and non-linguistic elements are "internal components of discursive totalities" (pp.100-103).

Foucault's conceptualization of knowledge as inextricably connected to relations of power is also significant. For Foucault (1972), the production of certain 'truths' is not an abstract process. These 'truths' are connected to real effects, for example in the regulation of social conduct through punitive methods (Foucault, 1977). In other words, Foucault (1977) views the body as being at the centre of the struggles between different formations of power/knowledge (Hall, 1977, p.50). In analyzing texts and practices discursively, Foucault examined the statements that create knowledge, the subjects who come to personify a certain discourse, and the institutional practices and regulations implemented to deal with those subjects (Hall, 1997, p. 45). Moreover, and as stated earlier, Foucault stresses how different discourses arise at different historical moments.

If Foucault attempted to link discourse to the regulation of the body, the recent 'material' turn in social theory has provided for alternative ways of conceptualizing the production of meaning and knowledge. Actor-network theory (Latour, 2005) is grounded in the notion that many relations are both material and semiotic, creating material-semiotic networks which act as a whole. Similarly, the notion of performativity (originally developed by J.L. Austin [1970]) challenges the dominance of the signified over the signifier. For example, Judith Butler's (1997) adaptation of the concept stresses how performativity establishes the way in which identities come about as effects of discourse. Thus objects/subjects can be conceptualized as functions of signifiers that do

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not depend on a fixed or separate signified. Martin Holbraad (2006) notes a similar shift in anthropology from questions of knowledge and epistemology towards those of ontology, as exemplified in the work of Strathern (2004), Latour (2005) and Gell (1998). For instance, Alfred Gell (1998) does not consider art objects as visual signs to be deciphered, but defines them in performative terms as systems of actions that have agency. These recent conceptualizations are important because they attempt to overcome the modernist binary between materialism and idealism, things and non-things, signifier and signified (Pels, Hetherington & Vanderberghe, 2002).

Martin Holbraad (2006) goes a step further and argues that such a distinction between concepts and things, in which meaning is abstracted from the material, inhibits an effective engagement between researchers and the phenomena they study (p.2). Instead, he proposes that the things encountered in the fieldwork are "allowed to dictate the terms of their own analysis – including new premises altogether for theory" (Holbraad, 2006, p.4). Furthermore, while he acknowledges that Latour's (2005) theory is important in suggesting that things operate in a network of hybrids, Holbraad (2006) argues that this hybrid ontology is only one possibility, advocating instead a methodology that might generate a multiplicity of theories and ontologies (p.7).

Finally, before I summarize my theoretical and methodological influences, I would like to turn to the photographic image itself. A large section of social research based on the visual analysis of photographs in fields such as sociology and anthropology relies on the notion that the photograph in some way participates in the 'documentation' of a certain phenomenon, event, fact, place, person or object. Stuart Hall (1997) describes

the two traditions that shape our understanding of 'documentary' photography, in the broadest sense of the word. The idea that the photographic image is an inherently objective medium of representation is grounded in the tradition of the enlightenment and empiricism. As photography replaced the iconographic systems of representation founded on the art of drawing, the new and dominant paradigm of representation asserted that the photograph offered a 'true' image of the world (Hall, 1997, p.83). Thus the photographic image acquired a 'truth' value (Hall, 1997, Tagg, 1998).

On the other hand, the subjective definition of photography deals with the way in which the document's informational value is mediated through the perspective of the person making it (Hall, 1997, p.83). This subjective mode of 'documentary' representation became paradigmatic during the 1930s and 1940s and is still influential today in the field of photojournalism. As Marianne Fulton (1988) stresses, this mode of photography focuses on the idea that the photographer is bearing witness to history: "To bear witness is to make known, to confirm, to give testimony to others" (as quoted in Hall, 1997, p.85). Thus the documentary nature of photojournalism is based on the photographer's interpretation of the events and the subjects he or she chooses to capture (Hall, 1997, p.85). Moreover, Fulton (1988) argues that photojournalism provides access to both the photographer's expression/feelings and facts, in that the photographs are still assumed to have some 'truth' value (Hall, 1997, p.85). Hall (1997) argues that this mode of photography is then based on a process of double construction. After the photographer constructs the image through his/her interpretation of events and framing of subjects, the photograph is usually placed alongside textual information which adds the constructed

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meaning of the photograph available to the viewer (Hall, 1997, p.86). Thus, whether we are taking about professional photographers or 'citizen' / amateur photojournalists, we need to consider the way in which photographs are socially located and exist within a wider series of related texts. As noted earlier, this is why I contextualize my final selection of photographs within a wider network of visual and written texts that are relevant to the cleanups.

In his essay *Visual Anthropology: Image, Object and Interpretation*, Marcus Banks (1998) further problematizes the notion that the photograph is an image of reality. He argues that the idea of veracity—or the image as evidence—is based on the assumption that control and intention lie with those "who produce the image, and who have faith in their ability to record reality or their vision of reality convincingly" (Banks, 1998 p.15). But as discussed earlier, intention is problematic in that representation functions as an active process requiring the participation of readers in interpreting a plurality of meanings. Banks (1998) further talks about the 'fallacy of the invisible camera', stressing the way in which documentary film production assumes that the motion camera can best capture 'natural' behavior – a belief that goes back to the natural science paradigm and the notion that the camera is a neutral recording device (p.18).

To summarize, in using a combination of professional press and amateur photographs as an entry point of discussion into the riot cleanup events, I consider the following methodological assumptions:

a. **Photographs as visual signs**: Photographs can broadly be thought of as embodying signifying practices that need to be interpreted (Barthes, 1977; Hall, 1997).

b. **Interpretation is socially and historically located**: However, there is no 'one' single interpretation of meaning; the production of meaning is relational and exists within a continuously evolving culture (Hall, 1997).

c. **Flexible/loose use of signifier-signified dichotomy**: While these are useful analytical concepts, I will be using them implicitly within the larger umbrella of representation as on their own they may provide an unhelpful dichotomy between the material and the ideal. Instead I consider the interconnection between signifier and signified, the body and technology, and between sociality and materiality, through notions like performativity and the agentic qualities of artifacts, people, places and events (Holbraad, 2006; Pels et al., 2002; Butler, 1997; Gell, 1998).

d. **Intertextuality and discourse**: Moreover, photographs gain meaning when read against one another, in relation to the text surrounding them and within the larger discursive formations and relations of power within which they are produced, disseminated and read/viewed (Barthes, 1977; Hall, 1997; Foucault, 1980).

e. **Photographs as 'partial truths':** 'Documentary' photographs (such as the ones used in my case) can be thought of as providing a 'partial' truth to the riot cleanup events. While photographs may capture facts in bearing testimony

to events, they are also constructed through the photographer's interpretation and visual framing of the events, as well as through the process of their publication (Strathern, 2004; Harper, 1998; Hall, 1997, Fulton, 1988).

f. **Problematized authorship:** Nevertheless, I will not be limiting my interpretation of meaning to the intentionality of authors (Barthes, 1977; Banks, 1998). As stated above, I seek to explore the production of meaning through a series of photographs and the way this meaning operates within a wider discourse.

2.6. POSITIONALITY

The ways in which I analyzed the production of meaning in the riot cleanups is based on the assumption that my reading of the photographs as texts is culturally, historically and politically located, and also shaped by my own background and positionality. In this section, I outline some of the factors that have influenced my positionality in relation the cleanups and the way in which I have worked through the interpretation process.

In thinking through positionality as relational, constantly changing and able to offer a multiplicity of viewpoints (Haraway, 1991; Geiger, 1990), my own location as part-insider/part-outsider has influenced my interpretation of the events. Having moved to the UK at the age of 16 (almost 10 years ago) from Greece, my viewpoint is often developed in opposition to certain normative identities relating to class, race and national culture, identifying more easily with hybrid and migrant identities and histories. Since I

have spent so much time in England and London more specifically, my understanding of the historical and the political is partly developed 'naturally' through having lived there. However, as an outsider, having moved their 10 years ago from another country, I have had to do additional work in understanding the way in which official history operates within political and national culture in the UK.

Moreover, from my perspective, the protests and the riot cleanups have largely been swept under the carpet. While some important academic and media projects are underway such as the Reading the Riots project, mainstream newspapers now rarely report on anything related to the events. Moreover, the riot cleanup events received very little critical attention at the time (August, 2011), and instead were dismissed as whimsical, spontaneous and fun events. So in my many ways, my positionality is also influenced by what I see as the necessity of *remembering* both the riots and their cleanups, as I believe they tell a larger story about power dynamics in London at the moment. More specifically, I chose to focus in depth on exclusive representational practices which received little critical attention, and particularly those that relate to the creation of exclusive identities at the intersection of class, race, gender and nation. For example, I have noticed the racial and class tropes connected to the cleanup events are more often invoked in conversations I have had with colleagues in the U.S. In the UK, this interpretation is still considered taboo, particularly among the white middle-classes, which I feel is symptomatic of the neoliberal discursive context in which class and race are increasingly de-politicized (Kapoor, 2011). Thus, while my interpretation of the events is socially, historically and culturally located, I have also chosen to narrow down

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my interpretation of meaning based on the way I perceive what is being ignored and

forgotten, and what needs to be remembered.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1. OVERVIEW

In the first part of this chapter, I seek to provide a critical review of the relationship between embodiment and identity construction, focusing specifically on (1) how identity formation comes about through embodied performance; (2) how such embodied practice is influenced by 'somatic norms' that make some bodies more 'out of place' than others; (3) how emotions influence social and bodily alignments in space, and (4) the relationship between technology and the body. In the second part, I seek to contextualize the riot cleanups by examining how notions of purity and cleanliness developed historically in relation to questions of middle class respectability. I also discuss a series of contemporary examples of how conduct is regulated in the context of the neighborhood in the UK, while also reviewing a number of theories on whiteness and nation making in the context of postcoloniality.

3.2. EMBODIMENT

Judith Butler's (1988) conceptualization of the performative is useful in examining how identities are constructed through corporeal acts. Central to Butler's (1988) theory is that the body is not a fact, but a historical construction constituting a set of "continuously materializing possibilities". While stressing that the body is constrained by historical conventions, Butler (1988) understands the formation of the gendered self as a process in which identity is "instituted through a stylized repetition of acts". Effectively, Butler stresses that this 'doing' of discourse is shaped by existing formations

of knowledge, and that it is within these discursive enactments that social subjects are produced. In her words, she describes performativity in the following way:

> …if a word ...might be said to 'do' a thing, then it appears that the word not only signifies a thing, but that this signification will also be an enactment of the thing. It seems here that the meaning of a performative act is to be found in this apparent coincidence of signifying and enacting. (Butler, 1995, p.198)

In other words, Butler's notion of performativity relates to the way in which a signifying practice enacts or generates that which it also names (Ahmed, 2004). Moreover, in rejecting theatrical notions of performance, Butler argues that the performative act succeeds only to the extent that it repeats and cites norms and conventions that already exist (Butler, 1993, p.13). In applying the notion of performativity to different identity formations, the body is understood to take shape through iterative performances that are conditioned by context and controlled across boundaries of gender, race, class and sexuality.

If the performance of the body is regulated by particular historical narratives, the notions of visibility and invisibility become important analytical lenses in understanding how some bodies are made more 'out of place' than others. In *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*, Nirmal Puwar (2008) uses the notion of the 'somatic norm' in arguing that the white male body is able to pass as the 'universal human' because it remains invisible, while acquiring political legitimacy because of the very way

in which it is perceived as disembodied (Purwar, 2008, 14)[2]. On the other hand, bodies that are seen as out of place—classed, gendered, racialized, disabled—gain heightened visibility from not being the norm, inviting suspicion and surveillance (Purwar, 2008, p.54).

Importantly, Tim Creswell approaches the notion of bodies out of place by focusing on the way in which normative landscapes define what behavior is appropriate. In exploring how marginalized bodies are deemed to transgress the 'proper' use of public space through 'deviant' behavior such as graffiti, Creswell (1996) argues that the performance of respectability allows other bodies to define their "in placeness". Thus, the process of being in place is relational and based on a series of ideological "*expectations* about behavior that relate a position in a social structure to actions in space" (Cresswell, 1996, p.3, author's emphasis). Taking the street as an example, many expectations about behavior are written in law but most are implicit or unstated (Cresswell, 1996, p.3).

If public space is constantly negotiated and held in tension between efforts to both purify it and to transgress its regulations (Cresswell, 1996), Katherine McKittrick (2006) further problematizes the way bodies are made out of place by relating the notion to the reproduction of normative spatial binaries. She argues that racial, sexual and economic hierarchies are naturalized by the repetitive spatialization of "difference" from a white, heterosexual and classed vantage point (p.xv). Here she invokes the notion of transparent

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[2] In the context of the protests, it will interesting to analyze how the somatic norm was re-asserted through the embodiment of authority or the police, BBC commentators, politicians, and the 'riot cleanup operations'. To what extent did bodies exhibit Puwar's notions of "gentrified heroic masculinity" or a sense of "aggression despite claim of bourgeois rationality"? (Puwar, 2008, p. 83)

space, or the way in which dominant geographies are based on the assumption that space

"just is" and that what we see is true:

> If *who* we see is tied up with *where* we see through truthful, commonsensical
>
> narratives, then the placement of subaltern bodies deceptively hardens spatial
>
> binaries, in turn suggesting that some bodies belong, some bodies do not
>
> belong…(McKittrick, 2006, p.xv, author's emphasis)

For example, McKittrick describes the ways in which traditional geographies

continuously portray blackness as naturally "ghettoized" (p.11), assuming geographic

inferiority and thus warranting the need to stay "in place" (p.9). She notes how these

stereotypes of dispossession are based in colonial fictions of the "seemingly

ungeographic" (p.5).

Emotions also play an important role in the way undesirable bodies are deemed as

dangerous or out of place (Kern, 2011). In her essay "Connecting embodiment, emotion

and gentrification: An exploration through the practice of yoga in Toronto", Leslie Kern

(2011) argues that emotional encounters such as fear and desire produce geographies of

exclusion and inclusion. In identifying bodies as the sites of emotions, and as "ways of

knowing, understanding and communicating with the world around us" (Davidson and

Milligan, 2004; Hubbard, 2005; Anderson and Smith, 2001), Kern explores how middle

class, body-centered consumption practices work to re-shape neighborhood landscapes,

while allowing for the visualization of 'desirable' and 'healthy' bodies.

In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion,* Sara Ahmed (2004) further problematizes the

role of emotions in aligning bodily and social space. By focusing on how emotions are

mediated, in that "what we feel is dependent on past interpretations that are not necessarily made by us", Ahmed conceptualizes emotions similarly to Kern (2011), as a form of knowing:

> …knowledge is bound up with what makes us sweat, shudder, tremble, all those feelings that are crucially felt on the bodily surface, the skin surface where we touch and are touched by the world. (Ahmed, 2004p.171)

For example, in examining the politics of fear—an emotion central to the way in which meaning was produced in the aftermath of the riots—Ahmed (2004) argues that the production of fear is dependent on histories of associations and particular narratives that are already in place, of what or who is fearsome (p.62). If the proximity of a passing object of fear is imagined as the possibility that we may be injured in the future (Ahmed, 2004, p.67), Ahmed (2004) stresses that it is the feared body that subsequently fears, as he/she is "crushed by that fear, by being sealed into a body that tightens up, and takes up less space" (p.69). Thus, fear enables some bodies to "inhabit and move in public space through restricting the mobility of other bodies to spaces that are enclosed or contained" (Ahmed, 2004, p.69).

Ahmed (2004) links fear to the emotion of love, as she emphasizes that turning away from the object of fear simultaneously involves turning towards the object of love (p. 68). She demonstrates this through Franz Fanon's famous example of the frightened white boy who shouts 'Look, a Negro!' before recoiling into the arms of his 'safe' mother (Fanon, 1952). She develops her argument further by analyzing the global economies of fear after 9/11. Fear in this case comes about through the distinction of those who are

'under threat' and those who 'threaten' (p.72). By turning away from the object of fear, American citizens were encouraged to turn towards 'home', a movement which involves a repetition of signs of 'fellowship' (p.74). This was demonstrated through the parading of flags outside homes for example, allowing "expressions of fear to be lived as patriotic declarations of love" (p.74). Effectively, such alignments allow some bodies to take up more space than others, while restricting the bodies that are seen as associated with terrorism (p.79). I will return to the politics of love later in this chapter.

Finally, the relationship between the body and technology is an important element in the process of identity formation. Challenging the common perception that nationalism is "peripheral", Michael Billig (1995) argues that the nation is reproduced through embodied habits. In other words, Billig's (1995) notion of 'banal nationalism' is concerned with everyday expressions and the daily routines and practices that define national citizens' identity, from eating, to reading or the unnoticed display of a flags on buildings. Through such practices, Billig argues, "there is a continual 'flagging', or reminding, of nationhood" (1995, p.8).

Emily Grabham (2009) draws on Billig's theory of the banal and on Ahmed and Stacey's (2001) work on the potential for skin to 'flag' difference in her exploration of how different forms of surgery can evoke national belonging. She does this by looking at the way in which aesthetic surgeries on 'white' subjects facilitate the alignment of 'white' bodies with a white nation, while also looking at how the US media coverage of Iraq veteran's prosthetic limbs works to "re-embed notions of the US as transcendent Christian nation" (Grabham, 2009). In emphasizing the way in which technologies are

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not added to the body, but are a means in and through which bodies are constituted and positioned (Sullivan, 2001), studies like Billig's (1995) and Graham's (2009) are particularly relevant in understanding how identities were constructed through the use of material objects in the riot cleanups.

3.3. GENEALOGIES OF MIDDLE CLASS RESPECTABILITY AND PROPRIETY

I now want to look at the way in which bodies are made 'in place' and 'out of place' through historical definitions of propriety and respectability, as this was a key element of the riot cleanups. In tracing the origins of middle-class propriety, domesticity and cleanliness, Anne McClintock's (1995) *Imperial Leather* offers a number of important insights that connect respectability to an intersection of identities. McClintock (1995) argues that the Victorian need to construct rigid boundaries, fetishes, absolution rituals and liminal scenes is linked to the crisis that emerged out of the imperial body's location and movement between the metropolis and colonies (p.33).

Moreover, the self-definition of the middle-class took shape against both the Victorian aristocracy and working class, in that the middle-class earned a living and owned property. The domestic realm became central in representing the notion of propriety, while at the same time allowing for the concealment of female domestic labor. The home was also a crucial site in exposing the spectacle of the commodity, which by now had taken shape as the essential form of a new cultural system for representing social value (McClintock, 1995, p.208).

In this context, dirt[3] quickly became a Victorian fetish. Representing what was

left over after exchange value had been extracted in the production of commodities, and

effectively revealing the evidence of manual labor, the fetish of dirt became a way to

police the boundaries "between "normal" sexuality and "dirty" sexuality, "normal" work

and "dirty" work and "normal" money and "dirty" money" (McClintock, 1995, p.154). In

other words, dirt came to represent a crisis in value in the way it contradicted the liberal

logic that social wealth is created by the rational principles of the market and not my the

labor of the body (McClintock, 1995):

> Smeared on trousers, faces, hands and aprons, dirt was the memory trace of
>
> working class and female labor, unseemly evidence that the fundamental
>
> production of industrial and imperial wealth lay in the hands and bodies of the
>
> working class, women and the colonized (McClintock, 1995, p.154).

Cleaning itself, McClintock maintains, has no inherent meaning (p.170). Instead,

it is through the demarcation of social boundaries that value is created, as "dirt is

segregated from hygiene, order from disorder, and disorder from meaning and confusion"

(p.170). In the context of Victorian middle class domesticity, cleaning became a fetish

through a preoccupation with giving social value to boundary objects (door knobs,

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[3] In *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo,* Mary Douglas similarly argues that "[d]irt is essentially disorder…in chasing dirt…re-ordering our environment, making it conform to an idea" (p.2). Güliz Ger (2004) also offers a useful overview of cleaning practices, principally in Europe and America: while Leonore Davidoff (1995) links the function of cleanliness in the 19th and 20th Centuries to the imposition of order and disorder, Arnould (1999) connects cleaning to ritualized hope and magic as a strategy to resolved intractable social problems (Ger, 2004, p.3). Ger (2004) also outlines the ways in which cleaning practices set the boundaries between classes, between inside and outside, between familiar and unfamiliar and between safety and danger. She also notes how cleaning is often expressed as a moment of festivity, particularly in the negotiation of the perceived safety of spaces.

windowsills) that symbolized the threshold between the private and the public. For example, McClintock talks about the way in which Hannah Cullwick's imperative to clean and order objects in the house was performed "in an infinity of repetition without progress or perfection" (p.170).

Soap acted as a similar fetish in the policing the boundaries of class, gender and race identity during a time of crisis and in a social order that felt "threatened by the fetid effluvia of the slums…imperial competition and anticolonial resistance" (McClintock, 1995, p.201). Beyond its use as technology of social purification, it also functioned as a way to consolidate national identity through the cult of domesticity (McClintock, 1995, p.207), as the bar soap embodied the relationship between domesticity and empire (p. 208). As Mosse argues (as cited in Fellows & Razack, 1998, p.349), this national consolidation allowed for bourgeois morality to become "everyone's morality."

National consolidation was also achieved through the connection between middle class domesticity and the exercise of citizenship as Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack (1998) argue in "The Race to Innocence: Confronting Hierarchical Relations among Women." In other words, while the middle class home became the site of self-discipline and order through close control over the manner of living, it also became a site where a class was reproduced by connecting the individual to the making a new liberal democratic order (p.345). Thus, they argue that "disciplined, self-regulating bourgeois bodies (Foucault, 1991) were emboldened to claim the right to participate as citizens in the body politic" (Fellows & Razack, 1998, p.345).

If respectability, and its converse, degeneracy, allowed for the assertion of middle class membership through relations of domination and subordination, Fellows and Razack (1998) pay particular attention to the way respectability structured relations among women. For example, the 'slum' - which was defined as being inhabited by prostituted women and other 'degenerate' classes - was also marked in opposition to the middle class home with its 'lady,' while inside the home the 'lady' was further differentiated from female domestic workers. Leonore Davidoff (1979) outlines this hierarchical relationship like this:

> Prostitutes, who were seen as the potential source of both physical and moral contagion for middle-class men, were also cast into this region [the slum]. Defenders of prostitution saw it as a necessary institution which acted as a giant sewer, drawing away the distasteful but inevitable waste products of male lustfulness, leaving the middle-class household and middle-class ladies pure and unsullied. None of the inhabitants of this twilight zone could ever aspire to be included in the "body politic" but had to be hidden and controlled wherever possible (Davidoff [1979] as quoted in Fellows and Razack [1998]: 247).

Thus, McClintock (1995), Fellows and Razack (1998) and Davidoff (1979) urge us to think about the multiple and intersecting ways in which notions of dirt and impurity informed the construction of class, gender and racial hierarchies in Victorian England.

3.4. THE POLITICS OF RESPONSIBILIZATION

The notion of the 'responsible' subject becomes central in contemporary concerns about the respectable behavior of bodies in public space. Notions of purity and cleanliness still play an important role in the construction and reproduction of social boundaries and identities, but they come to be articulated in slightly different terms. For example, the 'neighborhood' – a site which will become important in the analysis of the riot cleanups – can be thought of as an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991) that coheres around a set of ideals. Anderson defines the nation as an "imagined political community", whose members do not necessarily know each other face to face, but identify as part of the same space through "a deep, horizontal comradeship" (1991, p.224).

The ideal of a homogenous neighborhood is also explored by Howard Hallman (as cited in Ahmed, 2000, p.25), who defined the neighborhood as having the quality of being 'neighborly', while comparing successful communities to a healthy body where 'like people' live in proximity to each other (p.25). Importantly, Ahmed (2000) notes:

> The analogy between the ideal neighbourhood and a healthy body serves to define the ideal neighbourhood as fully integrated, homogenous, and sealed: it is like a body that is fully contained by the skin…This implies that a good healthy neighbourhood does not leak outside itself, and hence does not let outsiders (or foreign agents/virus) in. (p.25)

At the same time, Ahmed (2000) argues that Hallman's image of the ideal or pure community is accompanied by the assumption of the 'failed neighborhood', where

neighbors are no longer 'neighborly' to each other and where the imagined threat is identified as coming from within the community. In other words, Ahmed explains that "it is the very potential of the community to fail which is required for the constitution of the community" (2000, p.26). If the stranger then comes to embody that which "must be expelled from the purified space of the community" (Ahmed, 2000, p.22), the idea of proximity becomes central in the way that the recognition, or the 'knowing again', of strangers becomes a question of "how to survive the proximity of strangers…*who have already taken shape*" (p.2, author's emphasis) in the world of everyday encounters. Examples include the way in which the loitering body ("with no purpose") is perceived as a threat to the neighborhood because it is not taking part in the "exchanges of capital that transform spaces into places" of value (Ahmed, 2000, p.31), while immigrants become the "ultimate violent strangers…outsiders in the nation space", as "cultural difference becomes the text upon which the fear of crime is written" (p.36).

The potential of the community to fail is also apparent in recent government discourse. Andrew Wallace (2010) convincingly argues that New Labour's model of 'community' was used as a normative rationale for the regeneration and governance of designated urban space, reflecting the wider shift in the devolution of government services and the creation of local 'partnerships'. In this case, the community is imagined as a spatially bound entity that becomes the focus of government behavioral and moral scrutiny (Wallace, 2010). Wallace (2010) suggests that a key aspect of this neo-communitarian logic is the mobilization of a fault line which divides the decent responsible majority from a deviant, antisocial minority (p.815). This fault line is seen as

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necessary to "support the agency of the responsible in policing the feckless that cause the low-level nuisance" (pp.814-815). According to Ash Amin (2005), this normative definition of community allows the local to be re-interpreted as the cause, consequence and solution to social and spatial inequality (Amin, 205:614 as quoted in Wallace, 2010, p. 810).

Over the last 15 years, this normative discourse of community has also legitimated the creation of a punitive criminal justice system, and the implementation of invasive policies to control 'anti-social' behavior in public and private spaces (Skeggs, 2005). In "Governing Neighbours: Anti-social Behaviour Order and New Forms of Regulating Conduct in the UK", Flint and Nixon (2006) argue that housing has become a central site in which the new politics of conduct are played out, through policies like Anti-social Behaviour[4] Orders, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Parenting Orders, Tenancy Agreements, Probationary Tenancies and Good Neighbour Agreements. Central to these community and contractual policies is the idea of creating a coalition of local governors, placing renewed emphasis on the role of individuals, the voluntary, community and private sectors through appeals to the idea of 'community' and the need for active citizenship (p.952).

The communitarian underpinnings of community governance that urge residents to become self-governing and responsible citizens can also be understood within a wider

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[4] At the time when Flint and Nixton were writing, the Home Office identified anti-social behavior as "fundamentally caused by a lack of respect for other people" (Home Office, 2003, p.7). The authors also discuss how government discourse links the promotion of 'civility' to the responsibility of individuals as citizens, parents, neighbors and members of communities (Home office, 2003). (p. 939/940). The current definition of anti-social behavior is "any aggressive, intimidating or destructive activity that damages or destroys another person's quality of life" (Home office, 2012).

ideology of 'responsibilization' (Andrejevic, 2006). The notion of responsibilization is often conceptualized as form of neoliberal governance in which subjects take on the responsibilities of monitoring behavior upon themselves, as more direct and top-down forms of welfare are displaced (Andrejevic, 2006, p.485).

Similarly, Mark Andrejevic (2006) suggests that the war on terrorism "is the first war you can access from your desk" as the interactive promise of the internet allows citizens to participate in the collection of information on war itself as "…'passive' spectators are urged to become active participants[5]" (p.441). For example, Koskela (2011) explores the way volunteer observers take part in a process of 'patriotic voyeurism' by monitoring the Texas-Mexico border from the comfort of their home through the Texas Virtual Watch Program.

Such practices of lateral surveillance are also developed in Neighborhood Watch schemes. Sara Ahmed (2000) argues that in such schemes, the expulsion of the 'criminal' body becomes institutionalized through the enforcement of the boundaries that allow neighborhoods to be imagined as pure. Particularly popular in middle class areas where there is higher valued property to protect (Ahmed, 2000, p.27) and where residents are likely to collaborate with the police, the UK Neighborhood Watch schemes becomes a model of 'good citizenship', allowing residents to effectively self-monitor and self-police those bodies that are seen as 'out of place', while allowing for the production of safe places that have value or 'ideal character' (Ahmed, 2000, p.26).

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[5] Here Andrejevic (2006) refers to a number of participatory Homeland Security campaigns that urge citizens to become responsible and citizens, for example by taking part in a 'neighborhood watch program against terrorism'(p.449)

The theme of proximity is brought to the foreground once again, as valued property is protected by the proximity of nearby bodies (Ahmed, 2000, p.28). The notions of heroism and 'legitimate' citizenship become critical in this form of surveillance as "Neighborhood Watch purifies the space of the community through *purifying the life of the good citizen*, whose life becomes heroic, dedicated to fighting against crime and disorder" (Ahmed, 2000, p.28, author's emphasis).

The way in which citizenship is framed around concerns about pure or impure behavior is also central to the formation of middle class identities. In "The Making of Class and Gender Through Visualizing Moral Subject Formation", Bev Skeggs (2005) argues that hen parties[6] mark the limit to propriety in public space, through middle class associations of pollution, danger, distaste and excess heterosexuality (p.974). Skeggs (2005) underscores how such representations of predominantly white working class women are based on a need to construct ethical and responsible middle class identities. Here, Skeggs (2005) connects contemporary class formation to a discourse of 'choice'. In other words, this conception of the ethical is based on the individual's ability or inability to 'choose' their behavior or "repertoire of the self" (p.973).

Similarly to McClintock (1995), Skeggs (2005) focuses on the process of boundary construction or reconstruction in her conceptualization of class formation. Importantly, Skeggs (2005) moves beyond a Marxist economic conception of class, stressing the way class is made through cultural values premised on morality, embodied

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[6] In the UK, a hen party is an informal party for women only; it is usually held for a woman shortly before she is married.

in personhood and realized as a value in a symbolic system of exchange (p. 969). Skeggs (2005) further theorizes class as a *relational process*, constantly shifting and contested:

> It is the process of evaluation, moral attribution and authorization in the production of subjectivity that, I would argue, is central to understanding contemporary class relations. (p. 976)

If middle-class identities are produced relationally and rely on the expulsion and exclusion of what is held to be working-classness (Lawler, 2005), one of the ways in which the moral subject comes to differentiate itself is through the expression of disgust. In "Disgusted subjects: the making of middle-class identities", Stephanie Lawler (2005) focuses on expressions of disgust at working-class existence in the British media and public forums, as a way to explore what this tells us about normative and normalized middle class identities.

Skeggs (2005) further argues that disgust is one of the affective responses to monstrosity, in the sense that monstrous representations work to lessen concerns around the proximity of uneasy categories and comfort (Tomkins, 1995; Probyn, 2000). In this way, she suggests that disgust allows for the formation of collectivity:

> Expressions of disgust enable one to repel because they rely on public acknowledgement …when something or someone is designated as excessive, immoral, disgusting, and so on, it provides collective reassurance that we are not alone in our judgment of the disgusting object…(Skeggs, 2005, p.970)

If we return to Flint and Nixon's (2006) point that the new politics of conduct emphasize the active practice of 'civility' or responsibility, and to Skegg's (2005) point

that there has been a conceptual shift in the production of moral knowledge so that we

come to focus on 'good' and not 'bad', Ahmed (2004) argues that a similar phenomenon

can be observed in the politics of love. In noticing how it is common for 'hate groups' to

re-name themselves as organizations of love, Ahmed (2004) traces the significance of the

use of 'love' within fascist groups and asks the question: "How has politics become a

struggle over who has the right to name themselves as acting out of love?" (p.122).

She observes how such groups become concerned with the wellbeing of others

through an association with 'positive value' and the need to save loved others (p.123).

Moreover, she notices how a number of websites connect women to the role of defending

the nation, hence reproducing the connection between respectable femininity, maternity

and nation making (Ahmed, 2004). However Ahmed (2004) emphasizes that:

> This positing of woman as an image of the nation is not new. As critics such as
>
> Anne McClintock (1995) have shown us, this conflation of the face of the nation
>
> with the face of a woman has a long history and points to the gendering of what
>
> the nation takes to be as itself (the masculine subject) through what it has (the
>
> feminine object). (p.136)

If the work of love is connected to a national ideal, Ahmed (2004) stresses how

individuals become aligned with collectives through their identification with an ideal that

others have failed. In the UK, the nation is imagined as an ideal through the discourse of

multiculturalism which depends on an idealized form of love (Ahmed, 2004). However,

she argues that this display of love in multiculturalism is a humanist fantasy – the fantasy

that "*if only we got closer we would be as one"*- that works as a form of conditional love

where 'others' are identified by the failure to return the national ideal (Ahmed, 2004, p.138, author's emphasis).

3. 5. WHITENESS, NATIONALISM AND SPACE

Finally, I would like to explore the way in which bodies are made 'out of place' in relation to contemporary formations of racism and nationalism in the UK.

Barnor Hesse (1997), for example, explores the ways in which nationalism is rearticulated at the scale of the neighborhood, as the nation is relegated to a symbolic abstraction and the locality enlarged to connote concrete heritage and notions of indigenous 'whiteness'. This is made possible through processes of erasure or 'white amnesia' as the history of imperialism is occluded from the narration of the nation. The creation of national identity is thus dependent on "the curious but duplicitous cultural practice of projecting the discrepancies of the 'other's' experience onto the dislocations of the experience of 'self'" (Hesse, 1997, p.98).

However, Hesse (1997) also argues that the formation of local nationalisms relies on the creation of ambivalent boundaries. Using Bauman's (2000) notion of 'liquid modernity' which arises as a consequence of the failure to realize the grand homogenizing narratives of nationalism, he points towards the ambivalence and 'undecidability' that exists when the boundary between the national self and the 'other' is blurred (as cited in Hesse, 1997). Thus the process of differentiating friend from enemy is constitutive of nation-making. Hesse (1997) describes how this process allows for

nationalism to both expel and absorb difference, as identity is perceived as threatened of contamination or in need of another missing dimension (p.91).

Similarly to Hesse (1997), Katherine McKittrick (2006) emphasizes the way in which a false legacy of whiteness is created in the way blackness is continuously conceived as being 'outside' the nation state. The author explores the way in which black Canadian geographies are "lived as unvisibility" (p.96) through a dominant conception of black subjects as being absent and as being from 'elsewhere' (the Caribbean, the United States) (p.99). This erasure is accomplished through "landscaping blackness out of the nation", for example in the commonly held belief that Black Canada is only recent and urban (p.96).

Criminality becomes another way in which ideas of nation-purity are established. For example, McKittrick notes how criminality is often articulated around the stereotypical image of Jamaican spillage into the city-nation, while blackness is placed "ethnically outside the nation and criminally inside the nation-and always recent" (2006, p.102).

As Paul Gilroy stresses, this phenomenon has been integral to British racism since Enoch Powell's 'river of blood' speech (2002, p.140). In *There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack*, Gilroy (2002) further argues that representations of black presence in terms of illegality, particularly in the aftermath of the 1981 protests, are bound up with the experience of national crisis and decline and are linked to the foundational idea that legality is intrinsically bound up with national culture:

Crime in general and black crime in particular disrupt the reverence for law which

has been accepted by left and right alike as fundamental component of

Englishness. From the right, law-breaking is seen as an active rejection of

civilization of which law is the most sacred expression. From the left, it is the

policies of the authoritarian state and the refinement of oppressive power,

especially in policing which have been identified as being essentially alien to

British traditions and destructive of the heritage of freeborn Britons (Gilroy 2002,

p.91).

However, Gilroy (2004) stresses how some of the more recent anxieties expressed

in popular politics and discourse have to do with a "multilayered trauma" involved in

accepting the loss of empire (p.98). In other words, Gilroy explains how:

In this precarious national state, individual and group identifications converge not

on the body of the leader or other iconic national object…but in opposition to the

intrusive presence of the incoming strangers who, trapped inside the local logic of

race, nation and ethnic absolutism not only *represent* that vanished empire but

persistently refer consciousness to the unacknowledged pain of its loss and the

unsettling shame of its bloody management (2004, p.101).

This notion of postcolonial melancholia as Gilroy (2004) terms it, becomes

central in understanding the multiple instantiations of anxiety and fear that function to

make some bodies more 'out of place' than others.

3. 6. SUMMARY

Throughout this chapter, I argued that the study of embodied practices is important in examining the construction of identities and the way in which bodies are made 'out of place' (Butler, 1988; Puwar, 2008; Cresswell, 1996). I also emphasized the concept of respectability and the way in which it developed historically through relations of domination and subordination that operate across boundaries of class, race and gender (Fellows & Razack, 1998; McClintock, 1995), while underscoring how contemporary notions of heritage and belonging are often narrated through the erasure of colonial history.

In the next chapter, I provide an overview of the protests and examine some of the underlying reasons why they happened at this particular moment of history. Moreover, I contextualize the riot cleanups within a wider series of community responses to the protests, while also exploring some of the key themes that emerged through media and government discourse in relation to both events.

Chapter 4: Background

4.1. OVERVIEW

On Thursday 4th August 2011, 29 year old Mark Duggan was shot dead by the police on Ferry Lane in Tottenham, North London. The Metropolitan police had attempted to arrest Duggan as part of a pre-planned operation under Trident. Trident is a special police unit "[r]esponsible for the prevention and investigation of shootings in London's communities and all gun related murders within London's black communities" (Metropolitan Police, n.d.). On Saturday 6th August, a crowd of about 120, including Mark Duggan's family, who had not received any information regarding the circumstances of the shooting, held a demonstration outside Tottenham police station. They demanded that a senior officer come out and talked to them, but the police kept on prevaricating (Scott, 2011a). By the time a superintendent came out, Mark Duggan's family had already gone home. Soon after, a 16 year old girl was allegedly battered to the ground by police officers (Athwal, 2011; Lewis, 2011). Tottenham erupted and throughout the next three days, protests spread in London and to other cities in England including Bristol, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool and Wolverhampton. Police stations, vehicles and officers, as well as commercial property became the target of young people's frustrations in many regions (Elliot-Cooper, 2011).

Almost 4,000 people were arrested in the aftermath of the protests, with hundreds serving harsh and disproportionate sentences (Bowcott, Siddique & Sparrow, 2011). It quickly emerged that the government had given the courts a "directive" providing guidance on their law and sentencing recommendations, essentially ordering anyone

involved in the protests be given a custodial sentence (Bowcott, 2011). Although this later proved to be an underestimation, an early *Guardian* analysis revealed that the courts were handing down prison sentences that were on average 25% longer than normal (Rogers, 2011). Most notably, a young man was jailed for six months for stealing a bottle of water (Aitkenhead, 2011), while Gordon Thompson, a 34-year old man was given an 11 year sentence – the longest sentence so far – for setting fire to the Reeves furniture store in Croydon.

Very broadly, most of those involved in the protests were young men from poor areas. According to data collected at courts around England, 89% were male and 11% female[7], while 47% were aged 18 to 24, and 27% aged 10-17 (Ministry of Justice, 2012). Although, as Muir and Adegoke (2011) stress, the police figures of those arrested cannot be completely be reliable as studies repeatedly indicate that minorities are more likely to be arrested than others, an estimate from the Ministry of Justice (2012) of the proportion of defendants brought to courts shows that 41% self-identified as white, 39% as black, 6% as Asian, 12% as mixed background and 2% as other (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

However, these figures varied significantly throughout the country. In the North London borough of Haringey which includes Tottenham, 21% self-identified as white, 36% as black, 4% as Asian, 7% as mixed, 3% as other, and 28% did not state or no information was recorded (Ministry of Justice, 2012). In Birmingham, 32% self-identified as white, 35% as black, 14% as Asian, 12% as mixed, 1% as other and 6% did

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[7] Anecdotal accounts and interviews carried out by *The Guardian*'s study with the London School of Economics show that the percentage of woman was higher (Ball, Matthew and Newburn, 2011).

not state or no information was recorded (Ministry of Justice, 2012). Finally in Salford, 94% of the protesters brought before the courts self-identified as white, 3% as black, and 3% as mixed (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

4.2. CAUSES OF PROTESTS

The story of Tottenham

Mark Duggan's death follows that of a number of Tottenham residents killed by the Metropolitan Police, and also previous incidences of police brutality. In 1985, the Broadwater Farms riots started after the death of a black woman, Cynthia Jarrett, who collapsed and died from a heart attack after police raided her house. That event, and the shooting of Dorothy Groce in Brixton one week earlier, led to widespread urban protests around the country (Athwal, 2011). Cynthia Jarrett's death was followed by that of Joy Gardner in 1993 from neighboring Crouch End, killed while in detention by officers of the Metropolitan Police's extradition unit (Scraton & McCulloch, 2006), and by that of 30-year-old Roger Sylvester in 1999, who died after being restrained by eight police officers following an incident outside his home in Tottenham that resulted in his detention under the Mental Health Act (Athwal, 2011).

Moreover, the way in which Mark Duggan's inquiry was handled by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) reveals historical patterns of institutional racism and impunity. Tottenham activist Stafford Scott (2011c) published an indicting piece in *The Guardian* on the IPPC's inquiry, announcing his resignation as a community adviser. He explains how the IPPC gave erroneous information to journalists

regarding a "shoot-out" involving Duggan and police that didn't actually happen. He also

reveals how the IPPC had ordered the removal of the minicab from which Duggan was

taken before he was shot, claiming that the vehicle contained no forensic evidence, which

in fact it did (Scott, 2011c). Mark Duggan was one of eight black men killed under police

custody between January and August 2011 in the UK (Taylor & Muir, 2011).

Policing and racism

Although the police killing of Mark Duggan triggered the initial protests in

Tottenham, anger over his death and with the police more generally fuelled and

contributed to the broader uprisings (Lewis, Newburn, Taylor, Ball, 2011). This history

of police brutality requires us to examine the ways in which more and more young people

have been subjected to processes of criminalization over the last 30 years. Prison

numbers in England and Wales are repeatedly reported as reaching a record high, while a

recent report by the chief inspector of prisons shows that young black men account for

nearly 40% of the population of youth jails (Travis, 2011).

Moreover, new terrorism legislation in the aftermath of 9/11 and the 7/7

bombings have also meant that the police carry out hundreds and thousands of searches,

with figures showing that none of them have led to an arrest (Travis, 2010). The

criminalization of working class and minority youth is also evident in the introduction of

punitive community-based civil orders like Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBOs), or

probation programs like Community Payback[8], sentencing young people to undertake

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[8] Introduced in 2008 as part of a larger government program seeking to 'open' up the criminal justice
system to the public, *Community Payback* sentences young people to undertake between "40 and 300

hours of unpaid labor wearing bright orange jackets with "Community Payback" written on the back of them. In a speech to community leaders in Tottenham, Gilroy (2011a) argues that such policies represent the militarization of the policing structure:

> If we go down that road, we're headed toward a society that's run on the basis of mass imprisonment. And that's not just about making the prisons bigger and fuller, making them engines for making money for private corporations, but it's also about turning your schools into prisons, and turning your streets into prisons, and turning your community into something that's much more like a prison (para.7 [speech transcript]).

Police stop and search tactics have specifically been at the forefront of young people's discontent with the police. At the moment, black people are 30 times more likely than white people to be stopped and searched by police in England and Wales (Townsend, 2012). These figures refer to stop-and-searches figures under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 which allows police to search anyone in a designated area without specific grounds for suspicion (Townsend, 2012).

Moreover, South Asian people are 42 times more likely to be held under Section 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000, which allows police to stop people at ports and airports for up to nine hours without the need for reasonable suspicion that they are involved in any

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hours" of unpaid labor in their neighborhoods, while making them hyper-visible by forcing them to wear bright orange jackets with "Community Payback" written on the back. According to the Ministry of Justice website (2011), "about 100,000 individuals are sentenced to Community Payback each year across England and Wales with over 8.8 million hours of unpaid work completed last year" (para.5). Under the new conservative administration and in the aftermath of the 'riots', the program is now to go "full time," as "offenders" will have to work a minimum of 28 hours over four days, with the fifth day spent looking for full time employment (Ministry of Justice, 2011).

crime (Dodd, 2011). In an interview with *The Guardian* (Kape, Miller, O'Connell, Robertson, & Smith, 2011b), a man who took part in the protests talked about how:

> Young black back boys are always at the brunt of the stop and search tactics, you know…we're always the ones that get stopped and searched, stripped searched, naked, private parts flashing, ain't found nothing, I've just been subjected to strip search and you ain't found nothing, and I can't have no compensation, and not even a sorry or nothing.

While police stop and searches affect black and Asian men disproportionately, the criminalization of working class communities more generally points to a wider thread linking Mark Duggan's death the spread of the riots in other parts of the country, as activist Adam Elliot-Cooper points out:

> Stop and search had increased by over 300% in the last ten years for African and Caribbean males, over 200% for Asian males and over 100% for White males. These much-cited statistics reflect the multicultural nature of what became the riots, but also explains the genesis in the Black communities of Tottenham. (2011,para.5)

Poverty

Growing social inequality was another principal cause for the protests. In interviews, young people complained repeatedly about employment discrimination, a lack of opportunity, being broke, not being cared for by the government, and the recent cuts targeting education (Sky News, 12 August 2011). Other protesters talked about

having no job or earning money, not being able to support families, being discouraged to go to university (Kape, Miller, O'Connell, Roberston & Smith, 2011b) and about the divided worlds of London that never meet (Ferguson, 2011).

The current coalition government's recent policies have also exacerbated existing inequalities. Some salient examples include the tripling of university fees, the scrapping of the educational maintenance allowance (EMA) that supports students from low-income families, the privatization of state schools into academies that run like businesses, as well as dramatic welfare cuts targeting housing, community facilities, job, family and disability allowances. Reflecting on young people's response to the riots collected by youth groups in Tottenham, Elliot-Cooper writes:

> Many young people wrote that cuts to education, training and employment opportunities played a big part in spurring on rioters. They did not need academics to tell them there are over 30 unemployed people for every vacancy in Haringey at the moment, or the psychological effects of tuition fees tripling to £9000 for university students. (2011, para.11)

4.3. MEDIA AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

As John Solomos (2011) succinctly argues, the August 2011 protests were primarily interpreted through the lens of criminality, consumerism, morality and technology by the mainstream media and the government. While David Cameron dismissed the events as "criminality pure and simple" (David Cameron on the riots, 2011) the mainstream media corroborated this response by focusing on the acts of 'looting' and

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'criminality', describing them as a product of 'gangs'. For example, *The Telegraph* published a comment piece on the 9th of August 2011 entitled "[t]he criminals who shame our nation".

This, of course, is not a new theme. Cameron's words echo Margaret Thatcher's response to the 1981 protests when she said that "[n]othing, but nothing, justifies what happened . . . They were criminal, criminal" (TV Interview for ITN, 1981). Moreover, relations of enmity and references to war were used in articulating the idea of an 'enemy within' through the figure of the criminal. Neighborhoods were repeatedly described as being 'under attack' or looking like 'war zones'. References to apocalyptic films like *28 Days Later* were also common while descriptions of fear and the need to 'stay safe' were prevalent on social media websites.

While looting was also treated as a surprise and novelty in the 1981 and 1985 protests (Gilroy, 2011b) the media and public debate focus in 2011 focused disproportionately on this. Typically, commentators made references to the 'rise of consumer society' as a way explain the widespread damage of commercial property. Moreover, the media placed particular focus on reporting and publishing photographs of burning shops (see Chapter 7), while also constructing an image of people "engaged in forms of shopping by looting" (Solomos, 2011, para.6). Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman's commentary piece was often used to support such accounts. In it he argues that "[t]these are riots of defective and disqualified consumers" (Bauman, 2011).

The notion that the 'riots' were caused by a breakdown in morality was another central theme in media discussions and in public debate. For example, in his speech on

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August 15th 2011, David Cameron (Cameron, 2011) contends that "the riots were not about race...government cuts…poverty" but about "behavior" and a "slow-motion moral collapse that has taken place in parts of our country".

Similarly, journalist and author Toby Young (2011a) suggested that the Prime Minister should declare a state of emergency, impose a curfew and introduce drafting in the army if the rioting continued. He also felt that he was "witnessing the collapse of Western civilization as depicted in countless Hollywood disaster movies" (para.7), while in another article he compares the riots to a scene from Lord of the Flies, arguing that "moral relativism is to blame, not gang culture" (2011b):

> [w]hat the "rioters…lack isn't material wealth or meaningful employment, but a
> moral framework that enables them to see that smashing shop windows and
> setting fire to cars – and stealing – is wrong (2011b, para.14)

Finally, technology became another important theme in explaining the cause and spread of the protests, as the government and media constructed the former as being connected to the use of *Black Berry Messenger*, *Twitter* and *Facebook*. The government threatened to shut down social media websites in the future, while *The Sun* published the headline "[r]oll up and loot. Rioting thugs use Twitter to boost their numbers in thieving store raids" (Flynn, 2011). Once again, blaming technology is not new. In 1981, there were stories that people communicated using "£10 radios", while during the LA riots, continuous TV coverage was blamed and in France, the causes of the riots were partly linked to the use of text messages, emails and blogs (Newburn, Lewis, Metcalf, 2011).

In contrast to the 1980s, what stood out with the events of 2011 is the absence of any public inquiry. In re-affirming the dominant narrative about the riots, David Cameron said that "[t]his was not political protest or a riot about protest about politics. It was common or garden thieving, robbing and looting. And we don't need an inquiry to tell us that" (Newburn, Lewis, Metcalf, para.26). After pressure from the Liberal Democrats and the Labour party, the government finally agreed to set up the Riots Communities and Victims Panel under the chairmanship of Darra Singh. However, the report is very narrow in scope and dependent on the government's position.

Even though the media and government focused on the familiar themes of criminality and moral breakdown, in the 1980s, the official response accepted to bring issues of racial inequality into account in explaining the causes of the riots (Solomos, 2011). Moreover, the Scarman (1985) report into the Brixton riots of 1981 was independent enough from the government and showed a detailed focus on issues of racial discrimination, unemployment and police violence inflicted on Brixton's residents at the time (Solomos, 2011).

Thus, one of the major differences between the 2011 protests and those in 1981 and 1985 is that the latter were principally about race, although a significant amount of white people also took part which is a fact that is often neglected (Gilroy, 1991).

Although they did play an important role in the 2011 protests, race and ethnicity were discussed in a limited way as media reports tended to focus on 'criminality' and 'looting' (Solomos, 2011). However, Solomos stresses that discussions around issues of criminality and the breakdown of social values were often racialized, particularly in

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relation to the Tottenham and Wood Green protests, noting that David Starkey's[9] comments about a 'nihilistic gangster culture' are "perhaps the most infamous example of such taken-for-granted racialised discourses being integrated into broader social and political explanations of the riots (Merrick 2011)" (Solomos, 2011).

4.4. COMMUNITY, LOCAL AUTHORITY AND ONLINE RESPONSES

Community responses to the riots were varied. First, there was a series of vigilante actions during the nights when the protests happened. On the night of Monday the 8th, Turkish and Kurdish business owners gathered on Kingsland High Street to protect their properties from being attacked (Addley, Taylor, Domokos, Lewis, 2011). Similarly, Sikh men gathered outside to protect their temple and a Hindu temple (Addley, Taylor, Domokos, Lewis, 2011). These responses were widely praised by the national media and on social media platforms.

The situation was different in Eltham in South East London, where groups of largely white men gathered on the streets "to stop the looting from wrecking the high street" and to do the "job of the police" (Domokos & Bennett, 2011). The far right English Defence League was also there "to help manage and control" the "patriots who have come down to protect their area" ("London riots: far-right political party", 2011). A man was also overheard saying "It's going to kick off. A nigger is going to get it tonight"

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[9] David Starkey is a famous historian in the UK. During a televised discussion about the protests on BBC2's Newsnight, he claimed that "the whites have become black, a particular sort of violent, destructive, nihilistic gangster culture has become the fashion, and black and white, boy and girl, operate in this language together, this language which is wholly false, which is this Jamaican patois that's is being intruded in England, which is why many of us have this sense of literally a foreign country" (Starkey, 2011).

(Muir and Adegoke, 2011). Similar groups were out in Enfield, North London, where a group of white men were seen chasing local teenagers, one shouting "get the blacks" (Muir and Adegoke, 2011).

On Tuesday morning, volunteer 'riot cleanups' had been organized in eleven London neighborhoods including Hackney, Clapham, Croydon, Ealing, Camden, Brixton, Peckham, Lewisham, as well as in Manchester, Wolverhampton, Liverpool and Birmingham. The events were organized through social media using the "#riotcleanup" hashtag on Twitter. The @riotcleanup Twitter account gained over 86,000 followers in two days, with 84,000 mentions, becoming the most re-tweeted account that was related to the protests (Ball & Lewis, 2011; Williams, 2011).

A parallel Facebook event called "Anti-Riot Operation Cup of Tea" which urged people to stay at home and drink tea instead of rioting, has now over 300,000 online attendees. Both groups also focused on helping shopkeepers and residents whose houses had been burned through charity fundraising events, while their websites encourage users to "help the police identify suspects" by reviewing its CCTV archive on *Flickr* and by calling Crimestoppers anonymously (Riot Cleanup, 2011).

There was also wide support for the police on *Facebook* as 900,000 users joined a group entitled "Supporting the Met Police against the London rioters." Other groups set up in the aftermath of the protests include Riot Rebuild created by two architecture graduates, and the High St Heroes twitter campaign set up by the Retail Trust charity "to support the staff and families of riot victims" (Retail Trust, 2011).

Finally, while local councils were keen to promote post-riot regeneration projects such as the "I love Tottenham" campaign to "restore pride and confidence in the high road" (Haringey Council), such efforts did receive some criticism from local residents. Writing in *The Guardian*, Stafford Scott (2011b) argued that

> …residents know this is yet another cosmetic exercise, similar to the spending of £30m on the Broadwater Farm estate in the 1990s. It's designed to make those who are passing through think that change has occurred when really nothing could be further from the truth…Equality, fairness and justice must be on the table, for without this the regeneration of Tottenham High Road will be meaningless to many of its inhabitants, and the likelihood of another riot erupting will remain a distinct possibility.

Moreover, while the majority of events and groups described above were very hostile to the protests, the Tottenham Defence campaign was set up to offer legal information in case of arrest (Tottenham Defence Campaign, 2011). What is more, on Saturday the 13th August, on a march from Dalston to Tottenham protesting police brutality and racism, a community leader from an association representing Turkish and Kurdish people stressed that

> …contrary to the claims put forward by the media, Turkish and Kurdish people will not stand on the side of the establishment, and they will stand on the side of those brave kids, who fought the cops, who are out there on the front lines, enforcing this unequal, unjust, racist, capitalist society. (Rebellion in Tottenham, 2011)

4.5. RIOT CLEANUPS

The riot cleanups represent the largest unofficial or non-governmental response to the protests. Although the events were largely symbolic, as in many cases the councils had already cleared the streets, the events became effective in the way in which they were represented. In this section, I provide a thematic overview of the cleanups as they were represented by the mainstream media and through social media activity.

'Reclaiming the streets'

The idea of 'reclamation' was central to the way in which the cleanups were talked about by participants and by the media. A typical example is seen in *The Times'* headline on the 9th of August: "[b]room army sweeps in to reclaim streets" (2011). Responsible for coordinating the majority of events in London, Dan Thompson stressed that riot cleanups became about something more than "just cleaning up, it became about reclaiming the streets, about taking ownership of things again" (personal communication, January 12, 2011). Thompson also linked the desire to reclaim space to the privatization of high streets:

> …Twenty years ago, town centers belonged to the town. If you wanted to stage an event in a town center you could do it, you know, it was your civic space to do it…we saw the rioters claiming it as their space in the first place. Riot cleanup was very much claiming it as a space belonging to the wider community (personal communication, January 12, 2011).

Moreover, on social media websites like *Facebook* and *Twitter*, the idea of reclamation was expressed by riot cleanup participants or supporters through the notion

of 'taking back our streets' or 'taking back London'. For instance, a young woman who is a project manager for a charity in East London wrote "Whose streets? OUR STREETS!", the evening before heading to the Hackney cleanup ("Whose Streets", 2011).

Riot clean up participants were also frequently portrayed as acting bravely in defiance of the riots. For example, *The BBC* writes about how the "brooms quickly became a symbol of defiance for Londoners helping with the clean-up in the aftermath of the riots" (de Castella, 2011, para.9), while *The Sun* published the headline "[d]efiant Londoners start fighting back. Blitz spirit for Clapham clean-up" (Lazerri, Soodin, & Crick, 2011).

Paul Lewis, the *Guardian* reporter who is heading the Reading the Riots project in partnership with the London School of Economics, argued that, from his experience, the people who were most hostile and frustrated about the riots were the people who lived closest to them:

> I remembered being there [Ealing] immediately after the riots…the entire area had been completely destroyed, every car on the street had been burned and overturned…every single shop had been ransacked…I mean people used the clichéd comparison of a war zone but it really did look like that. But then within a day, the whole area had been transformed, and it was filled with people cleaning it. (personal communication, January 11, 2011)

He continues by stressing that riot cleanup participants "just…wanted their area to look nice again, but it was also an act of defiance…riots make certain people feel very powerful, i.e. the rioters, but they also make other people feel powerless, and for those

who feel powerless, I think the process of cleaning is an articulation of a power that maybe they didn't have during the riots" (personal communication, January 11. 2011).

Symbolic cleaning

The use of brooms gained symbolic potency for reporters and participants of the riot cleanups alike. Tom de Castella from *The BBC* saw the broom as symbol of resistance, fight back and defiance (2011), while Lucy Inglis, a 34-year-old historian who helped with the cleanup near Hackney Town Hall spoke about the broom being the "symbol of [the] civilized majority" (Tom de Castella, 2011, para.16). Liz Hogard from the Evening Standard wrote an influential piece describing the "uplifted brooms becoming a symbol of hope" (2011, para.7), while Dan Thompson wrote in *The Guardian* that "[the] broom, raised aloft, and cups of tea carried on riot shields have become today's iconic images. How British…And how very, very London" (2011, para.4). Similar comments were made about the process of cleaning being "something very British" (de Castella, 2011). In the same article, journalist Caitlin Moran was quoted saying that "[a]n American said to me, we're not going to change the way we think about you until you stop clearing up after your riots. No-one else does it. We riot and then we mop it up with a napkin" (2011, para.22-26).

Moreover, *The Times* interviewed 66-year old Liz Veitch from the Hackney cleanup, who said that "the biggest defense I've got is a pair of rubber gloves" (2011, para.10). Similarly, author John-Paul Flintoff blogged on *The School of Life* website that "any movement that takes as its logo a yellow washing up glove is a movement I want to belong to," and that although they are not suitable for picking up glass "they're

immediately identifiable and I like them" (Flintoff, 2011, para.5 and 6). Finally, the

majority of descriptions of objects began with the verb "armed" as exemplified by *The*

Guardian's opening line: "[a]rmed with brooms, binbags and rubber gloves…" (Davies,

Topping, Ball & Sample, para.1). Crowds were also typically described as "broom

armies" (Baites, 2011).

'Community'

Ideas around 'community' and 'neighborliness' were also repeatedly evoked in

the representation of the riot cleanups. For example, Liz Hogard talks about how the

cleanups "restore faith in the idea of community" (2011, para.7), while 29-year old music

promoter Hayley (who was famously photographed wearing a handmade t-shirt saying

"Looters are Scum") was quoted by *The Sun* saying that she "thought what the rioters did

was disgusting. This is my home. I love Clapham…This is a peaceful place. I came here

today to solidarity with my community" (Lazerri, Soodin, & Crick, 2011, para.4 & 5).

Dan Thompson (2011) links the cleaning to the "60s counterculture of people

doing things rather than talking about it", to punk and to movements like guerilla

gardening (personal communication, January 12, 2011). Like some other participants and

commentators, he talks about the importance of the blitz in defining the riot cleanups:

> It's one of the periods that define London's history...And I think it's because it
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> marks a point in British history which everything changed…a lot of the things
>
> that were lost after the war, like the empire, were lost because the country was
>
> bankrupt. Because we couldn't maintain a fleet to go around the world, and so on.

So it was, it was an incredible shift in Britain's kind of national psyche, that has almost never been addressed. (personal communication, January 12, 2011)

A few references were also made to the 7/7 bombings. Nick Curtis from *The Evening Standard* recalls "the sense of purpose that followed the 7/7 bombings" as "Londoners suddenly remembered their sense of fellow feeling and urban pride" in contrast to the way they are "[n]ormally preoccupied with the everyday pressure of living here" (2011, para.4). Opening her article by stating how the night before the riots she was walking around a festival in Brixton "eating jerk chicken and thinking what a wonderful place I live in", subsequently weeping "at the sight of my lovely Brixton so damaged and sad", Sasha Kerr (author of the *Happiness Project London*) encouraged readers to join the cleanups saying that "same Blitz spirit that filled our streets after 7/7 is kicking in" (Kerr, 2011, para.4).

Moreover, Omar Robert Hamilton (2011), film maker and producer of the Palestine Festival of Literature, likened the cleanups to the cleaning that would take place in Tahrir square at the start of the Egyptian protests. He argued that:

Ideals of neighbourliness that have been worn away by decades of growing individualism are being reborn. A sense of common ownership of the streets that has been stripped away by the Tescofication of every high street is being refound. And while David Cameron talks about responsibility, and the government insists on the primacy of individual action, we are seeing people take a collective stand instead: acting as a society. (para.11)

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Finally, anarchist/ "radical" media group Indymedia published a blogpost stating that "[t]his is not about the riots. This is about the clean up - Londoners who care, coming together to engender a sense of community" (Anarchistandhumanist, 2011).

Technology

The 'good' use of technology was also an important lens through which the riot cleanups were discussed in the media and in public debate. For example, Charles Leadbeater from *The New Statesman*, the Labour-affiliated political magazine, wrote that while "some used Twitter and BBM to coordinate their criminality …hundreds of broom-wielding street-cleaners organised by the invisible hand of technology…"(2011, para.1). Moreover, Paul Lewis from *The Guardian* suggests that cleanups are similar to global resistance movements in their use of social media:

> …the analysis that we did on that corpus of tweets, indicated that the cleanup
> initiative was the thing that garnered most discussion and support in social media.
> So it was like all of these other movements, Occupy, UK uncut from last year,
> arguably other movements around the world, small and large, the Indignados in
> Spain, there's a strong kind of element of social media driven and political action.

Criticism

Although the riot cleanups received widespread support by the mainstream media and in social media activity, a number of critical commentaries were also published. Writing for *The New Statesman*, Laurie Penny (2011) stresses that "[t]he resilience of Londoners approaches cultural cliché" (para.1) while noting that "Twitter was alight with racist indignation" as "some people discussing the clean-up urged volunteers to 'sweep

away the scum'" (para.5). She concludes her piece by arguing "that it is vital that we resist the easy story of 'us' and 'them'" (para.9). In a similar vein, Suzanne Moore (2011) from *The Guardian* argues that the "lovely post-riot clean up, all Big Society with big brooms, has been sweeping away any notion of 'the political'. This now belongs to those in power who define its terms" (para.11).

Published on the blogpost of the University of Strategic Optimism, a student group set up against the government cuts, the article "#riotcelanup #riotwhitewash" criticizes the cleanups for being broadly white and middle class and for trying to erase social inequality:

> By the symbolic cleaning, cleansing and casting out of the rioters from the community, the sweepers appear to enact the closest thing to popular fascism that we have seen on the streets of certain 'leafy' bits of London for years. (Himmelblau, para.8)

Similarly, another student blog focused on the "liberal crypto-fascist aftermath" of the riots, focusing on the complicity of the liberal middle classes in the subordination of the poor through the use of tropes that conceal underlying classism and racism:

> …when it comes to the riots, it seems that the liberals are the first to denounce the rioters as being dirty, ugly, demonic, feral, disgusting. All this despite the fact that the people using this language know that many of the rioters are often young black males. All this despite the fact that they know about the history of prejudice in British society, and in the police, directed towards young black males ("The London Riots and Liberal Crypto-Fascist Aftermath", 2011, para.8).

Finally, talking outside the London School of Economics (LSE) on the 30th November 2011 during a Teach Out[10], Paul Gilroy criticized the cleanups making the following remarks:

> …and let's see that there's more, again, to these protests than a matter of race and gangs. I'm sure you all saw – you may have even been broom waivers – I don't know if there are any broom waivers here, but actually, the pageant of broom waiving was just another a very striking and powerful image, which sought to fragment, to divide communities, often actually along the axis of gentrification, and to say that there are respectable decent people here, who are ready to bond against the impact, the destructive and negative effect of mere criminality.

In response to the main criticism that the events where white and middle class, Dan Thompson describes the participants as a "pretty diverse bunch of people" (personal communication, January 12, 2012) while arguing that the cleanups were not about a clear story of "bad rioters and good clean-up people" as the media claimed:

> I mean, my background is, a bit of artist, I've worked with communities through Empty Shops[11] and all that work. But you know 10 years ago, I was a youth worker, working on the streets with young people, and I come from a not very well off council estate background myself. I think people involved are aware of the issues, and I think some of the good will that was mobilized through it is

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[10] As part of the nationwide strikes over public sector cuts, LSE and Kings University lecturers and students came together to organize a teach out on austerity and resistance (LSE Students' Union, 2011).
[11] Founded by Thompson, the Empty Shops Network reuses empty high street shops to "give space to creative industry and social enterprise alike, and add art, culture, community and fun to our high streets" (Thompson, 2011b)

going go to address those issues…I don't think it's as clear cut as there are the were the good guys and the bad guys.

Similarly, in response to a question relating to the causes of the riots in an Twitter interview carried out by Kate Bussmann, @riotcleanup - the Twitter account set up and presumably still managed by a young London musician, Sam Duckworth - replied that "[t]he streets may be clean but the underlying issues must not be swept under the carpet" (2011). Moreover, following Busmann's question relating to the criticism that the events were mainly white and middle class. @riotcleanup argued that:

> In a way it's a fair criticism. I overheard someone in Battersea saying that it was mostly Actors, Musicians and Students, as they were the only folk who didn't have to be at work on a weekday morning.... However come lunchtime the mixture of people was very different as many came out on lunchbreaks... It's also very important to acknowledge the work of the Tottenham support centre ran by the Salvation army. The people visiting this centre were from all ages and backgrounds and was staffed by many locals. It is also hard to tell who donated to the fantastic #helpsiva and #keepaaroncutting campaigns. The media focus was on the first day of sweeping but many worked incredibly hard for months after.

4.6. SUMMARY

Although the protests of 2011 emerged out of a set of complex social and historical conditions, some of the major causes are linked to anger and frustration with the police, growing unemployment and economic marginalization, as well the effect of

the recent cuts imposed by the Tory government. Nevertheless, the protests were interpreted primarily through the lens of criminality, consumerism, morality and technology by the mainstream media and the government. In contrast to the intense hostility expressed against the protests, the riot cleanups received widespread support. The discourse around the cleanups centered on notions of defiance, spatial reclamation, community spirit and national unity.

In the next chapter, I seek to contextualize the protests and the cleanups within the particular histories of Battersea and Hackney, paying detailed attention to planning, housing and demographics changes, while also examining patterns of gentrification and inequality. I also look at how the protests started in both neighborhoods, and describe the particular characters of their cleanups.

Chapter 5: Case Studies Background

5.1. BATTERSEA BACKGROUND

Location and area history

The riot cleanup in Battersea[12] was concentrated around Clapham Junction railway station and Lavender Hill High Street. Battersea is located in the London Borough of Wandsworth, which just south of the River Thames and west of Lambeth.

Figure 1: Map showing where the Battersea and Hackney clean-ups took place
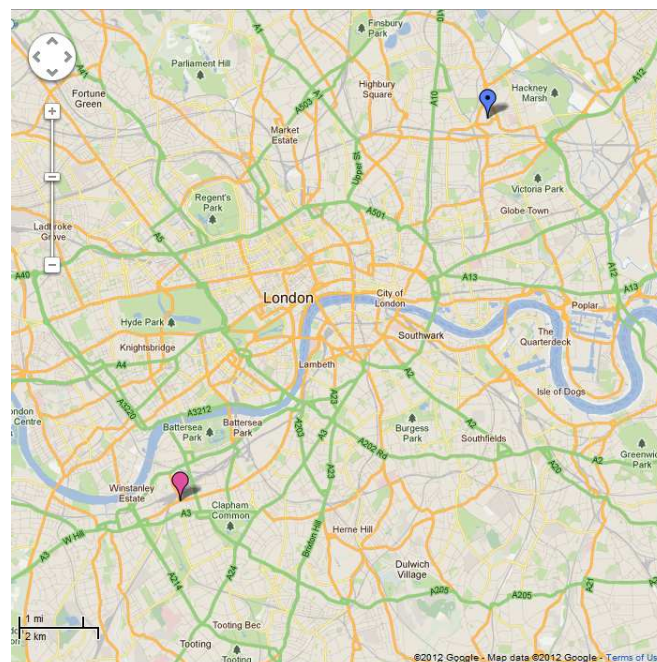
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[12] It is a common misconception that the surrounding area is called Clapham. Clapham proper is one mile to the east of Clapham Junction and is in the London Borough of Lambeth. Battersea is in the London Borough of Wandsworth and has a very different pattern of urban history to its neighbour. The area referred to as 'Between the Commons' is also technically within Battersea.

Before industrialization, Battersea served as agricultural farm land for the city of

London. From the 1840s onwards industry and railways radically altered Battersea.

Large manufacturers established factories on the waterfront. A confluence of railway

lines going south from Victoria and Waterloo drove through Battersea and in 1863 an

interchange railway station was built here. These changes resulted in huge population

growth, growing from 4,000 to 120,000 in fifty years (English Heritage, n.d.)

From the 1880s onwards, Battersea had a reputation for radical politics. John

Burns founded Britain's first socialist party here, reflecting the strong working class

character of the local populace. In 1913 Battersea had London's first black mayor, John

Archer and in 1922 elected Battersea North's first communist MP the Indian born

Shajpuri Saklatvala (Museum of London, n.d.). Battersea has changed hands between the

Labour and Conservative parties over the past fifty years and now is in conservative

hands with Jane Ellison as MP. Moreover, since 1978, the conservatives have had a

majority council since 1978 in the Wandsworth local authority, reflecting the changing

demographics of the area.

Gentrification

In comparison to nearby commuter suburbs of Clapham and Balham, Battersea

was until about 25 years ago a largely working class area. Since the 1980's the

gentrification of Battersea has been significant and high profile, often used by the media

and estate agents to promote the practice capital-wide.

Tim Butler and Garry Robson have carried some of the most extensive research in

the gentrification of 'Between the Commons', which lies immediately south of Clapham

Junction where the riot cleanups took place. Butler and Robson (2001) describe the

privilege that characterizes many of the residents that they interviewed in the area. At the

time of writing in 2001, 24% were privately educated, 85% were university graduates,

10% of which had graduated in Oxbridge. Moreover, 66% were not brought up in

London or South East England, while 73% have fathers who had professional/managerial

jobs. Most residents typically work in central London or the City, with financial services

and media strongly represented (Butler & Robson, 2001, p.2154).

Many women stop working full time once they have children giving the place the

nickname 'nappy valley' (Butler & Robson, 2001; LondonTown, n.d.). Butler and

Robson note how "the atmosphere of the area is pronouncedly female during the day"

(2001, p.2154). Importantly, the authors note how the culture of neighborhood is also

very home-centered. The majority of families interviewed by Butler and Robson (2003)

revealed that their children are privately educated, while only around a quarter allowed

their children to 'play out' unsupervised (although the area is very safe reflecting what

the authors term as the wider privatization of the family [2003]). The middle classes in

Battersea are also "highly bounded in and inward looking" (2003, p.1799), sharing core

lifestyle attributes like sporting. Overall Butler and Robson's respondents tended to be

very satisfied with their local authority and "keen to maintain the area's advantages

through the market" (2003, p.1799).

Indeed, over the last twenty years, Wandsworth has actively pursued policies of

gentrification which have "facilitated not only the process of residential gentrification,

but also the creation of what might be termed the infrastructure of gentrification". The 'regeneration' of Northcote high street is a clear example of this infrastructure, with bars, restaurants, estate agents, bathroom and kitchen shops constituting what is "one of the major satellite areas of consumption in south-west London" (Butler & Robson, 2001, p.2154).

Wandsworth Borough Privatization

If Wandsworth borough provided the "infrastructure of gentrification" (Butler & Robson, 2001, p.2153), Simon James (2011) argues that it was also here where the privatisation of municipal services started in the 1980s. In fact, the first public service privatized was street cleaning. James, who worked in Wandsworth Council, recalls how Michael Heseltine, the conservative Environment Secretary at the time, "paid a highly-publicised visit to Wandsworth in February 1982, and was photographed brandishing a privatised broom" (p.296), echoing Boris Johnson's visit to Battersea during the cleanups.

From 1982 to 1986, the council privatized the housing estate caretaking service, the cleaning and management of public halls, toilets and libraries, estate management, the council's mechanical workshops, litter picking and office cleaning (James, p.297). Neighboring councils like Kensington and Chelsea quickly followed suit, turning Wandsworth council into an example and showcase for privatization[13].

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[13] James (2011) notes how the most famous copycat became Bradford council in 1988, where the Conservative Eric Pickles (with the active encouragement of Conservative ministers) deliberately copied Wandsworth to cut the Council's budget by £50 million, reduce the workforce by a third and privatise services", openly acknowledging his debt to Wandsworth (p.301).

National coalition policies have also affected the council's policies. In 2011, Wandsworth council announced budget cuts of 70 million over four years (Malik, 2011). Notably, the conservative-led council was also involved in pushing for the eviction of Maite de la Calva after her son had been charged during the riots and who has now been jailed for 11 months. The council's decision to evict Calva followed the creation of an e-petition calling for 'rioters' to lose their benefits that was signed by over 100,000 people ("Riots: Benefits", 2011). The threat of eviction was eventually dropped following protests by angered members of the community.

Demographics

Battersea constituency includes a number of wards in the North East corner of Wansdsworth borough. These include the wards of Latchmere, Shaftesbury, Northcote, Balham, Queenstown, St Mary Park and Fairfield. Shaftesbury, Latchmere and Northcote wards all border Clapham Junction where the cleanup took place and constitute its closest neighborhoods. For the purpose of this research, I have compared the demographics of Latchmere (north of the Junction) with Shaftesbury (North-East of the Junction).

Latchmere is the poorest ward of the borough, while Shaftesbury represents one of the wealthier wards. As there are currently no estimates for ethnic group statistics at the ward level[14], I have provided the latest mid-year estimates for the Wandsworth Local Authority, as well as for London and England. Looking at Wandsworth first, the white population is higher (78%) than the London average (69.7%).

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[14] The 2011 Census will be published in July 2012 and will include ward level statistics.

The Shaftesbury ward itself has an even higher white population at 85%, which contrasts to Latchmere whose white population lies below the London average at 63.8%. The black population in Latchmere is 24.4% in contrast to 8.4% in Shaftesbury ward. Moreover, the South Asian population is 4.9% in Latchmere ward compared to 2.6% in Shaftesbury.

Table 1: Latchmere and Shaftesbury Wards, Wandsworth Borough, London and England Ethnic Group Statistics

	Latchmere 2001	Shaftesbury 2001	Wandsworth 2001	Wandsworth Mid-Year Estimate 2009	London Mid-Year Estimate 2009	England Mid-Year Estimate 2009
All people	12596	12464	260380	286600	7,753,600	54,809,100
White (%)	63.8	85	78	77	69.7	87.5
White British	51.7	73.5	64.8	65.7	59.5	82.8
White Irish	2.9	2.9	3.1	2.1	2.2	1.1
White Other	9.3	8.6	10.1	9.2	8	3.6
Mixed (%)	4.8	2.9	4.8	3.2	3.5	1.9
White and Black Caribbean	1.9	0.9	1.9	1	1	0.6
White and Black African	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.2
White and Asian	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	1	0.6
Mixed Other	1.1	0.8	1.1	0.9	1	0.5
Asian or Asian British (%)	4.9	2.6	6.9	8.4	13.2	6
Indian	1.5	1.2	2.9	3.8	6.2	2.7
Pakistani	1.2	0.6	2.1	2.3	2.8	1.9
Bangladeshi	1	0.2	0.4	0.8	2.2	0.7
Other Asian	1.1	0.6	1.6	1.5	2	0.7

Black or Black British (%)	24.4	8.4	9.6	8.1	10.1	2.9
Black Caribbean	10.4	4.9	4.9	3.6	4	1.2
Black African	11.5	2.8	3.9	3.9	5.3	1.5
Black Other	2.5	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.2
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group (%)	2.1	1.1	2.1	3.3	3.5	1.6
Chinese	0.8	0.5	0.9	1.7	1.8	0.8
Other Ethnic Group	1.4	0.6	1.3	1.5	1.7	0.8

Table 1, cont.

Source: Office of National Statistics

Deprivation and Inequality

Although considered to be wealthy, many areas of Battersea rate high on the deprivation index. For example, over 15% of residents in the relatively affluent gentrified neighborhood of 'Between the Commons' (just south of the Junction) have a household income of over £100,000 (Butler & Robson, 2001, p.2149). In contrast, 2.7% of Latchmere ward have been claiming Job Seeking Allowance for over 12 months (Wandsworth Priority area overview, p.15, 2010).

Moreover, Winstanley and York Road Estates were subject to a 'drug exclusion zone' in 2007, and dozens of CCTV[15] cameras were installed (Thompson, 2007). The first map shows inequality within the borough according to the indices of multiple deprivation. Almost half of Latchmere (no.8 on the map) lies in the most deprived 5th of

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[15] In fact, Wandsworth controls more CCTV cameras per person than any other London borough, according to Freedom of information data compiled by campaign group Big Brother Watch in December 2009 (The Guardian, 2010)

areas in England, while around a third of Shaftesbury ward (no.14) lies in the least

deprived fifth of areas in England.

Figure 2: Wandsworth Indices of Multiple of Deprivation Map 2007. Source: Based on Ordinance Survey material, 2008 (Department of Health, 2008).

National deprivation groups

1 Least deprived fifth of areas in England

2

3

4

5 Most deprived fifth of areas in England
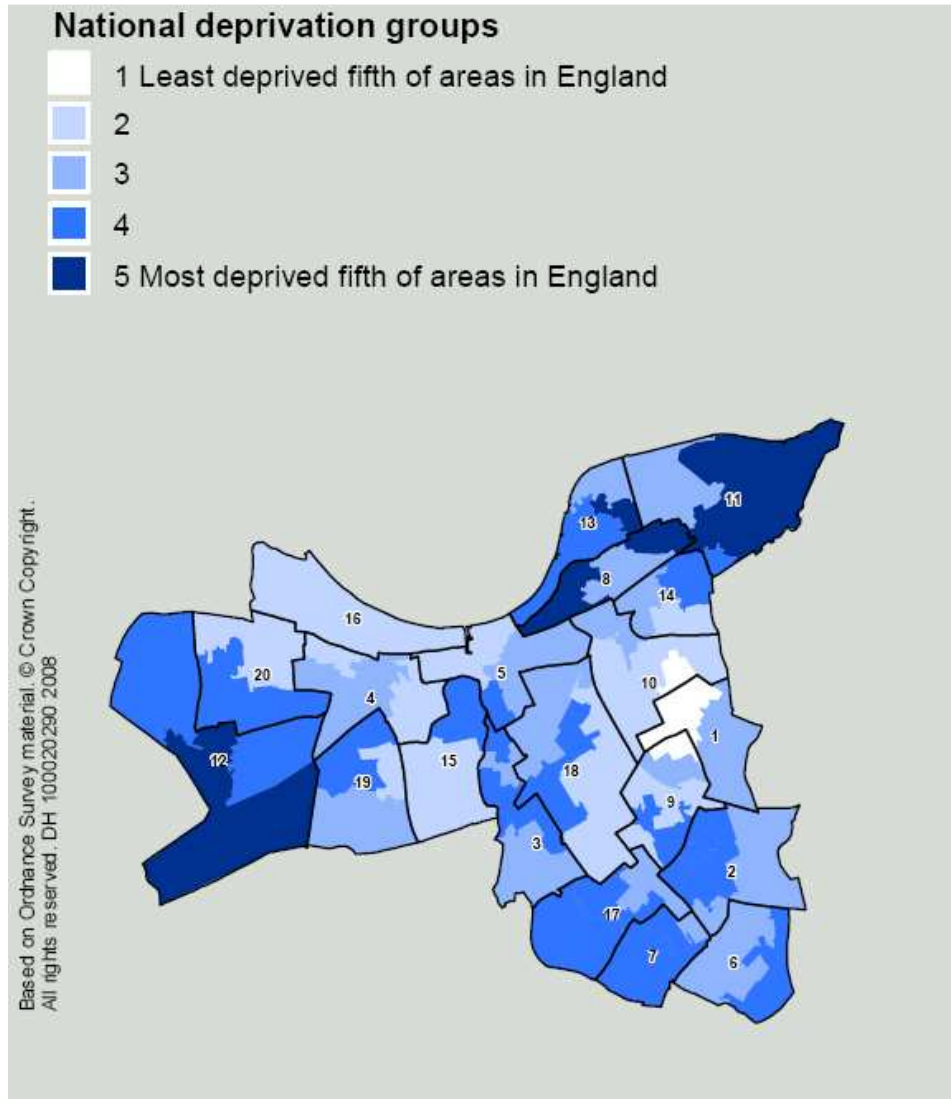
A detailed look at unemployment figures further demonstrates the existent

inequality within the Battersea area and Wandsworth as a whole. The total number of

people claiming Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)[16] in Wandsworth totaled 3.1% in February 2012 which is lower than the London average of 4.4%. The youth unemployment is higher, with 6.1% of all 18-24 year olds claiming JSA, still lower than the London average of 7.8%. Moreover, the total number of people out of work was 9.2% compared to the London average of 12.7% in August 2011 (Nomis, 2012b)[17]. However, a closer look at these statistics at the ward level reveals a wider disparity between neighborhoods. For example, in Latchmere, the percentage of working age people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in February 2012 totaled 6.4%, which is more than twice the Wandsworth average of 3.1% (Nomis, 2012d). In Shaftesbury Ward, the figures are much lower. Only a total of 2.9% of the working population is claiming JSA (Nomis, 2012e).

Finally, according to a study carried out by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) using government statistics (TUC, 2011), there are 643 vacancies for 6316 claimants in Wandsworth, which means that there are almost 9 people chasing each vacancy in Wandsworth (this number will be compared with Hackney).

Police

Like most parts of London, Wandsworth borough has a history of police violence and racism. Notably, 'high excess' stops and searches by the police (where no reason is given for the search of where the stopping is speculative) of black people in Wandsworth

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[16] The Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) is payable to people under pensionable age who are available for, and actively seeking, work (Nomis, 2012d)

[17] Nomis is a service of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) which provides access to most detailed and up-to-date UK labor market statistics from official sources.

totaled 6,164 and 923 for Asians for the year 2008/2009 (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010, p.104).

Battersea Riots

On Monday 8th August, and following riots in Tottenham, Wood Green, Brixton, Enfield, Islington, Waltham Forest, Hackney and Croydon, around three hundred young people gathered outside Battersea's Lavender Hill police station asking officers to come out (Baidoo-Hackman, 2011; "England riots", 2011) . Young people also targeted shops on St John's Road on the corner of Lavender Hill in Battersea (Taylor, Wainwright, Quinn, Walker & Syal, 2011) at around 8.30 p.m. Foot Locker's (shoe shop), Curry's (electronic shop), Carphone Warehouse (mobile phone retailer) and Debenhams shopping center were some of the main targets (James, 2011).

Police officers arrived at around 10.30 p.m. (Taylor et al., 2011), while at midnight the dress shop Party Superstore was set on fire (James, 2011). Most people had dispersed by the time riot police arrived in armored vehicles. This was the third night of riots in England. In London, there were protests in 22 out of the 32 boroughs (The Guardian & The London School of Economics, 2011).

Although the following figures are problematic, particularly because ethnic minorities are much more likely to get arrested by the police, they give a sense of who took part in the protests. According to the most recent (February 2012) Ministry of Justice and Home Office analysis of riot cases, a total of 42 defendants were brought before the courts between the 6th and 9th of August 2011. 31% were white, 40% black, 17% mixed and 12 % had no stated or recorded ethnicity (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

Moreover, an independent report commissioned by Wandsworth Council states that around half of those arrested were Wandsworth residents, while other participants came from neighboring Lambeth or Croydon (Kinghan, 2011). Of the Wandsworth residents, most came from the Battersea, followed by Tooting and Putney areas (Kinghan, 2011).

Battersea Cleanup

On the morning of Tuesday August 9th 2011, hundreds of people from the local area and other parts of London gathered outside Clapham Junction station to clean-up the damaged streets and stores. Although some people had arrived as early as 7.00 a.m., the crowd was cordoned off from most parts of the Junction as the police had designated the area as a 'crime scene' (Noorkabhsh, 2011).

The event was also partially hampered by health and safety rules as volunteers were informed that the council will be doing the majority of the cleaning ("Clean-up begins", 2011). At 2 p.m. and after the police had finished collecting forensic evidence, people were allowed to start with the cleaning in some parts of the Junction.

Figure 3   Figure 4

Figure 3: Battersea cleanup participants waiting. Source: You Tube (the wrongwayaround, 2011)

Figure 4: Boris Johnson visits the Battersea cleanup. Source: You Tube (teabagnose, 2011)

While waiting, the local Sainsbury's donated coffee to volunteers, while people clapped and cheered as police cars drove by ("Clean-up begins", 2011). Famously, the crowd also performed a 'Mexican wave' with their brooms. A photograph of the wave captured by a twitter user who was participating in the cleanup went 'viral' becoming the most iconic photograph of the event. One hour after the photograph was posted online it had received 100,000 views (Phillips, 2011).

During this time, London's conservative mayor Boris Johnson also made a highly publicized visit. Walking towards the crowd still cordoned-off, online videos show participants and residents shouting "where's your broom, where's your broom", while many were booing him. Once he got hold of broom, the crowd started cheering (morning5t4r, 2011). A cyclist who appears to be a local resident is filmed saying:

People want to go down and clean…but they are not allowed to go in there…but

Boris is allowed to…he gets a broom and he raises the broom in the air, a broom

that has never been used. (teabagnose, 2011)

Johnson thanked everyone who came out to clean, calling them the "true spirit of this city" unlike the "looters and the thugs who did so much damage to London last night", adding that it is time "to hear a bit less about the sociological justifications for what is, in my view, is nothing else, than wanton criminality" (SirBrucible, 2011). Throughout his speech, Johnson was repeatedly heckled as residents complained that they had not had enough protection from the police, while questioning the mayor about why it had token him so long to come back from his holidays (Davies, 2011).

Jane Ellison, the conservative MP for Battersea also visited the cleanup. She was filmed by *The Guardian* saying that "people like this…represent the real local community", arguing that the cleanup is linked to a feeling of powerlessness felt by residents the night before ("Clapham Junction cleanup", 2011). In the same video, a woman with "I (heart) Clapham" on her t-shirt is interviewed saying that "… the problem with the rioters is just that more numbers are needed, to tell them that you can't behave like this, you know, we are a capital city in a wonderful country, you can't behave like this" ("Clapham Junction cleanup", 2011).

As seen in Johnsons' visit to the Junction, the cleanup was also a site of debate between different members of the community. A number of arguments were filmed as people fought over the meaning and cause of the riots, while some people were filmed complaining about problems of unemployment, transportation, lack of opportunity and police brutality although it is not clear whether they took part in the cleanup (see Veitch, 2011). For example, the young man photographed talking to Johnson tells him how:

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…there's a reason for everything Boris, think about the number of times you are cutting and cutting and cutting and then putting up youth fees…I have so many friends who want to go to university but have stopped, you are spending hundreds and millions of pounds a week in Libya when you could be over here, sorts yourselves over here first…I'm talking on behalf of the youths…and they don't have anything, take it on board what I'm saying (Illightsealer, 2011)

5.2. HACKNEY BACKGROUND

Location and area history

The riot cleanup operation in Hackney was concentrated around Hackney Central, the historical and administrative center of the borough. The London Borough of Hackney is an inner city borough in North East London, and is roughly five miles from the center of London. It is bounded by Haringay and Islington to the north and west, Tower Hamlets to the south while the River Lea and the Hackney Marsh lands mark its eastern boundary.

Up until the late 18th century, Hackney was a collection of rural villages. Early industrialization came in the form of water powered mills along the River Lea, followed in the 1870s by chemical and plastic manufacturers. A furniture trade moved to Shoreditch in the early 19th century, and many timber yards cropped up on the West bank of the Lea to supply this new industry (Hackney Council, 2011). A familiar pattern of industrialization, expansion of the railways and accompanying population explosion during the Victorian era was seen in Hackney.

Although much of Hackney was neither very wealthy nor poor in the late 19th century and early 20th century according to Charles Booth's study of the East End (1898-99 Map, n.d.) large parts of it did contain slum housing for industrial workers. The London County Council along with housing charities such as the Guinness trust began to re-house people in clearance programs of the 1930s (British History Online, n.d.). Moreover, damage caused in World War II, lack of space, pressure to densify, and new arrivals from inner London and commonwealth countries created a great need for housing. This led to the construction of high-rise tower blocks (of up to 21 storeys), such as the Morland estate (1960) and the Holly Estate (1966). By 1981 its 15 wards had between 15.6 to 94.9% of residents in council housing (British History Online, n.d.).

During the 1970s industrial decline continued as elsewhere in London. Large firms departed Hackney leaving many families without employment in poverty. In 1979 32% of Hackney revealed to be in poverty (British History Online, n.d.). Institutional racism and police brutality, as well as rising unemployment following Thatcher's harsh economic reforms triggered social unrest and in the summerof 1981 riots broke out in Dalston (just west of Hackney Central), Brixton, Wood Green, Southall and elsewhere in the country[18].

As the Tory government continued to make public sector cuts in the 1980s, poor maintenance and neglect in housing estates worsened as council budgets were cut. Pressure to deal with this led Hackney to take extreme action and demolish a number of

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[18] Thatcher's response was to arm police further (water cannons, CS gas, rubber bullets etc) (Berg, 2011) and in 1986 the Public Order Act was passed which gave the police increased power to break up what they deemed as potentially threatening gatherings (Legislation, n.d.)

tower blocks in the late 1980s and early 90s such as the Trowbridge Estate in 1985 and the Holly Street Estate in 1996[19]. It also during this time that Right to Buy Scheme was introduced by the Thatcher government, giving council tenants and some other landlords the right to purchase their homes at a price lower than the full market value. This is one of the most important national policies that led to housing privatization in the UK[20].

By 1995, Hackney Council faced £30 million worth of cuts in public services (Fiskar, 2011b). By the beginning of 2001 and following its official declaration of bankruptcy, the council had closed off the school bus services, several nurseries, seven of the boroughs's 14 libraries, while also auctioning hundreds of commercial and housing properties, doctors surgeries, playing fields, schools youth clubs and swimming pools (Seymour & Panos, 2003). This selling of community properties effectively put the burden of paying the council's debt on Hackney's residents, while benefiting wealthier incomers. House prices have increased by 197% since 2000 (Hackney Coucil, 2010a), while rents increased by more than 25% just in 2011 (MacKinlay, 2011).[21]

Gentrification

In the 1970s, Hackney had pockets of what Damaris Rose (1984) would call marginal gentrification. Butler and Robson (2003) note how these pioneer gentrifiers moved to Hackney often in order to make a political statement about living amongst the

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[19] By 2002 Hackney had demolished 17 tower blocks, setting a new European record for number of towers collapsed in a single borough ("Tower demolition", 2002).

[20] To date, more than 10,000 tenants in Hackney have purchased their homes under the scheme, (Lilleystone, n.d.). According the Hackney Housing Needs Survey of 2008, today around 30% of all Hackney homes are owner occupied (Hackney Council, 2010a).

[21] Figures run from June 2010 to June 2011 and are based on the rental asking price of properties advertised on www.findaproperty.com (MacKinlay, 2011).

dispossessed, or because they were unable to afford the costs of gentrified areas to the west (Butler, 1995, p.193). Stoke Newington, just North West of Hackney Central, became the center of this "counterculture" (Butler, 1995, p.94).

Homeowner gentrification was in "full swing" by the 1980s (Butler, 1995, p.195). Most incomers came from privileged backgrounds. For example, in the mid-1990s, around a quarter of the gentrifiers interviewed by Butler in Stoke Newington and De Beauvoir had graduated from either Oxford or Cambridge. David Ley (1994) describes this "new cultural class" as a "tertiary educated professionals in the arts, media, teaching and academic positions as well as public sector managers in regulatory and welfare activities" (p.56).

In the last ten years, the neighborhoods of Dalston and London Fields — which are immediately west and south of Hackney Central where the riot cleanups took place— have become increasingly gentrified. Condominiums and gated communities are being erected next to some of the poorest housing estates in the country.

However, the cultural and consumption infrastructure of cafes, wine bars, kitchen/ bathroom shops and estate agents that characterize Battersea exists in smaller enclaves in the neighborhoods surrounding Hackney Central. In his 2003 study of London Fields, Butler notes that a 'pioneer' spirit is still visible, while there is a sense that the gentrification narrative is based on the "non-normative and multicultural and, to some extent, risk or 'edge living'" (2003, p.1802)". Yet, the area remains highly divided. This was famously exemplified in May 2010, when a man sunbathing was wounded by bullets

shot in a gang fight in London Fields park. The park itself has become one of the 'trendiest' spots for the young, white middle classes living in East London.

Finally, Hackney is one of the boroughs impacted by London's hosting of the Olympic Games in the summer of 2012. The displacement of residents and the 'cleansing' and militarization of public spaces has been quite obvious. As Ashok Kumar (2012) explains, the process involves a combination of state-led and informal gentrification such as evictions by private landlords.

Coalition Cuts

In October 2010, Hackney Council voted to implement £70 million in cuts, as Communities Secretary Eric Pickles announced the biggest council budgets in recent times (Wellman, 2010). Spending plans for 2011 were approved in March 2011 amid protests outside and inside the town hall. With 11.1% cuts in government funding (TUC, 2011), Government has also capped the cuts in Hackney at a maximum of 8.9%, making it one of the three London boroughs which maxed out at this level ("Hackney riots", 2011)[22].

Notably, Hackney council has cut Children and Young People's services by £10 million, despite the fact the youth unemployment is at its highest (Newman, 2011). However, the budget has been increased in other areas. For example, the council will be

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[22] In contrast, Richmond Council only had to cut its budget by 0.61% ("Hackney riots", 2011; Horton & Reed, 2011).

spending £541,000 for graffiti removal and flyposting[23] up until the Olympics ("Hackney Council", 2011).

Young people in Hackney have also been affected by the tripling of university fees and the scrapping of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of up to £30 a week to support low-income students to stay in school. According to the Hackney Student Deputation statement given in January 2011, more than half (54%) of Hackney's 16-18 year old students were receiving EMA, one of the highest percentages in London (Hill, 2011).

The coalition's introduction of a housing benefit cap in October 2012 will also have devastating consequences in Hackney. The £20,000 annual cap on housing benefits means that the government will only help towards the lowest third of rents in the area (Fiskar, 2011a), leaving the remaining of families the choice of cutting on food to pay the rent or moving out, according to The Chartered Institute of Studies (Ramesh, 2012).

Demographics

The riots principally took place around Mare Street and Clarence road which technically lie in the ward of Hackney Central. Although protesters also came from other parts Hackney, for the purpose of this demographic analysis, I will be looking at this ward in detail, and will also be comparing it to information about Hackney as whole. Once again, there are no estimates for ethnic group statistics at the ward level[24], but I

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[23] Flyposting refers to the activity of placing posters in unauthorized places.
[24] The 2011 Census will be published in July 2012 and will include ward level statistics.

have provided the latest mid-year estimates for the Hackney Local Authority, as well as for London and England.

According to 2009 estimates (see Table 2) Hackney's White population[25] is now estimated to be almost 63%, while its Caribbean population is 7.1%. 9.2% of Hackney's population is estimated Black African, while South Asian residents (mostly from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) constitute 11% of the borough's population. Hackney also has a large Turkish and Kurdish community, currently estimated to be 6%.

In Hackney Central Ward, the White population was lower (52.4%) than the Hackney average according to the 2001 Census (59% in 2001 and 62.7% in 2009). Moreover, the ward has a larger population of Black and Mixed population, with 30% Black, 1.9% White and Black Caribbean and 0.9 % White and Black African.

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[25] Hackney's White population decreased significantly in the post-war years, following middle class movement to suburban counties like Essex. In the 1950s and 1960s, commonwealth migration following the dissolution of the British Empire brought migrants from the Caribbean, Africa and South Asia.

Table 2: Hackney Central Ward, Hackney Borough, London and England Ethnic Group Statistics

	Hackney Central 2001	Hackney 2001	Hackney 2009	London 2009	England 2009
All people	10,291	202,824	216,000	7,753,600	54,809,100
White (%)	52.4	59.0	62.7	69.7	87.5
White British	38.2	44.0	51.1	59.5	82.8
White Irish	3.2	3.0	2.2	2.2	1.1
White Other	11.0	12.0	9.4	8	3.6
Mixed (%)	4.7	4.2	4.2	3.5	1.9
White and Black Caribbean	1.9	1.5	1.4	1	0.6
White and Black African	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.2
White and Asian	0.7	0.8	0.9	1	0.6
Mixed Other	1.2	1.1	1.1	1	0.5
Asian or Asian British (%)	8.1	8.6	11	13.2	6
Indian	3.3	3.8	4.7	6.2	2.7
Pakistani	1.1	1.1	1.8	2.8	1.9
Bangladeshi	2.9	2.9	3	2.2	0.7
Other Asian	0.8	0.8	1.5	2	0.7
Black or Black British (%)	30.9	22.2	18.2	10.1	2.9
Black Caribbean	13.3	10.0	7.1	4	1.2
Black African	14.2	12.0	9.2	5.3	1.5
Black Other	3.4	2.0	1.9	0.8	0.2
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group (%)	3.3	3.2	4	3.5	1.6
Chinese	1.2	1.2	2.3	1.8	0.8
Other Ethnic Group	2.1	2.0	1.7	1.7	0.8

Source: Office of National Statistics

Deprivation and inequality

Hackney is the second poorest local authority in England, according to the latest Indices of Multiple of Deprivation published in March 2011(Department of Communities and Local Government, 2011). The map below shows the distribution of Small Output Areas (SOA's) across the borough. Hackney Central Ward, which is one of the wards were the protests and riot cleanup were concentrated, has four SOAs that are part of the

10% most deprived areas nationally, and 3 SOAs of the 20% most deprived areas

nationally. 28 of the least deprived SOAs nationally represent around 20% of the total

borough. These areas are scattered principally on the mid-Western part of the borough,

particularly in the heavily gentrified De Beauvoir and Stoke Newington and Shoreditch

neighborhoods.

Figure 5: Hackney Indices of Multiple Deprivation Map 2010. Source: Indices of
Deprivation, CLG 2010. Map created by Hackney Council (2010b).
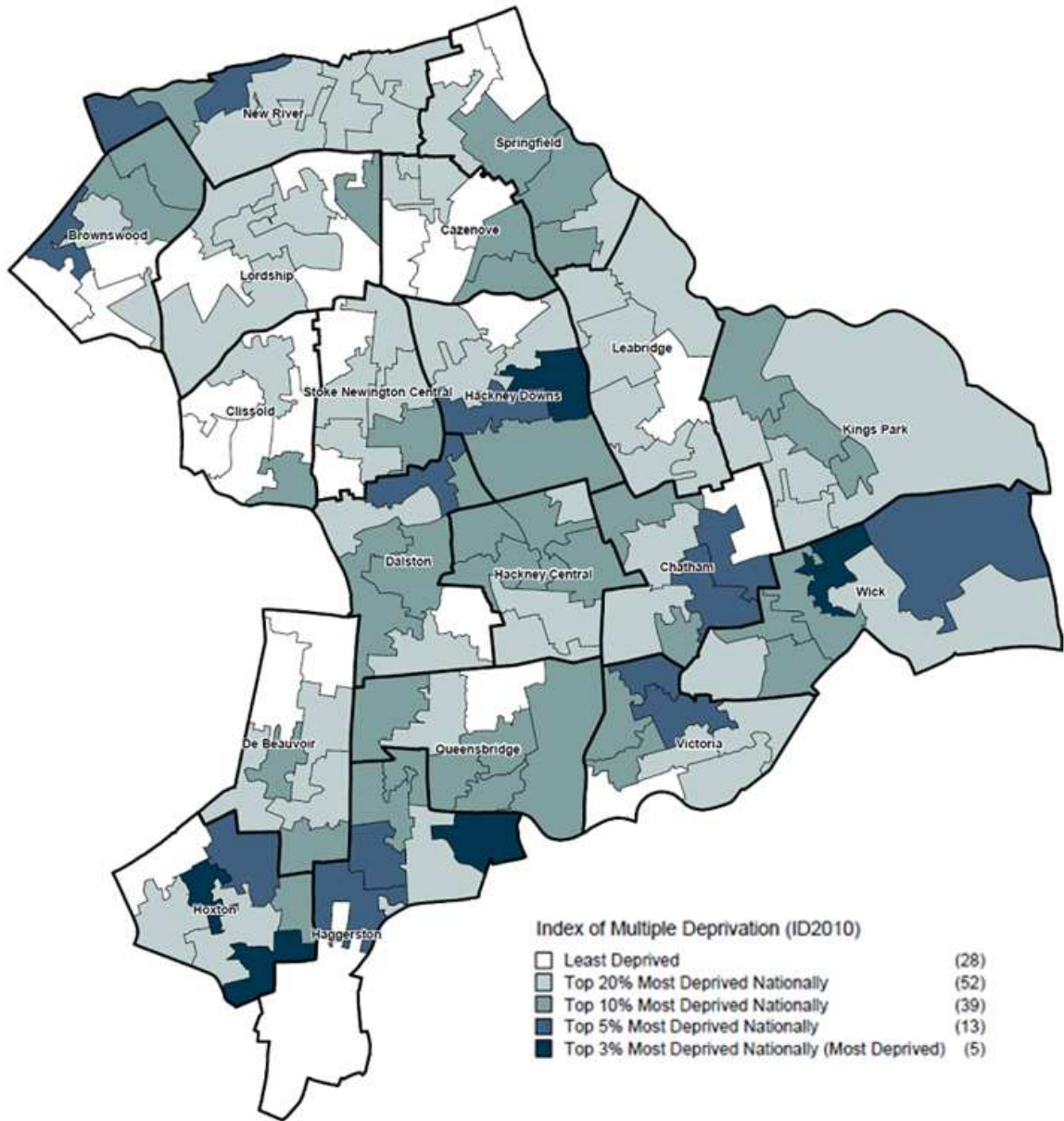
Unemployment in Hackney is significantly higher than London as a whole. Compared to the London average of 4.2%, Hackney's working-age population[26] on Job-Seeker's Allowance is 7.3% ("Hackney riots", 2011; Nomis, 2012a)[27] according to the latest figures published in 2012 by the Office of National Statistics. Youth unemployment is even higher with 10.6% of young people aged 18-24 claiming Job Seekers Allowance. In contrast, the average youth unemployment in London was 7.8% in February 2012. The total percentage of 16-64 year olds out of work[28] and on various benefits was 19.5% in August 2011, compared to the London average of 12.7%.

The statistics of Hackney Central Ward reveal an even wider disparity. A total of 8.3% of 16-64 year olds and 18.3% of 18-24 year olds were claiming Job Seekers Allowance in February 2012 and 28.3 % of all unemployed have been claiming JSA for over 12 months. The total number of people out of work is 21.1%, higher than the Hackney average (Nomis, 2012c).

Hackney is also among the 10 places in the UK where jobs are hardest to come according to the TUC, who used government figures published in August 2011. More specially, in March 2011, 26 people were chasing each available vacancy in Hackney. In Haringey where the riots started, the number is 29 for each vacancy (TUC, 2011).

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[26] 16-24.

[27] The UK rate of unemployment is 8.4% the highest it has been since 1995 (Rogers, Evans & Sedghi, 2012).

[28] 'Key out-of-work-benefits' or the total number of people out of work includes the groups: job seekers, ESA and incapacity benefits, lone parents and other on income related benefits.

Police

Like Tottenham, Hackney has a history of police brutality, most famously remembered in the suspicious death of Colin Roach outside Stoke Newington Station in 1983. Moreover, Hackney has historically been portrayed as a 'challenging place to police'[29]. The Hackney Siege in 2002 demonstrates this. This was a siege that lasted 15 days (the longest in British police history), as the squads of paramilitary police were deployed and shut down several streets in an attempt to arrest 'yardie gangster' Eli Hall (29) who was suspected of possessing illegal firearms. More than 40 residents were unable to leave their homes for a fortnight after Boxing Day ("In pictures", 2003; Seymour and Panos, 2003), while the siege resulted in Hall's death.

Hackney stop and search numbers also show that particularly black and Asian people get routinely checked. 'High excess' stops and searches (where no reason is given for the search of where the stopping is speculative) of black people in the borough totaled 7,556 and 577 for Asian for the year 2008/2009 (Equality and Human Rights Commission, p.104).

Hackney Riots

The riots in Hackney were sparked after a large group of police stopped, searched and detained two men against the wall of Hackney's Old Town Hall building on Mare Street (Hill, 2011). At 5 p.m., crowds gathered in Pembury estate after having been moved on from Mare Street and London Fields where a few shops had been targeted

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[29] For example, in 2004, Her Majesty Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) described Hackney as "one of the most challenging policing environments in the country" (Dann & Hinchliff, 2009). The current discourse emphasizes how the borough has experienced a huge reduction in reported crime (Dann & Hinchliff, 2009).

(Gabbatt & Adams, 2011). Protesters – men and women – set up makeshift roadblocks made of wheelie bins and metal fencing, setting them on fire to create a boundary between them and the police (Lewis & Khalili, 2011). At this point protests were primarily directed at the police (Gabbatt & Adams, 2011). For a while, police and protesters were lining up at opposite ends of Clarence Road in Hackney, while at times, protesters also fought by throwing sticks, Molotov bottles, bricks and branches to the police (Gabbatt & Adams, 2011). But in general, the crowd mostly targeted solitary police vans, unguarded shops and bus shelters (Lewis & Khalili, 2011). After around 9.30 p.m., a dozen police on horses arrived and started pursuing protesters through Hackney Downs Park.

Throughout the protests, videos show numbers of protesters and bystanders being beaten by the police, with dogs set on them, while many where trapped on the street and not allowed to go home. A young black man who had a dog set on him and his head truncheoned by the police on Sylvester road, was filmed by *The Guardian* saying the following about the police (Domokos & Smith, 2011):

> You see half of the people in this community have all got a story to tell about the fucking police, and individual brutality…so when they come out on our streets and try and tell us we must do what we're told, and we're all together…we ain't going nowhere, and the only thing they can do is answer our questions with violence…I got a dog set on me, I got a dog set on me, like I'm an animal!...I live down the road! And I'm not allowed to go back to my home, but the two white people there, the two yuppies on the bikes, they're allowed to go home…watch it,

I'm going to try and go home now [he is not allowed by the police] Remember, shop, consume, do as your told and you'll be safe [shouts to people around]

In an unedited video interviews with *Dazed Digital* on the evening of the riots, a young man from the area stressed that the protesters are crying for help and not trying to destroy their environment: "these politicians, they are political gangsters.. the government has taken everything away…from them…so what do you want them to do?" ("Voices on the street", 2011). In another interview, another man tells the interviewer not to racialize the uprisings:

It's not a racial thing…not it's not a black movement, please don't you ever twist it that way, what it is…is basically it's injustice, a person has been shot who never had a gun, yeah, then they try to smooth it over as what they show… and what they perceive to be as news… we want to know what happens on our doorstep, and they are not showing us that…so when they coming to us and they telling us a whole load of nonsense, that oh they are waiting for an investigations and all that…if it was a white man, that would have been done - he got killed today, they would have found out who done it by tomorrow…("Voices on the street", 2011)

In response to a questions about living conditions he continues by saying

Yes it's all that…if we had jobs, you know, we would be in our houses relaxing and chill, but we are suffering same way…while they are sitting down there on holiday…we don't get no money to get to that level you understand? ("Voices on the street", 2011)

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Finally, a last interviewee stresses the need for housing in Hackney and how things will get worse with the cuts:

> it's not about right or wrong, it's just revolution, I think that killing sparked off the mobilization…it's difficult… especially…in London, you don't see people together, people are usually in little cells, or by themselves individually, so maybe it's not expected that people will join forces in this way…I don't think this is the end of this, it's only get worse when the benefits are cut, like I say I work with homeless people, and the benefits are cut next year, and people's houses are…it's like the very…essence, a human need…it's terrifying, but it's also terrifying that so many people have no home, it's a lost generation… ("Voices on the street", 2011)

Finally, according to the Ministry of justice figures from February 2012, there were a total of 82 protesters from Hackney brought to court. Nineteen (23%) were white, 31 (38%) were black, 8 were from mixed backgrounds (10%) and 21 had no ethnicity stated or recorded (26%) (Ministry of Justice, 2012). Once again, it is important to remember that these figures are biased to the extent that ethnic minorities are more likely to get arrested by the police. Moreover, compared to other areas, a lot more women were seen taking part in the protests.

Hackney Riot Cleanup

On Tuesday August 9th 2011, around 200 people (Davies, Topping, Ball & Sample, 2011) gathered outside Hackney Town Hall at 10.00 a.m. Sitting on top of the

stairs, a young white man in his mid-20s or 30s spoke to the crowd. He was filmed by journalist McDevitt (2011) giving the following speech:

> …amazingly pleased and overjoyed at how many of us arrived and turned up here, thank you so much for coming. There are people from all over London here [clapping and cheering]. The main reason for coming here I believe, I felt, was help the beleaguered shopkeepers here, help them tidy up, help them clear the shops, most of the shutters are down…there's talk form the police about whether it's gonna come up, the hackney council up is going to let us know as of when we can help out…and we can check out their website or follow their tweeter feed to find that out. At the moment the streets are looking amazing and it was refreshing to wake up this morning and to…[loud clapping and cheering]. That's partly due to local residents sweeping glass, but huge huge thank you to the council who came to work at 3 o'clock this morning to wash everything, clear the glass, move everything, there's a few burned out cars they are going to be moved…In the meantime, how can we be useful? Clapham is in a state and they are letting people help out there. So in about an hour's time a lot of us are going to head down to Clapham and Croydon, where we can use our brooms and actually do some good there….

Figure 6: Riot cleanup participants checking their phones at Hackney Town Hall (McDevitt, 2011b)

The borough's rector, Father Rob Wickham told the crowd to "reclaim these streets" and walk to Clarence road, where the protests took place the day before (Davies et al., 2011). There, the group held a two-minute of silence and started to clean the remains of two torched cars. The event mainly took place on Clarence road, near the Pembury Estate. Most of the cleaning also seems to have taken place around the Clarence convenience store that was targeted in the riots the day before. Lizzie Davies (In Jones, Wells & Owen, 2011) from *The Guardian* who was there reported just before 9.a.m:

> The clean-up here is well under way — men are scrubbing the green graffiti 'fuck the pigs' off the shutters — but the real damage will clearly not go away so easily

At 9:43 a.m. she also reported being outside Hackney town hall, describing how people have come from all over London for the #riotcleanup which was publicized on

Twitter (Jones et al.,2011). People from outside of Hackney central had come from places including Dalston (still in Hackney), Finsbury Park (in neighboring borough Islington) and Hampstead (a wealthy neighborhood in North West London).

Davies adds that the volunteers have "come up against an unexpected problem: the clean-up's already been done. The streets in the area have been hosed down, the glass swept up and bins re-erected in their proper places." Rick from Hampstead had come "to get involved, to play my part" while Andrew Knight from Finsbury Park said that "finally my moral conscience has woken up" after 10 years of living in London (Jones et al., 2011). George Sandison, an editor from a publishing company who had taken the morning off said that "it's nice to be useful" (Jones et al., 2011)

5.3. SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have provided socioeconomic data that reveals patterns of inequality and gentrification in Battersea and Hackney – trends that tend to be erased from the discourse and everyday discussions about the protests and the cleanups. I have also provided detailed demographic information regarding ethnicity, which is a crucial factor in shaping the way in which various groups were represented during the protests and the cleanups. Finally, I have attempted to paint a short portrait of the types of gentrifiers that may be found in both neighborhoods: the different compositions of these new arrivals in the neighborhoods help explain why the cleanups took on different characters in different places. In the next chapter, I focus on analyzing photographs of the cleanups in Battersea and Hackney.

Chapter 6: Analysis

6.1. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF PHOTOGRAPHS

The table below documents my collection and analysis of riot clean up photos in Battersea and Hackney Central. As explained in the methodology chapter, the methodology of counting and categorizing various elements of photographs is limiting and problematic for a number of reasons. However, it was important for me to systematically document elements of the photographs that are central to the dominant discourse surrounding the riots. For example, and as explored in my background chapter, proponents and participants of the cleanups stress that the cleanups are 'diverse', with people from 'all races and backgrounds'. In other words, I acknowledge that my categories, particularly relating to demographics, may be problematic in reproducing normative and socially constructed systems of categorization. However, I attempt to use this crude synthesis of numbers as an *entry point* into interpreting the multiple meanings behind the cleanup within their larger social context, and within larger relations of power. The following table (Table 3) is based on my analysis of a total of 66 photographs, including:

- 14 newspaper photographers from a total of 6 newspapers for Battersea
- 27 social media photographs for Battersea
- 7 newspaper photographs from a total of 5 newspapers for Hackney
- 17 social media photographs for Hackney

For Battersea, I found photographs of the event posted on the websites of following newspapers:

- *The Sun*

- *The BBC*

- *The Guardian*

- *The Daily Mail*

- *The Evening Standard*

- *The Telegraph*

For Hackney, I found photographs on the websites of the following papers:

- *Telegraph*

- *The Evening Standard*

- *The Londonist*

- *The Hackney Citizen*

- *The Sun*

For both Battersea and Hackney, 'social media photographs' refer to photographs found on social media websites, and usually taken by amateur photographers who were either at the scene and/or participated in the event. The vast majority of these photographs were from the photo-sharing website *Flickr.* The highlighted cells point to categories in which there is a large discrepancy in the frequency in which a certain element was photographed and published in newspapers as compared to social media websites.

Table 3: Quantitative analysis of riot cleanup photograph taken in Battersea and Hackney.

	BATTERSEA		HACKNEY	
	Newspaper photographs	Social media photographs	Newspaper photographs	Social Media photographs
CLEANING				
% photographed not Cleaning	93%	74%	70%	41%
% photographed cleaning	7%	26%	30%	59%
% photographed with brooms	58%	28%	42%	37%
% photographed with dust pans	1%	5%	10%	13%
% photographed with bin bags	4%	15%	3%	12%
% photographed with gloves	31%	28%	30%	24%
% of which are marigold gloves	59%	50%	38%	38%
% of which are garden gloves	31%	20%	13%	36%
% of which are disposable blue gloves	6%	17%	6%	9%
GENDER				
% women photographed	63%	49%	55%	53%
% men photographed	37%	51%	45%	47%
RACE				
% white people photographed	85%	91%	88%	84%
% black people photographed	15%	8%	12%	11%
INTERSECTION OF GENDER & RACE				
% white women photographed	50%	47%	47%	43%
% black women photographed	13%	2%	8%	10%
% white men photographed	35%	44%	42%	45%
% black men photographed	2%	6%	3%	2%

Race and gender

My analysis of photographs from Battersea and Hackney confirms the common criticism that the cleanups were predominantly white. In the case of Battersea, national newspaper photographs show about 85% of the participants as being white. Comparing this to the statistics of Shaftesbury Ward where Clapham Junction is located, I noticed that the white population was also 85% according to the 2001 census (see Table 1 in Chapter 5). Moreover, the 2009 year estimates of Wandsworth's borough population suggest that about 78% of residents are white. However, in the Latchmere Ward which is just north of Shaftebury, the white population was only 63% in 2001 (see table 3). In other words, the high number of white participants seems to be representative of many but not all geographic areas surrounding Clapham Junction. The high number of white participants also contrasts with the official figures of the young people who took part in the protests as outlined in in Chapter 5: according to early Ministry of Justice figures of those arrested 31% were white, 40% were black, 17% were mixed and 12% had no stated or recorded ethnicity (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

In the case of Battersea, my study of photographs also confirms my initial observation that women, particularly white women, were made more visible than both men and black women in the national press. More specifically, almost two thirds of all newspaper photographs have captured women engaged in the cleanups. On the other hand, the social media photographs reveal an almost equal ratio between men (49%) and women (51%). Looking at the intersection of race and gender, I calculated that around 50% of total participants were white women in the photographs published in newspapers,

while 13% were black. Amateur photographs tell a slightly different story, showing that only around 2% of women photographed were black with again almost half being white women (47%).

Looking at particular examples, the photographs of a number of women were repeatedly published, especially on the website of tabloid or popular newspapers like *The Sun*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Telegraph*. Most of these 'poster' girls' (Bates, 2011), are seen wearing t-shirts, inscribed with words of love for Battersea or Clapham, and hate against the 'looters'.

Other Slogans include "Looters are scum", "I (heart) London", "London hate looters", "I love Clapham" and "(heart) London #riotcleanup" (the last one was inscribed on the back of a man's t-shirt). Moreover, amateur photographs show a large number of men and women wearing a small sticker expressing love for their postcode. However, and contrary to my expectation, the ratio of women to men seems to be more balanced when comparing newspaper photographs to social media photographs, suggesting that men did play an important role in the cleanups.

Black women also tend to be more represented in newspapers (13%) than in social media photographs (2%). This is particularly true for *the BBC*, *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*. This can be explained perhaps as an attempt to counterbalance the conception of the cleanups as distinctively white events.

In Hackney, newspapers photographs on average show about 88% of the riot cleanup participants as white and around 12 % as black. Amateur photographs don't differ very much, with around 84% of the photographed participants being white and

11% black. A number of South Asian young men were also photographed during the minute of silence staged on Clarence Street before the riot cleanup began. In stark contrast, the Central Hackney Ward statistics from the 2001 census show that 33% of residents are black, and only 52% white. As seen earlier, the Hackney-wide numbers for 2009 are only slightly higher, with almost 63% of the population being white which reflects a rise of 4% since 2001.

As mentioned earlier, the Ministry of Justice figures of those who participated in the protests reveal that around 23% were white and 38% black, 10% were from mixed backgrounds 26% had no ethnicity stated or recorded (Ministry of Justice, 2012). Once again it is important to note that these numbers tend to be distorted in that black men are disproportionately likely to get arrested by the police. Here, I interpret the high number of white participants as being linked to the gentrified geography of Hackney and by the fact that many volunteers came from other parts of London. In the next section I will explore in further detail how I understand the visualization of class and whiteness in the case of Hackney.

Figure 7   Figure 8

Figure 7: Hackney riot cleanup. Source: *Flickr* (Carrasco, 2011)[30]

Figure 8: Hackney riot cleanup. Source: *Flickr* (stephbosset, 2011a)

While the contrast is not as high, in Hackney, more than half (55%) of the

participants captured in the newspaper photographs appear to be women. The number is

only slightly lower in amateur photographs, with around 53% of subjects being women.

However, at the intersection of gender and race, almost half of all participants

photographed (47%) and published in newspapers are white women, with only 8% out of

the total participants being black women. Amateur photographs capture on average

around 10% of all subjects as black women, and 43% as white women, revealing only a

small discrepancy.

Cleaning practices and objects

One of the most striking features of the way in which the Clapham Junction

cleanups were photographed by the press is the absence of people cleaning. I only found

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[30] Caption reads: "London Riots Cleanup (Mare Street and Clarence Road). Text above photograph includes "After 3 days of looting and riots in several boroughs in London, Twitter and Facebook users have organized themselves to clean up the mess left by a few" (Carrasco, 2011).

one online photograph in a big national newspaper (The Daily Mail), showing around 7 women and 6 men (all white) sweeping a street which appears to be near the Junction (I will be analyzing this photo in the next section). The rest of the photographs published in national newspapers portray the majority of participants (around 93%) performing an activity other than cleaning. In Clapham Junction, this includes the photograph of the broom wave that went 'viral' through Twitter and subsequently incorporated into newspaper's depiction of the event, revealing the blurry line between amateur and newspaper photography.

Figure 9: Battersea riot cleanup. Source: Mail Online (Bayles, 2011)[31]

Other activities captured in newspaper photographs include people standing with brooms in the air or in front of their legs, simply standing, walking and looking ahead, posing for photographs, checking their phone, drinking tea and writing slogans on t-shirts.

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[31]Caption reads: "Clean sweep: Brooms at the ready, people brought together through Twitter gather to clear up Clapham Junction, devastated in the riots last night" (Bayles, 2011)

In contrast, the photographs found primarily on *Flickr* capture around one quarter of the participants cleaning. In many cases what appears to be cleaned or swept is small pieces of glass, while in other photographs there is nothing visible on the floor. Other things being swept include paper, plastic and litter. The majority of photographs capture people sweeping pavements, curbs or streets, while a few show participants picking or sweeping up pieces of glass inside shops.

Although this could be partly because newspaper editors ask for certain types of photos that fit the editorial format, readership and stance of the newspaper, the *Flickr* photographs paint a much richer picture of what other activities were taking place apart from cleaning. For example, photographs include staff members of Starbucks coffee shop offering free coffee and tea to the cleanup volunteers, while other shops were offering sweets and cakes. One photograph shows a muscular man attaching Union Jack bunting flags across Lavender Hill Street where the main crowd was standing before being allowed to go into the 'crime-designated' area, suggesting once again that men played an important role in the representation of the cleanups. Moreover, the display of flags underscores the presence of national symbols in the cleanups.

Figure 10   Figure 11

Figure 10: Battersea riot cleanup. Source: *Flickr* (Herring 2011, 2011)[32]

Figure 11: Battersea riot cleanup. Source: *Flickr* (linniekin, 2011)[33]

In terms of objects used whether in the act of cleaning, in anticipation of cleaning or symbolically, I observed that on average newspapers showed more than half (58%) of the volunteers using a broom in one form or another. Social media photographs capture around half of this number (28%), suggesting the way in which newspapers capitalized on the symbolic value of the broom. As noted Chapter 4, commentators and participants described the broom explicitly a symbol of 'hope', 'defiance' and 'civilization'. However, this might also be explained by the nature of press photographers' job, as they are encouraged to take dramatic pictures.

Social media photographs also show more people using dustpans (5% compared to 1% as observed in newspapers photographs). Plastic black bin bags are also seen in higher frequency in the social media photographs (15%) compared to (4%). However, the

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[32] Caption reads: "Post Riot Cleanup: Jack draws cheers. In the clean up after rioting in Clapham, a man hangs the British flags across the street to wild cheers from the crowd". © Matthew James Herring 2011
[33] Caption reads: "Clapham Junction Clean-up".

number of people photographed wearing gloves almost equals 30% for both categories. Within the glove category, I observed that the majority of people were photographed by the press wearing yellow marigold gloves (59%), followed by garden gloves (31%) and disposable blue gloves (6%). The numbers varied a little in Flickr photographs, with 50% of people wearing gloves photographed wearing marigold gloves, 20% garden and 17% blue disposable gloves.

In Hackney, around 30% of participants are seen cleaning, according to my observations of newspaper photographs. In contrast, almost 60% of participants are captured cleaning in social media photographs. Once again, this points to the symbolic value of the cleanups and the way in which newspapers chose to make the non-cleaning body more visible. When people were not photographed cleaning by the press, they are seen walking, posing for photographs, standing in a circle for the minute of silence and holding hands, and congregating and waiting in front of Hackney Town Hall. Social media photographs show people, standing, looking, talking, drinking coffee, taking pictures, getting organized, holding hands, walking with brooms and smiling.

Figure 12   Figure 13

Figure 12: Minute of silence on Clarence Road. Source: *Flickr* (stephbosset, 2011b)

Figure 13: Cleanup participants walking on Mare Street. Source: *Flickr* (Carrasco, 2011)[34].

Nevertheless, the photographs which show people cleaning in Hackney portray a different picture than that in Clapham Junction. First of all, most of the cleaning seems to be concentrated around one spot in which a car was burned. What is photographed as being cleaned is a mixture of a black and muddy ash and car debris. Around 42% of participants are photographed using brooms by the press. This number is only slightly lower (37%) for the social media photograph suggesting consistency in representation.

Almost the same number of people were photographed using dust pans (10% by newspapers and 13% by amateur photographers), although this number is more than double of that observed in Clapham Junction. The number of people photographed using bin bags averages to 3% in newspaper photographs and to four times as much in social media ones.

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[34] Caption reads: "London Riots Cleanup Hackney (Mare Street and Clarence Road)" (Carrasco, 2011b)

Finally, almost a third of participants are photographed wearing gloves by the press (30%), while the number is slightly lower for social media photographs (24%). The number of people photographed wearing marigold gloves averages to 38% for both newspaper and social media photographs. However, there is a relatively large discrepancy in the representation of garden gloves, as only 13% of participants are photographed wearing them by the press, compared to 36% by amateur photographs. The frequency of disposable blue gloves varies slightly, with an average of 6% of participants photographed wearing them by the press, and 9% by amateur photographers. These discrepancies in the use of gloves are not particularly significant for my research. What is more important, especially for the next section, is documenting the different types of gloves used and the potential symbolism they have attached to it.

To summarize, through my analysis of 66 photographs from Battersea and Hackney, it appears that the majority of participants were white. This contrasts with the multiracial background of the protesters in both Hackney and Battersea. Moreover, while particularly white women tend to be overrepresented in newspaper photographs, social media pictures reveal that men played more or less an equivalent role in the cleanups.

In terms of cleaning patterns, most news photographs of Hackney and Battersea privilege the representation of participants who are engaged in activities other than cleaning, although most of the time this also involves the use of objects. Newspaper photographs also seem to make the most out of the symbolic power of brooms, while photographs from across news and social media show that marigold gloves were

prominent in use. Finally, in Battersea, the body is visibly used as a site of inscription for feelings of love and hate.

The findings and analysis presented above raise certain questions around the body's relationship with artifacts (including paint/ink), the gendered performance of bodies and the wider production of whiteness. I seek to examine these themes further through a deep, semiotic and discursive analysis of a few photographs as 'text.'

6.2. NEWSPAPER CONTEXT

Methodology review

As explored in Chapter 2, I draw on the work of Stuart Hall (1997), Roland Barthes (1977), Judith Butler (1988; 1993; 1995) and Foucault (1990), in thinking through how meaning is produced through signifying practices that are connected to larger questions of power/knowledge. First, I provide a description of all the key 'signs' in the photographs, i.e. what elements the photographs *denote*. This is the first level of signification (Barthes, 1977). In the second level of analysis, I seek to explore what some of these signs may *connote*. As noted in Chapter 2, I use the distinction of signifier and signified as an entry point of discussion to explore how the two may be interconnected. Importantly, by drawing on Butler's (1988) theory of performativity, I am attentive to how signifying practices enact or generate that which they also name (Butler, 1993).

Context of photographs

I have chosen four photographers for my analysis. The two Battersea photographs are from The *Mail Online* (the online version of *The Daily Mail*), while the Hackney ones are from the *Telegraph.co.uk.*

The *Mail Online* is regularly the most visited UK newspaper site, registering almost 4.5 million average unique browsers in August 2011 (McAthy, 2011), surpassing the *Guardian.co.uk* by around 1.5 million. It also surpassed the New York Times as the most visited newspaper site in the world, drawing 52 million unique visitors a month January 2012 (Collins, 2012). In print, it is the second most widely circulated paper after *The Sun*. Founded in 1896 by Lord Northcliffe and now owned by British Media conglomerate *Daily Mail and General Trust plc,* the paper is a middle-market tabloid. Lauren Collins recently published an article in *The New Yorker*, arguing that the paper is the most powerful in Britain while not necessarily supporting any political party. Instead, as an editor told her,

> "The paper's defining ideology is that Britain has gone to the dogs." Nor is the
> *Mail* easy to resist. Last year, its lawyers shut down a proxy site that allowed
> liberals to browse Mail Online without bumping up its traffic. (Collins, 2012,
> para.2)

In August 2011, *Telegraph.co.uk* was the third most-visited UK newspaper site after Mail *Online* and *Guardian.co.uk*, registering over two million average unique browsers (McAthy, 2011). The newspaper is conservative-leaning and was founded by army officer and travel writer Arthur Sleigh in 1855 and is currently owned by the billionaire Barclay brothers.

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Despite these distinctions between online newspapers, I noticed that media is used in a complicated way by users, especially in times of a big event like the riots. From my experience, web users circulate and read a wide variety of articles online; this is particularly true in the circulation of online picture galleries.

Moreover, as noted throughout this research, news organizations from a variety of political ideologies provided widespread support for the riot cleanups. In other words, while distinctions between newspapers are visible, the meta-messages about the riot cleanups, and the way the cleanups are able to transmit these messages through the media, are arguably the same in many cases. In a Foucauldian sense, different representations of the riot cleanups can be said to operate within the same regime of truth (Foucault, 1980).

6.3. THE CLEANING BODY

Photograph 1: Battersea

Posted on the *Daily Mail* website on the afternoon of August 10, 2001, this is one of the very few photographs published in national newspapers showing people cleaning in Battersea. The caption reads "[c]lapham clean-up: Volunteers don rubber gloves to sweep the streets and pick up broken glass following the riots in the London suburb", while the overall article is entitled "#RiotWombles on the march: 200 rioters caused this mayhem…500 offer to clean up mess" (McDermott & Jaffray, 2011). The article represents *Mail Online's* principal news coverage of the events around the country. No information is provided about the author of this particular photograph.

Figure 14: Battersea riot cleanup, St John's Road. Source: *Mail Online* ("Clapham clean-up", 2011).

At the denotative level, this photograph shows eleven people engaged in cleaning the road of a high street. The majority (seven) appear to be women. Five people are seen holding household and deck brooms, some using them to sweep the floor, while six of them are wearing gloves. The majority of the gloves are yellow marigold gloves, while someone is seen wearing pink gloves and a woman appears to be wearing what seems like brown garden gloves. Two volunteers are squatting or leaning down on the floor sweeping something with a dustpan and brush, while three large black bin bags are also

used to dispose of what is being swept. Although nothing is visible in the photograph, the caption informs the viewer that this it is broken glass that is being swept.

All the people photographed are white. While some people are wearing trainers or 'comfortable'/'everyday' clothes, others appear in semi-leisurely clothes. Around six to ten other people seem to be watching the cleaning. They are most likely bystanders, local residents or local shop owners. A professional cameraman is seen walking in the back while a most likely amateur photographer faces his back to the viewer of the photograph, as he photographs the scene himself. In the background, two green trucks can be seen. These are probably the Wandsworth council's waste management trucks.

In terms of shops, I was able to see that the green sign on the left is the sign of an upscale/posh supermarket chain, Waitrose. This showed me that the cleaning was taking place on St John's Road, just south of Clapham Junction. The pink shop is a Recipease, celebrity chef Jamie Oliver's "food and kitchen shop where everyone can learn to cook and make great food"[35] (Recipease, 2012). Oliver revealed on his *Tweeter* account that the Clapham Junction shop was not targeted, writing: "My cookery school was in the thick of Clapham riot but seems there not interested in reading or cooking as Waterstones & Resipease go left…" (Britten, 2011). Behind the Waitrose are an O2 mobile phone shop and a pharmacy.

On the connotative level of analysis, this photograph represents the cleaning body as leisurely, and white. While there are more women than men, I would not consider this

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[35] Jamie Oliver, originally from Essex, has mass appeal in the UK. He used to call himself the 'naked chef' because his recipes were all about 'simple proper food' with fresh ingredients. However, his shops would probably cater to the posh market.

a photo that privileges the representation of women in the riot cleanups, given other examples that are more obvious. However, this coming together of gender in the act of cleaning begins to communicate an image of 'coherence' (Ahmed, 2004).

Moreover, it is the streets that are being visibly swept as the caption asserts, but no visible sign of 'dirt' can be identified in the photograph. While the very absence of dirt reinforces the performative aspect of the cleaning, the caption encourages the viewer to visualize that there is broken glass on the floor. In itself, broken glass is a historical signifier of disorder and danger, particularly in the context of urban space, while it also something cannot be put back together – it needs to be removed and thrown away. This suggests that the cleaning body is also performing a form or respectable behavior in its attempt to 're-order' the high street, echoing one of the participant's comment that 'you can't behave like this' (see Chapter 4).

The use of brooms and dustpans usually associated with home cleaning create an image of domesticity. This practice of home-making is also signified through Jamie Oliver's cooking shop. Importantly, the shop also indicates a kind of domestic masculinity in which housework and cooking are de-feminized (Gorman-Murray, p.371). Arguing that this 'New Man' has developed in the liminal space between work and home and represents a new model for hetero-masculinity, Andrew Gorman-Murray (2008) (see also Moseley, 2001 and Hollows, 2003) describes Jamie Oliver as one of the most notable images of this in popular culture: "he takes care of children, cooks for family and friends, and wants to ensure school children have healthy meals" (p.371).

The Waitrose supermarket also acts as marker of gentrification. On news websites and blogs, the fact that a Waitrose has opened is often used to argue that gentrification is now 'official'. For example, *The Telegraph* published an article in 2009 entitled "The new Waitrose shows there is hope for Croydon after all" (Singleton, 2009).[36]

Middle and upper-class identities are also marked in subtle ways through the particular choice of clothes – the combination of sport wear and khaki trousers worn by the woman in the front, as well as the combination of short and boat shoes worn by the man taking photographs.

To summarize my interpretation of this photograph, representation functions through a number of practices that mark bodies as white, respectable and distinctively upper middle class, while images of health and homeliness prevail. This reproduction of identity also comes about in the way bodies cohere in space in sweeping away what is defined as in need of expulsion. After my analysis a Hackney photograph, I will explore in more depth some of the meta-messages that apply to both images.

Photograph 2: Hackney

This photograph[37] was published in an online picture gallery on *The Telegraph* website on August 9, 2011. The caption reads "Clean-up operation around Mare St saw local residents amass at the Hackney Town Hall to express their disgust at the damage, praise the council clear-up and travel to Clarence Rd close by to assist with clear up after damage caused previous night", while the title reads "London and UK riots: the clean-up

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[36] Singleton (2009) concludes that "Croydon may be a Chav city today, but tomorrow it'll be full of cocktail bars."

[37] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/picturegalleries/uknews/8691273/London-and-UK-riots-the-clean-up-operation-in-pictures.html?image=22

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operation in pictures" ("Clean-up operation", 2011). The picture is authored as "Rex" which is the name of a photographic press agency and picture library.

The photograph shows a young man in his twenties sweeping away the remains of a burned car on Clarence road. He is using a household or deck broom but is wearing no gloves. He is wearing casual, everyday clothes, and is wearing a bag around his shoulder. Dust seems to have been poured over the remains of the car by the council's cleaners. Half of the storm water drain is also visible on the right hand side of the photograph. Behind him to the left is a woman, probably in her late twenties. She is holding what appears to be a dustpan and brush. She is wearing harem pants, a multicolored headband and a sturdy bag around her chest.

On the other side of the cleaning man is an older man, probably in his forties or fifties, taking photographs of the remains of the burned car. To the left in the back is another man who appears to be taking photographs with his mobile phone. To the far left of the photograph are a person's hands. The hands are covered with garden or mechanic's gloves, and appear to be in mid-action or waiting as if they have touched something.

At the very front of the photograph is a pram with a sleeping young girl (most likely), who looks about three years old. She is clutching on to a teddy bear. A deck broom, its bottom covered in burned car ashes, is resting on the pram. Most of the people in the photograph are white, apart from the man taking a photograph at the back and the woman on the left whose head was cropped.

On the second level of signification, the white baby in the pram acts as a powerful symbol of a 'family friendly' and 'safe' environment. The pram - when visibly associated

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to middle class parents - is often used as a referent to gentrification in the context of Hackney. Importantly, the image of a white baby has historically been constructed within a visual rhetoric of 'innocence' and 'purity'.

The woman's red harem trousers and headband potentially signify Hackney's 'alternative' or 'liberal' gentrifier. The bags around the man and the woman's chest suggest that they possibly traveled to this street or that they are not there for long. Either way, they don't necessarily look like they have just stepped out of their house onto Clarence road (see also Figure 13). Similarly to Clapham, cleaning seems to be represented as a unifying activity across genders. Nevertheless, the focus on the young man cleaning also tells a story about domestic masculinity and suggests an image of the 'responsible' man.

Like the broken glass in Battersea, the ashes on the ground become associated with the semiotics of disorder and waste. Moreover, the ashes are photographed falling in and lying around a drain, which in itself represents a space that allows waste to exit, while also connoting images of un-health – images that contrast starkly to the white baby in the pram. Like in the Battersea photograph, a process of home-making seems to be at play as objects like brooms and dustpans that are usually associated with the house are taken out on the street.

Finally, the caption of the photograph introduces the important theme of disgust. Going back to Skegg's (2005) conceptualization of disgust an expression that allows for the formations of collectivities based on the public designation of something as disgusting or immoral, the caption may help bodies to cohere visually. Notably,

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expressions of disgust are not visible on people's faces, at least not in a conventional way. In one sense, this underscores the way in which meaning and discourse come about in the way different texts relate to each other (Barthes, 1977). On the other hand, disgust can also be performed through its very containment, expressed implicitly through the act of volunteering to 'clean the mess of others'.

Meta-analysis

In both photographs, the meaning of the cleaning body takes shapes in complex ways and may be interpreted from a multitude of positions. What strikes me in particular is the way in which the cleaning body gains meaning through its interconnection with objects, and through the way in which these objects facilitate the removal of what I assume is being defined as 'dirty'. Brooms played an undeniable role in the iconic representation of the cleanup and so I will begin from here and proceed to analyzing the dustpans, bin bags and gloves.

An important element of the brooms used during the cleanups is that they appear to be designed for the house or for light outdoor cleaning. They almost acquire a character of comic inadequacy when compared to the professional council brooms as picture below. A number of symbols have already been connected to the use of brooms[38]

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[38] The broom also has a long history of being used to represent fantasy, liminality and boundary transgression: as a fetish of female domestic labor in Victorian and Edwardian times, as various symbols of matrimony in Wales and Ireland and the United States. The broom also has connotations with war and victory. For example, a "clean sweep" (meaning enemy had been swept from the seas) was demonstrated by hanging a broom from a mast or lashing it to the periscope of U.S. submarines during World War II. Also, brooms are often used symbolically in contemporary protests where the act of cleaning (usually corruption or the government) is laid out as explicitly symbolic and performative.

through the oral and written discourse about the cleanups, namely that they signify 'defiance', 'hope', the 'civilized majority', and 'something very British' (See Chapter 4).

Figure 15: Council workers clearing remains of car on Clarence Road, Hackney. Source: *The Telegraph* (Cawthra, 2011)[39]

As noted earlier, the brooms help bodies to come together in public space creating the impression of togetherness. The dustpans and brushes also become important elements in creating an atmosphere that is reminiscent of the domestic realm. Plastic, and small, they seem out of place, reinforcing the performative aspect of the cleaning. The black bin bags also become particularly visible in becoming the agent of final disposal. What is swept in the broom, is collected in the dustpan with a brush, and finally disposed of in the bin bag which is taken to space outside of the street. The plastic bin bag conceals all that is in it. All its objects become homogenized as 'garbage' inside its lining, garbage that might go bad if not removed or expulsed from a particular space within a certain time limit.

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[39] Caption reads: "Council workers begin to clean up damage caused to the road by a burnt out car on Clarence place in Hackney, London following a third day of riots in the capital" (Cawthra, 2011).

Figure 16   Figure 17

Figure 16: Battersea riot cleanup. Source: Emma Gutteridge (2011)

Figure 17: Hackney riot cleanup. Source: *Flickr* (Carrasco, 2011c)[40]

Cleaning is also performed through the use of gloves. Yellow rubber marigold gloves were the most widely used in both Hackney and Clapham. The use of marigolds communicates the trope of female domestic labor. More specifically, they bring back the memory of the industrialization and commodification of domestic cleaning, particularly through the image of female dishwashing. Nevertheless, it is important to note that such tropes still prevail in advertisements, particularly those for domestic cleaning services.

Designed to protect the hands from corrosive liquids or other damaging substance or materials, the wearing of marigolds also suggests the need to protect the hand's skin from what is dirty and threatening to the body. In this way, marigolds also become markers of class in hiding the body's visible labor.

The use of garden and mechanic's gloves was also a common sight. In contrast to the marigold gloves, these gloves allude to images of volunteering, planting trees and

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[40] Caption reads: "London Riots Cleanup Hackney (Mare Street and Clarence Road)" (Carrasco, 2011c).

DIY culture – or to the idea that something needs to be fixed. Also, garden gloves are not

thrown away after use, and suggest a more comfortable mediation between the hands and

what is being handled. In the context of the riot cleanups, their use contributes to the

image of the 'good' volunteering body that is able to help a neighborhood 'regenerate', as

well as exposing practices of male propriety.

Finally, many participants were wearing disposable blue gloves. While marigolds

are disposed after a number of uses, blue gloves tend to be thrown away together with

what they have touched, after one use. Here, the poetics of surveillance (McClintock,

1995, p.154) come to the surface through the use of disposable gloves, as if the

participants are performing a kind of border inspection on their neighborhood. Thus the

use of rubber glove also mirrors the pseudo-discourse of criminology and medicine. Like

the evidence collected by forensic officers in the aftermath of the riots (see below), the

gloves are used to clinically remove what is visualized a kind of disease or pollution, re-

activating discourses of race, purity and hygiene.

Figure 18: Woman collecting forensic evidence from riots, Manchester. Source:
International Business Times (Reuters, 2011a)

Hands themselves become powerful icons in the photographs. Echoing a similar discourse to anti-terror campaigns in which the figure of the suspect stranger is mediated through that of objects that may handled in suspect ways, the riot cleanup makes visible claims to innocence and the embodiment of a legitimate struggle, as seen in the logo which was developed for one of the cleanup websites. Moreover, the performance of 'getting your hands dirty', as heard in many interviews, invokes a certain notion that 'the state has failed us, so we will take matters into our own hands'. But the hands are also helping hands: expressing their desire to help by 'showing solidarity' with the affected neighborhoods or with the council cleaners, cleaning becomes also a performance of benevolence. Once again, class and whiteness seem to materialize around the act of 'doing good' (Slocum, 2006).

Figure 19   Figure 20

Figure 19: Australian 'anti-terror' ad (Chemical Security, 2010).

Figure 20: Riot Cleanup logo (Riot Cleanup, 2011)

6.4. THE LOVING BODY

As stated throughout the research, love and care became central to the riot cleanup discourse. For example, when interviewed about why they were participating in the cleanup event in Clapham, young men and women talked about the 'love' they have for their community, their desire to "help in any way [they] can to repair it from all the damage that's been done" or because the "response to hatred is love and the response to disorder is to show order and care" (Riot clean up in Clapham, 2011). In this section, I seek to unpack how the discourse of love operated in the cleanups, while also exploring how it relates to the emotions of fear and hostility that characterized popular reactions to the riots.

Photograph 3: Battersea

Figure 21. Battersea riot cleanup. Source: *Mail Online* (Reuters, 2011b).

Published in the *Mail Online* on the 9th August 2011, this photograph was taken on St John's Hills Road. The photograph's caption reads "'London hates looters': More volunteers in Clapham Junction, where they have congregated after call outs on Twitter" (Reuters, 2011b) and was published in the same article as the first photo of people sweeping the street (McDermott & Jaffray, 2011).

On a denotative level, the photograph shows two white women standing among a bigger crowd. One is wearing a long sleeved shirt on which she has inscribed the words "(heart) LONDON HATE LOOTERS". Around her waist is a Hilly waist bag. Hilly is a clothing company that specializes in synthetic material for runners. She is also wearing sunglasses and a cap. Her facial expression, in combination with the angle at which the photograph was taken, makes her seem aggressive. She also appears to be looking away from the camera. Another woman on the right is inscribing her own t-shirt, sunglasses on her head, and eyes focused her writing. She is wearing comfortable or sport clothing.

It is important to note here that most people were photographed expressing slogans of love for their neighborhood, city or postcode. While the 'scum' and 'hate' discourse certainly was not marginal, it was less visible at the cleanups but was particularly prolific online as well as on a number of message walls such as the one set up at the Debenhams Department store in Clapham Junction (see below). Nevertheless, as noted earlier in the chapter, a number of women came to personify the discourse as their photographs were made hyper-visible in national newspapers like *The Sun*, *The Telegraph* and *The Daily Mail* (or *Mail Online*).

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Figure 22   Figure 23

Figure 22: "Hugs not thugs". Source: areyouhavingabubble (2011a)

Figure 23: "Love vs Fear. Choose the right one". Source: areyouhavingabubble (2011c)

On a second level of signification, the women's choice of clothing communicates a sense of 'usefulness' and 'vitality', stressing the apparent functionality of the task ahead (cleaning). The first woman's body (in the grey shirt) is also communicating a combination of aggression and aloofness, embodying in some sense the 'hate' part of her t-shirt. Importantly, the figure of two women inscribing their love for the capital (and metonymically, the nation) is tied up to historical associations of women as defenders of the city-nation (Ahmed, 2004; McClintock, 1995).

The inscription of love on the woman's t-shirt is an important symbol. The formulation 'I (heart) + city' is usually associated with the graphic designer Milton Glaser, who originally developed the concept in New York City. The logo has since been copied throughout the world and is most often used in the context of tourism. During 9/11, the 'I love New York' slogan became so popular that Glaser redesigned the slogan stressing that 'I (heart) NY more than ever.'

In the case of the woman in Battersea, the idea of loving London signifies the desire to portray the city in positive terms to everyone watching the events, while simultaneously identifying the perpetrators who are hated, presumably because they have failed to love their city. As Ahmed (2004) stresses in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, hate is often felt as belonging to one's own body, although it is directed at an 'other'. This turning away from the other is often lived as turning towards the self and consequently as a form of narcissism. (Ahmed, 2004, p.51) This paradox is apparent in the photograph in which the body is simultaneously the site of hate and self-love. The very inscription of love also makes the woman's body hyper-visible as she sticks out from the crowd, explaining in part why the media were quick to reproduce her image.

Photograph 4: Hackney

In a second photograph[41] published on *The Telegraph* website on 9th August 2011, the caption reads "Local residents amass at the Hackney Town Hall with brooms and other cleaning equipment". It also appears in the picture album entitled "London and UK riots: the clean-up operation in pictures". Around 30 people are seen walking, many pushing their bikes along. Nearly all of them are white. The woman at the front is seeing carrying a broom in the air. The people in the crowd are wearing a mixture of casual and leisurely clothes. The pace of their walk appears as if they are strolling, or walking at a relaxed/ leisurely pace.

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[41] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/picturegalleries/uknews/8691273/London-and-UK-riots-the-clean-up-operation-in-pictures.html?image=20

In thinking through the connotative message of the photograph, the mass procession of white people bushing bikes along Mare Street in Hackney signals the politics of class and gentrification. Like in many cities in the U.S, the culture surrounding biking in London operates within a symbolic economy in which the white cycling body, particularly when riding through a neighborhood that is getting gentrified, becomes classed through a set of cultural values premised on morality and ethical choice-making (Skeggs, 2005, 969). Like the backpacks visible in photograph 2, bikes also evoke the memory of travel. Most of the participants photographed here are likely to have cycled from *somewhere* to Hackney Town Hall.

In the case of the Hackney photograph, what is apparent is that the bodies are aligned together and have a sense of directionality. They are going to Clarence road, to *clean* it. 'Love' or 'solidarity' for the community is expressed through this shared alignment in space. Cleaning becomes a way to express an idealized love for the 'community' in Hackney in the way bodies are aligned in opposition to the protesters who created the mess the night before. Love here almost becomes an untouchable discourse in the politics of the riot cleanups. Even if this alignment of bodies is walking through a highly unequal and divided geography, why would they not have the right to love Hackney?

Figure 24: Hackney riot cleanup cyclist. Source: *Flickr* (Carrasco, 2011c)

6.5. SUMMARY

Through an analysis of newspaper photographs, I have attempted to show how dominant notions of whiteness, class and gender were visualized through the performance of various forms of expulsion during the cleanups. Cleaning artifacts become constitutive of the body's identity as respectable and benevolent. The performance of respectability also depends on the enactment of various gender tropes of feminine and masculine domesticity, and on implicit and explicit expressions of disgust and aggression.

Best exemplified through the photograph of the baby in the pram, the production of white innocence is developed in relation to the semiotics of disorder and criminality which develop metonymically through the images of broken glass and muddy ashes. Cleaning bodies are also differentiated through the use of gloves which function as powerful symbols of the corrective and generative ambitions of cleaning, while also reproducing the more invisible violence of the surveillance practices that contribute to the criminalization of the protesters.

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The performance of love emerges both through physical inscriptions and the separated movement of bodies across space. Importantly, the discourse of love and care allows the loving body to become hyper-visible, which in turn allows for the emergence of a form of narcissism that is also national (Ahmed, 2004). In the next chapter, I examine the role of the cleaning and loving body within a wider historical schema, while exploring implications for future research and practice.

Chapter 7: Discussion

Although the riot cleanups photographs tell an important story about class and race formation in and of themselves, the way in which they gain representational power is also dependent on their juxtaposition with photographs of the protests. For example, on the morning of August 9, 2011 (the day of the cleanups), without fail, all national newspapers published photographs of building burnings as seen below. In fact, the two men whose photographs were repeatedly published were at the Hackney protests. However, over half of the newspapers privileged the visibility of the young black man wearing a hoodie, with a car burning in the background, which says a lot about the way in which tropes of black and working class criminality influenced the visual discourse of the riots.

Figure 25: British Newspaper Front Pages, August 9, 2011. Source: *Huffington Post* ("London Riots", 2011).

The photographs of the riot cleanups also need to be juxtaposed with the representation of women protesting. Although not that many women took part in the protest, those who did were made hyper-visible. Particular scrutiny was given to young female protesters, best exemplified through ex-Olympic ambassador Chelsea Ives who was jailed for two years after being accused of burglary and attacking a police car. The media represented her through the figure of the 'greedy female rioter' and 'council housing scum' who has failed to perform an accepted version of femininity (Allen & Taylor, 2011). Thus the performance of female respectability in the riot cleanups also needs to be juxtaposed against this dominant representation of female protesters.

While the discourse that protesters are 'scum' was present in the riot cleanups, it was not made visually explicit in the majority of photographs that were published in national newspapers. Nevertheless, the absence of bodies made 'out of place' doesn't mean that they were not represented as undesirable. In part, class and race differentiations were enacted through material objects that helped to reproduce a discourse of expulsion as explored in Chapter 6.

Here I would like to return to Anne McClintock's argument that the fetish of cleaning emerged during a time of crisis as a way to preserve uncertain boundaries. Although she writes of Victorian London, a number of her observations seem particularly relevant to the contemporary context. As discussed in Chapter 2, Anne McClintock (1995) underscores the way in which cleaning acquired meaning in the way it was able to segregate dirt from hygiene, order from disorder and meaning from confusion (p.170). In this context, dirt was assigned a fetishistic value in relation to objects, as exemplified in

McClintock's point that a "broom in a kitchen closet is not dirty, whereas lying on a bed it is".

Holding on to this image for my analysis of the cleanups, it is worth going back to Marx's definition of commodity fetishism. For Marx, a fetish is created once the relationship between people is transformed into the relationship between things, as the labor that produces the object is erased from its final use and meaning (McClintock, 1995; Ahmed, 2000).

Now to go back to McClintock's example, it is also possible to say that a broom in a kitchen closest is not dirty whereas on the contemporary streets of London it is. Moreover, I would like to argue that the pavement and the high streets stores begin to acquire the qualities of boundary objects/spaces in delineating order from disorder, and safety from danger. Cleaning can be thought of as a way of giving social value to these threshold spaces which in the aftermath of the riots were perceived as being 'under threat'.

Moreover, if dirt contains the qualities of excess in the way it is deemed to lie outside the commodity market, cleaning the public spaces and stores of the high street becomes a way to restore the "overvaluation of commercial exchange as the fundamental principle of social community" (McClintock, 1995, p.154).

As an object, the broom is also connected to the poetics of surveillance (McClintock, 1995, p.154) in restoring the distinction between "clean money" and "dirty money" ('looting', stealing) – restoring, in other words, the "normal" economy of the neighborhood. In this way, the underlying causes of the protests (which include

institutional racism and rising social inequality) are effectively collapsed and reduced to a set of material relationships (a relationship between people transformed into a relationship between things) articulated around the reconstitution of property: the glass of the broken shop must be swept, the ash of the burned car must be disposed of, the scattered objects must be placed back on their shelves. At the same time, the young men and women who took part in the protests are made into bodies deemed 'out of place' and in need themselves of domestication/incarceration.

Conversely, the policing of spatial boundaries is also connected to the idea of love and care. In discussing the logic of surveillance in Neighborhood Watch Programs, Ahmed (2000) suggests that a moral justification to watch is being provided by the need to care and protect the vulnerable member/body: "…self-policing communities are inscribed as moral communities, those that care. Caring evokes a figure of vulnerability who must be cared for, who must be protected from the risks of crime and the danger of strangers". In the case of cleanups, the vulnerable member is constructed principally around the figure of the shop owner. For example, riotcleanup.com has on its front page a post that asks visitors to go to "www.helpsiva.com and donate money so he can get back on his feet." Siva's shop is the convenience store on Clarence road where the Hackney cleanups took place.

Help Siva

Siva Kandiah is a local shopkeeper who ran the Clarence Convenience Store for 11 years before it was ransacked. He had building insurance but no contents insurance and cannot replace his stock. Please go to www.helpsiva.com and donate money so he can get back on his feet.

Figure 26: "Help Siva". Source: Riot Cleanup (2011)

It is important to note here the domestic and leisurely rituals were performed not only through the act of helping and cleaning, but also through peripheral activities such as drinking tea while strolling, eating cakes and loaves offered by shop owners and hanging Union Jack flags as seen in the case of Battersea. McClintock (1997) illustrates the relationship between colonization and the domestic rituals rooted in European gender and class roles (p.34) as she describes the illustration of a Huntly and Palmer's Biscuits ad showing a group of male colonials sitting in the middle of the jungle drinking tea on biscuit crates. McClintock writes:

> In the flickering magic lantern of imperial desire, teas, biscuits, tobaccos, Bovril, tins of cocoa and, above all, soaps beach themselves on far-flung shores, tramp through jungles, quell uprisings, restore order and write the inevitable legend of commercial progress across the colonial landscape. (p.219)

I would also like to suggest that the performance of cleaning was also enacted digitally. As explained in Chapter 4, the riot cleanups started as a social media phenomenon on *Twitter*, and were followed by the creation of a number of different sites and organizations. For example, "Operation Cup of Tea" urged Londoners to stay inside their houses. To support the cause, the website states that "all you have to do is make a cup of tea, take a photo of yourself drinking it at home and then post it on our Operation Cup of Tea Facebook page, just like the lovely people below" (Operation Cup of Tea, 2011).

It is important to remember here that both the riot cleanup and the Operation Cup of Tea website encouraged viewers to 'help the police identify suspects' by reviewing their online CCTV archive and by calling 'crime stoppers'[42]. These practices, together with the symbolic work of watching and policing the neighborhood, exemplify recent trends in online surveillance practices where citizens are encouraged to be vigilant and responsible by watching one another. As discussed in Chapter 3, Koskela (2011) explores the way volunteer observers take part in a process of 'patriotic voyeurism' by monitoring the Texas-Mexico border from the comfort of their home through the Texas Virtual Watch Program, while Mark Andrejevic (2006) suggests that the war on terrorism "is the first war you can access from your desk" (p.441). In the case of the riot cleanups, this notion of 'patriotic voyeurism' can be thought of as being re-articulated at the scale of the

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[42] It is also worth recalling here that a vigilante facial recognition system was set up through a Google group in the aftermath of the protests, although it was later abandoned. Using the name "Facial Recognition London Riots", Forbes magazine (2011) published an article on how the group created an experimental app using tools from Face.com, testing it with their friends and planning to release it on Facebook so that people could volunteer to scan riot photos to see if "any of the ne'er –do-wells were friends of theirs" (para.4).

neighborhood through the exercise of various forms of digital and performative

vigilantism and through the exhibition of self-discipline and hygiene (tea, cleaning).

Twitter was also used as an important platform for the digital spatialization of

difference, as voices/bodies were made out of place through the surveillance of

'deviant'/'uncivil' use of language and technology. Following the public hysteria

expressed at the use of Twitter and BBM (Black Berry Messenger) by the protesters, a

public discourse started to take shape around the "appropriate" use of social media.

A popular opinion was that the #riotcleanup and #operationcupoftea restored the

integrity of Twitter in bringing together 'good strangers' (while it is assumed that 'bad

strangers' use twitter to 'riot' and 'loot'). These discussions around 'illegitimate'

Tweet/BBM messages gained particular weight after David Starkey's dissection of a

protester Chelsea Ive's text message in an interview with the BBC, asserting that "black

and white, boy and girl, operate in this language together, this language which is wholly

false, which is this Jamaican patois that's being intruded in England, which is why so

many of us have this sense of literally a foreign country" (Starkey, 2011).

Here we see the way in which language becomes intimately connected to

governmentality as a marker of distinction (Puwar, 2008, p.108), while the imperial,

legitimate language becomes associated with rational thinking and 'civility', while

illegitimacy/criminality becomes articulated around the stereotypical image of

black/Jamaican spillage into the city-nation (McKittrick, 2006).

Finally, I want bring these arguments together and suggest that the riot cleanups

constitute a form of erasure that is linked both to contemporary practices of gentrification

and to wider historical amnesia of Britain's postcolonial legacy. One of the principal ways in which colonial relations are relived in the present is the way in which social differentiation is expressed in terms of behavior and culture (Gilroy, 2004).

Using Gilroy's concept of postcolonial melancholia, it can be argued that the 'rioter' comes to embody the figure of the intrusive stranger upon which the nation's anxieties and fears are projected upon. As Gilroy argues, anxiety is projected upon this symbolic body of the stranger as it seems to "not only *represent* that vanished empire but persistently refer consciousness to the unacknowledged pain of its loss and the unsettling shame of its bloody management" (2004). It is particularly within this context that metaphors of the blitz bombings make sense in that they allude both to a time before Britain's unwanted settlers arrived to the metropolis, and to a nation united under attack. Often, and as exemplified in the riot cleanups, the way in which such appeals to unity are relived in the postcolonial present is through the production of a type of whiteness that is hybrid. As Ahmed and Homi Bhabha (1994) stress, this form is defined by its ambiguity and the capacity to incorporate and assimilate others into itself (p.137).

In the context of gentrification, the appeal to national unity through the cleansing of space is best exemplified through the Olympics clean-up campaign recently launched by Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London. Sponsored by Procter & Gamble (who produce among other things cleaning products Flash and Ariel), the 'P&G Capital Clean-up' is a three month campaign running up to the Olympic games that aims "to bring Londoners together to spruce up neglected areas of the city" as London prepares to "host the greatest show on earth". For example, we are told that Ariel is "on a mission to make London

stain free". Volunteers are encouraged download the "Ariel Love Clean London App" on their phone to "report grime and environmental crimes" as they walk around their neighborhood (P&G Capital Cleanup, 2012).
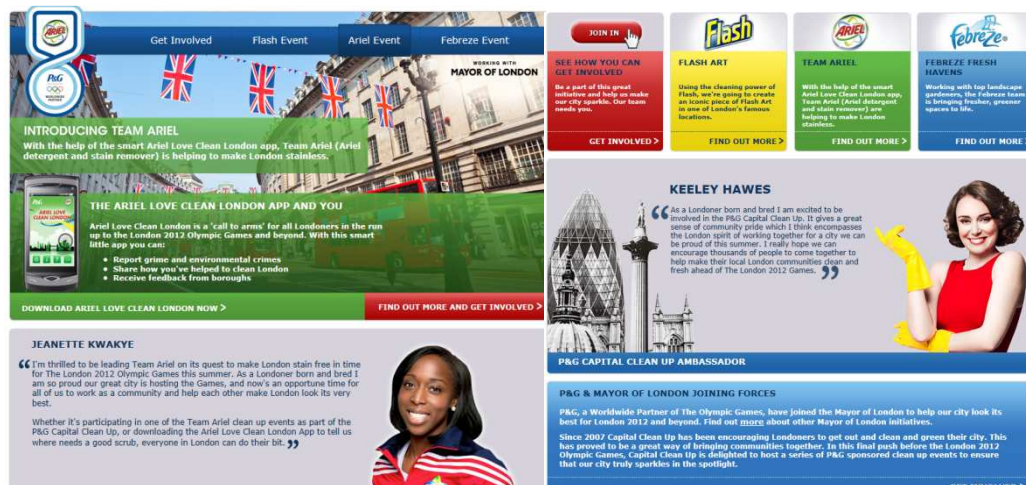

Figure 27: P&G Capital Cleanup website, 2012

This could not be more ironic in the context of the actual cleansing and displacement that is taking place in East London where the Olympics are taking place. For example, it was revealed on April 24 2012 that the Labour-run Newham council (just east of Hackney) is planning to move housing benefit claimants to Stoke-on-Trent which is in the North of England, while three conservative London councils are also considering moving 150 homeless families 130 miles away to Derby and Nottingham (Mulholland, Walker and Curtis, 2012).

Implications for theory and planning practice

The riot cleanups are an important example of the way in which spatial and bodily exclusion is enacted through symbolic practices. As noted throughout the research, the representation of some bodies as 'in place' (Creswell, 1996) came at the expense of

containing others. Beyond the symbolic casting out of undesirable bodies, it is important to remember that over 4000 people were arrested with hundreds now serving disproportionate prison sentences (Bowcott, Siddique & Sparrow, 2011).

Performances of symbolic cleansing—as exemplified both in the cleanups and the Olympic campaign to clean and love London—do not necessarily legitimize structural urban displacement in and of themselves. Nonetheless, such practices inform the reproduction of wider discourse on 'community', participation and the control of bodies in space, and as such, need to be analyzed within planning practice and policy. Moreover, I have also attempted to explore how embodiment plays an important role in the negotiation of public space, particularly in the context of gentrification. As Kern (2011) argues, it important to understand the way in which practices of gentrification are enacted not only across class lines, but along those of race, gender and nation. By underscoring the significance of representation, I also hope to contribute to contemporary conversations on the role of digital and social media in shaping narratives of inclusion and exclusion that often serve to underpin the reproduction of unequal cities.

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