Performance, Identity, Spectacle: The Notting Hill Carnival

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This dissertation presents results of original research undertaken by the author. The work has been conducted in accordance with the University of Nottingham’s Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics and in accordance with the School of Geography’s risk assessment procedures.

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Abstract:

Drawing on the use of archival, interviews and participant observation methods, this study explores the imaginative geographies that are involved in the Notting Hill Carnival. In doing this, the study adopts the perspective that artistic spectacles are not separate from the realm of power and politics. The paper seeks to explore why Notting Hill is a significant place for the diasporic West-Indian community in Britain. Secondly, the paper assesses how negative imaginative geographies of the event can serve to legitimise greater regulation of the event. In conjunction with this, there is deconstruction of how the commercialisation of the event has impeded on the carnival’s cultural expression. The greater licencing and controlling of the carnival is reflective of significant changes to the processional routes and the freedom that the performers have to express their culture. The study maintains its sensitivity to the sensory practices of the carnival. This allows an uncovering of the battles for the appropriation of space between different types of carnival performers. The study finds that the celebration of the carnival is becoming more fixated on the festivities of the event rather than remembering the deep-heated history associated with its origins. However, with this changing dynamic, increasingly practices of resistance at the local scale helping to keep the origins of the event alive.

Key Words: Place, Imaginative geographies, Performance, Diaspora, Identity, Art, Streets, Power, Resistance.
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1.0 Introduction:

‘Before 1965 we strive to keep alive
This glorious celebration
Derived from emancipation, exploitation
Deprivation and immigration.
We carnival, the pride and joy of a Caribbean Nation
On narrow streets where people meet people
In a joyful ripple of nostalgic action
Feeling high in an atmosphere
Eating and Drinking we can of Red Stripe and Carib Beer
Rum, Roti, Mauby, fry fish, rice and peas and we ginger beer
Make this Carnival we annual affair’ (Pascal, 1991).

This poetic narrative succinctly illustrates that ‘the study of culture is… closely connected with the study of power’ (Cresswell, 2004: 124). Consequently, ‘power is expressed and sustained in the reproduction of culture’ (Cresswell, 2004: 124). This perspective efficiently illustrates that a cultural spectacle like the Notting Hill Carnival is not only connected to power but it is integrally shaped by it. Underpinning this further Waterman (1998: 69) declares that ‘art festivals’, or in my case a carnival, hold ‘complex relationships with society’ and ‘an intimate connection to place’. Resultantly, ‘art festivals are deserving of [greater] social and geographical analysis’ (Waterman, 1998: 69). There is a negligible amount of geographers who have attended to the Notting Hill Carnival despite it being positioned as Europe’s largest festival with an excess of 2 million attendees at the event per year. In recent years’ geographers have advocated that art is ‘often a powerful mode of knowledge and social engagement’ and should not be analysed in a way that separates it from the political, social and economic (Daniels, 1993: 8). The Carnival is not a conventional battle space that is filled with ‘soldiers and cannons’; this may influence its festivities to merely be interpreted as a trivial spectacle (Said, 1993:7).

However, inscribing the event with particular ‘imaginings’ creates particular forms of representations about the event which can legitimise particular actions by senior authorities (Said, 1993:7).

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**Aim:** To understand the ways in which the Notting Hill Carnival is integrally linked to the notion of place and how maintaining this existence is a continuing challenge.

**Objectives:**
- To understand the imaginative geographies of the Notting Hill Carnival and how it acts a place for diasporic expression and identification.
- To examine the ways that the commercialisation and control has changed the spectacle of the Carnival.
- To understand the power relations that are placed within the Carnival and its physical occupation of the Notting Hill streets.
2.0 Literature Review:

2.1 Caribbean Diaspora, Carnival and Geography:

In recent years, cultural geographers have started to consider the interaction between social memory, identity and performance. These sites of memory can come from a number of vantage points: buildings, monuments, public displays and an array of others (Hoelscher and Alderman, 2006). The desires for a cultural performance can be influenced by nationalism, class, ethnicity and can become a key conduit for empowering a social community (Hoelscher, 1999). ‘Geography’ is arguably at the ‘heart of diaspora’. This is due to the discipline being well positioned to engage with the ‘contested interplay of place, home, culture and identity through migration and resettlement’ (Blunt, 2005: 10). This is illustrative of carnival being a space in which performers can imaginatively re-create their devastating colonial history in order to provide a new, and more positive, perception of themselves (Alleyne-Dettmer, 1998). Despite academics engaging with the diasporic dimensions to the Notting Hill Carnival, there has not been an effort to flesh out the imaginative geographies that is associated with this phenomenon. Increasingly the Notting Hill Carnival is being framed as a site of celebrating multicultural Britain, whereby the ‘policeman’ - whose authorities were involved in the historic 1976 riots - finds himself grinding with the ‘passing ragga girls’ (Anderson, 2015: 188). Such events influence suggestions of it being a site of ‘trans-racial coalition’ rather than merely about the celebration of Caribbean culture (Anderson, 2015: 188). The interplay between carnival being a site that links diasporic groups with their ancestral past whilst the event is becoming increasingly about celebrating Britain’s multiculturalism prompts research to engage with whether both interests can exist without imposing on each other.

The carnivals artistic expression can be understood to be experimental as it departs away from conventional “western art” which often displays a ‘concern for the creation of illusory space…[through] artificial containment’ (Owusu, 1986: 81). This may be done through the use of frames. Moreover, Owusu (1986) highlights that galleries, museums and other rigid spaces detach visual art from performing art. In contrast to these spaces, the Carnival through its masquerading literally combines visual and performing arts, this takes place in the streets. The carnival, arguably, brings a unique dimension to what is considered artistic. The carnivals’ artistic quality is demonstrated through the performative masquerading that is explicitly carried out at the event. This visual art is intrinsically tied to the performative, and arguably political dimension. The ‘interplay between the West London houses and dancing Mas players [is precisely what] give[s] carnival its force and
power...[as] an experimental space’ with a deep-rooted ‘history’ (Ferris, 2010: 521). There is a need for academics to decipher how the changes to the carnival have impeded this interplay between the physical geography of the area and the performers.

2.2 Post-colonialism and Performance:

Studies engaging with post-colonial debates have proliferated, particularly since the 1980’s. It is a term that has varied definitions but in its broadest understanding it refers to the uncovering of the ‘diverse, uneven and contested impact of colonialism on the cultures of colonized and colonizing people’ and how it may be ‘reproduced or transformed [in the] past and in the present’ (Yeoh, 2009: 561). There are various contentious views on how academics should approach post-colonial debates. This study favours with the importance of attending to the locations in which post-colonial discourses can be found (Sleman, 1991). Moreover, post-colonial research can engage with the space of the metropolis or the former colony’s territory (Yeoh, 2009). The Notting Hill Carnival is the manifestation of a space of Black Atlantic processes. This is illustrated of ‘the transformation of European carnival traditions’ initially towards the ‘colonial and postcolonial Caribbean, in the form of the Trinidad carnival, and latterly ‘returning back to Europe’ through the Notting Hill Carnival (Featherstone, 2005: 230). More recent work on post-colonialism seeks to complicate understandings of colonial encounters by ‘paying attention to colonial discourses without denying agency to colonised people or overlooking practices of resistance’ (Nash, 2002: 221). Moreover, Nash (2002) asserts that research engaging with the legacies of colonialism is growing; however, spaces of constructive alternatives are an under-researched domain. The Carnival can be argued to be a site that displays constructive alternative qualities which resultantly prompts the need for research to engage with it. This is characterised by the way in which the Notting Hill Carnival has negotiated its identity over the years, beginning in the1950’s as an event that was exclusively for the celebration of Caribbean culture to its present day common depiction as a celebration of multicultural Britain.

Scott’s (1990) ‘hidden transcripts’ theory is useful in helping to deconstruct how carnival festive performances are culturally and politically significant for a particular community and arguably unimportant for another. During the mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century, and arguably in the present day, the West Indian community were marginalised in Britain. It is within this constrained space that marginalised groups may adopt ‘arts of political disguise’: this may be through verbal or/and non-verbal mediums such as graffiti, poetry or even spectacles of celebration. Alleyne-Dettmers’ (2002) effectively concretises this theory through relating
it to the Notting Hill Carnival. As forms of resistance against the established authorities have been exchanged through non-verbal embodied dance practices and well-thought costume designs; of which may merely be interpreted by the western eyes as lascivious dance. Because of this apolitical interpretation by the western authorities, the territory of the carnival becomes a ‘privileged site for nonhegemonic [sic]…subversive discourse’ (Scott, 1990: 25). This is illustrated by the fictional figure of Gayelle who performed in the Canboulay themed carnival in the first year of the 21st century. The costume of this figure consists of all-black clothing and a large semi-circle shaped cloth being worn by the performer. To the naked eye this may appear as nothing more than a well-crafted spectacular costume. In actuality, Gayelle’s half circle was linked to the stick-fighting rings that were characteristic within ‘almost every plantation in Trinidad’ during the slavery period (Assunsao, 2005: 61). The decision to re-enact visuals of slavery within a Eurocentric country was employed to ‘dramatize the persistence of colonialism in the…[critically acclaimed] postcolonial world’ (Alleyne-Dettmers, 2002: 256). More specifically, producing this ancestral history within a metropolis space is designed to cultivate ‘hope’ and ‘empowerment’ for any ‘Caribbean migrants [who feel] estranged’ within Britain (Alleyne-Dettmers, 2002: 256). Academics have begun to address the way in which the spectators’ knowledge will shape whether they see performances as ‘spectacular entertainment or a deeply political contest’ (Carver, 2000: 38). This effectively illustrates the potential of research engaging with the Notting Hill Carnival to respond to the widespread critiques of post-colonial studies that is needs to be more grounded in tackling ‘material practices, actual spaces and real politics’ (Sylvester, 1999: 712).

2.3 Art, Performance and Geography:

The discipline of geography has a strong interest in visual art; this is notable of the characteristics that are associated with it: observing, sketching and mapping landscapes (Cant and Morris, 2007). More importantly, Hawkins (2013) states that geographers should pay more critical attention to art mediums that are beyond conventional visual outputs, such as paintings. Consequently, the sub-discipline cultural geography has started to consider ‘performance’ as a method to ‘thoroughly’ carry out ‘cultural practices’ (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000: 420). In conjunction with this, the emergence of the new cultural geography has led to a more ‘politicised concept of culture’ (Jackson, 1988: 45); this has probed geographers to look at artistic practices from a more critical stance. Influenced by this stance, art should not be something that shifts attention away from the political, social and economic. Rather, ‘it is often a powerful mode of knowledge and social engagement’ (Daniels, 1993: 8). Of which, art festivals have grown in interest for
geographers in recent decades. Geographers have started to favour the view that cultural queries regarding aesthetics and bodily performance are not neatly separable from political interrogatives regarding power, inequality and oppression (Waterman, 1998). This contention neatly adjoins to Nurse’s (2010) critique that the researchers that have engaged with the carnival have only employ historical, ethnographic or sociological perspectives. With the heightened commodification of culture, there is a far greater need for researchers to be more sensitive to cultural economy approaches (Nurse, 2010). However, some academics have started to become engaged with cultural economy stances, even prior to Nurse’s (2010) publication. For instance, Carver (2000: 42) illustrates that the first commercial sponsorship of the event, by Lilt in the 1970’s, led to a euphemising of the notion that ‘carnival’ liberates ‘the bodily pleasure of the other’. Nonetheless, there is a lack sufficient literature that engages with the politics that are shaping the commercial sponsorship and a geographical perspective, which incorporates a scalar dimension.

2.4 Spatialising the Notting Hill Carnival:

Smith (1993: 292) boldly asserts that ‘geographers are [well-placed] to make a direct contribution to a growing sociological interest in the importance of collective memory and in the spatiality that is integral to it’. In addition to this, a culturally geographical approach to place may seek to understand the way in which particular spaces are bordered to include and exclude particular groups or individuals (Anderson, 2015). This is illustrative of the Jackson’s (1988: 1992) work on Notting Hill’s Carnival and Toronto’s Caribana, respectively. Jackson (1992) illustrates the importance of attending to the street, as it is essentially a political space that is wrought with contestation. Despite this, Jackson’s (1988) account is produced in the wake of the 1976 carnival riot and is not decoupled from this contextual factor. Subsequently, he provides a critical analysis that narrows in upon the long-lasting uneasy tensions between the police and the Black British youth, albeit with relation to the politics of the streets. This provides the scope for an empirical engagement that critically analyses other battles that the carnival is facing. Moreover, the chosen territory of carnival is the streets and this has historical significance that should not be overlooked. The Trinidadian carnival was born out of the emancipation of slavery in 1834. The streets are of integral importance to the Trinidadian and even the Notting Hill Carnival. As prior to emancipation ‘slaves could not walk the streets after dark without their white masters’ (Carver, 2000: 39). Thereafter, the abolishment of slavery meant that former ‘slaves’ could occupy the ‘streets in song and dance’ and this is mirrored in the
space of the Notting Hill Carnival as performers celebrate ‘the right [and] the freedom to be on the streets’ (Carver, 2000: 39).
3.0 Methodology:

3.1 Approach:

I have been influenced by a humanistic approach in conducting my research; a position which grants human experience at the centre of geography (Sharp, 2009). I used a triangulation of qualitative methods, which consisted of archival usage at the Black Cultural Archives, semi-structured interviews and finally participant observation at Notting Hill Carnival 2015. Archives are sites of ‘preserved discourses’ (Foucault, 1972: 129) and subsequently it was a site where the research could gain a deep grounding of the events history. Meanwhile, interviews allow insights into the experiences and personal views that members of the Carnival community hold towards the event. Finally, it is a highly experiential event (Cohen, 1980) and therefore participatory observation was the best method to gain a first-hand feel.

3.2 Archival and Textual Sources:

Nash (2002) asserts the critique that cultural geographers’ that engage with postcolonial studies need to move beyond being too abstract and make greater efforts to empirically ground their work through the use of field sites such as archival spaces. This rationale has influenced me to conduct my archival research at the Black Cultural Archives located in Brixton, London which is designated to ‘collect, preserve, and celebrate heritage and history of Black people in Britain’ (The Black Cultural Archives, 2016). An array of sources about the Notting Hill Carnival and its Trinidadian affiliate were thoroughly analysed.

Under the influence of Fairclough’s (1993) theorisation, the archival sources and interview transcripts were analysed with the use of textual and discourse analysis. Firstly, textual analysis was conducted; which ensured a close reading of the texts (See Appendix). A textual analytical reading of the texts enhances the ability to understand the significance of its physical contents: grammar, word structure, figurative language. Nonetheless, a sole use of textual analysis can ignore the significance of the institutional factors that have a role to play in shaping the production and organisation of various texts (Goss, 1993). Therefore, the adoption of discourse analysis, which initially appears abstract, allows an identification of themes that relate the texts to the social conditions and ideologies that have shaped their existence and ordering (Waitt, 2010). Moreover, the influence of the post-structuralist and post-colonial thought have led to theories of deconstruction coming to fore in archival approaches (Lorimer, 2010). This is illustrative of discourse analysis.
also seeking to grant attention to the role of the archive institution itself. Moreover, archival collections are socially constructed; their selections are ‘consciously chosen’ which can reflect an effort to ‘document… the past’ in a particular fashion to contribute to the broader narratives that an institution wants to deploy (Steedman, 1998: 67). Sensitivity towards the Black Cultural Archives itself will help to interpret the archival sources as being potentially linked to their broader ideological and political stance (Lorimer, 2010).

3.3 Interviews:

The use of semi-structured interviews was influenced by feminist geographers’ approach; they assert the value of interacting and the exchanging information with participants instead of merely extracting from them (Oakley, 1981). The participants are not ‘research subject(s) to be… systemically investigated by a scientist’ rather they are conscious human beings who should be engaged with (O’Connell Davidson and Layder, 1994: 121). This influenced me to exchange ideas and voicing some of my own experiences about the carnival, with my participants, which helped to strengthen a rapport with them (See Appendix). In turn, I hope this influenced more honest and transparent responses from them. The use of semi-structured interviews was chosen as a method to help flesh out the deeper views of the participants. This approach allows me to be responsive and adaptable to the participant’s views; notably, it enhanced the ability to gain further detail by asking more questions in the same area to the interrogative that was initially posed. This strengthened my ability to capture the complexities and contradictions of the participant’s experiences (Valentine, 2005). The interviews were transcribed and themes were drawn out through adopting the method of coding.

Interviews were conducted with the following; (references to interviewees used in the analysis are in **bold**; they consent to appear with only their first name disclosed in non-published research):

**Ansel**
– Trustee of the Carnival Village Trust
– Founder of the Elimu Paddington Mas Band

**Adrianna**
– Performer in the Soca Saga Boys Mas Band.
3.4 Participant Observation:

Cloke et al (2004) contend that the quantitative revolution led to geographers being fixated with spatial techniques that did not grant consideration to humans and their capacity to shape these places. Contrary to quantitative revolutions practices, ethnographic approaches are well-known for empowering people and depicting them as knowledgeable subjects who can enhance academia’s understanding of processes such as place-making (Watson and Till, 2010). There is scepticism towards the sole use of ethnographic approaches in geography; it is a method that attempts to be ‘as little predetermined as possible’ and this causes tensions with documents such as research proposals which seek to highlight the research’s potential outcomes (Jackson, 1983: 45). This scepticism is accounted for by still employing the use of ethnography, through participant observation, albeit in conjunction with arguably more conventional geographical approaches: archives and interviews. Cook (2005) demonstrates that the extent to which a researcher participates or observes does not have to be balanced and is dependent upon the nature of the research: consequently, due to the carnival being a performative celebratory space a strong emphasis was placed on the participatory dimension. Consequently, I decided not to carry a field diary whilst in the carnival. This is influenced by Cook’s (2005) contention that some researchers desire to remain covert in the field settings which allows them to obtain a more authentic experience of their research interest and consequently gain a more reliable perspective. A multitude of pictures were taken of the event in order to capture its lived experience and a field diary was documented after leaving the site (Watson and Till, 2010). It is with this in mind that an enhanced ethnographic writing style will be incorporated into this analysis which will operate descriptive scene-setting techniques (Humphreys and Watson, 2009).
4.0 Notting Hill Carnival’s Place in Britain.

4.1 Observing Notting Hill’s Spectacle

I was exposed to several colourful masquerading performers as I followed the processional route down Ladbroke Grove: a key sight for observing the mobile Mas bands. ‘Trini-dad…Trini-dad’ was the musical chants exploding from the DJ of the Mas Band I was following, who announced this in harmony with the fast-paced and vibrant Soka sounds that were blasting out of the mobile system in the form of a large van (Field Notes, 24/08/15). This is reminiscent of the DJ chanting ‘50th Anniversary’ which really ‘hypes up all the dancers on the float’ (Adri). The constant interaction between the DJ’s vocals and the music always seemed to energise the masquerading performers – who were easily identifiable due to the uniformity in their bright feather-like costumes with the only thing occasionally separating them being their own heritage flag hanging out via their side-pocket (Field Notes, 24/08/15). The visual disturbance of a rainy day on Monday 24th 2015 could not sway the vibrant smells of the jerk chicken and rice n’ pea’s meal that I had purchased from one of the side streets filled with several food stands.

4.2 Notting Hill Carnival, Trinidadian Roots and Colonial Histories

Nonetheless, it is important to assert that this highly spectacular event, the Notting Hill Carnival, is integrally linked to the history of colonialism. Its Trinidadian roots inspired the emergence of the Notting Hill Carnival. Of which, prior to the emancipation of slavery the Trinidad carnival was an annual celebration of the colonial slave masters (Cohen, 1980); it was formerly called Canboulay. Prior to the the takeover of Trinidad by the British Empire, the French colonists initiated the Canboulay whereby they implemented the practice of slave masters’ blackening their faces, which at the time was ‘a signal of disorder’ in the European tradition (Dearden, 1980²) . This blackened face served to justify the carrying-out of spontaneous actions such as the slave masters burning ‘the houses of slaves on their plantation’ (Dearden, 1980²). This is reflective of the significance of orientalist ‘imaginative geographies’ as the slave masters' blackening of their face(s) helped their ‘mind’ to ‘dramatise…what is far’ from their own visual appearance and consequently validate actions that they would otherwise consider to be disorderly (Said, 1978: 55). This has inherent links to orientalism as the slave masters attempted to become an

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embodiment of the orient through adopting ‘blackness’. This blackness is likened to
‘monstrous’ actions that would be carried out by the orients in ‘exotic and bizarre space(s)’
such as the Caribbean (Gregory, 2009: 514). In addition to these practices, it is
unsurprising that the French colonists deemed these carnival events as exclusive and as a
result they forbade the participation by black middle classes and African slaves, unless
they participated as slave performers (Nurse, 2010). In response to this longstanding
exclusion from a celebratory spectacle, the emancipation of slavery in 1834 saw the freed
slaves occupying and laying claim to the territory of the street that they had been
previously excluded from (Tompsett, 2005). Ansel highlights that the freed slaves in
Trinidad marked the event as an annual celebration and it became a site of ‘mimicry of the
[colonial] plantations’ and that this spirit was transcended by the Trinidadian migrants who
entered the United Kingdom and resultantly incorporated it into the London event. The
occupation of public streets is at the heart of the emergence of the Notting Hill Carnival
just as it was integral to the post-emancipation Trinidadian version (Tompsett, 2005).
Consequently, it can be said that both the Trinidadian and Notting Hill Carnivals were born
out of rebellion against former colonial authorities and this is felt in the present-day
operations of the event as there is a constant worry that the ‘masses’ who perform ‘may
shift from mock[ery]’ of the authorities towards ‘real rebellion’ (Gutzmore, 1982³). The
management of this concern is a key factor that has influenced greater policing and
regulating of the carnival. This is dimension that is explored in greater detail in chapter 6.

Moreover, geographers have heightened the need to consider the role of bodily
performances in sites of memory (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000). The use of steel drums is
widely perceived as an integrally important instrument to the emergence of the event in
London. The playing of the steel drums is demonstrated by an image of the Mangrove
Steel Orchestra in the Carnival 1986⁴. The image consists of a group of youth – between
the ages of about 10-16 – performing on the Mangrove Steel Orchestra mas float on
Carnival Sunday, which is the widely known as the children’s day (Figure 1). This
illustrates the continued tradition of the playing of the steel drums around 3 decades after
the event was initially established. In a similar vein, Ansel has declared that it is important
that Black British youth who engage in the Carnival develop ‘an understanding of their
cultural heritage’ which is not always sufficiently produced in the education curriculum.
Consequently, performative practices such as ‘music’ and in this case the playing of an

Collections, File RC/RF/20/03/D
⁴ Masquerading: The Art of the Notting Hill Carnival 1986-7. (1986) Black Cultural
Archives, Collections, File PHOTOS-142, 2
instrument should not be seen to fall neatly outside of ‘the realms of society, politics and economics’ (Revill, 2004: 207). This is reflective of the steel pan being a symbol of poverty and historic social disadvantage (Cohen, 1980).

4.3 Finding a West Indian’s ‘Place’ in Britain

The history inscribed into the streets of Notting Hill gives it great cultural significance to the West-Indian community; the territory consisted of a large black community since the 1950’s (Jackson, 1992). Within this territory, the West-Indian community were exposed to several different forms of racial discrimination. The members of Notting Hill’s caribbean community were prevented from accessing many clubs and pubs and also they were frequently violently attacked by white working-class Britons (Tompsett, 2005). Such factors laid the foundations for the Notting Hill and Nottingham riots in 1958 that subsequently led to the murder of a young black carpenter Kelsoe Cochrane. It is noteworthy that Claudia Jones was inspired to create the carnival in response to disaster of the Race Riots (Tulloch, 1988\(^5\)). Claudia Jones attempted to create a more inclusive

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image of West-Indians in Britain, through establishing the carnival in 1958 (Prescod, 1999). Tulloch (1988) contains an extract from Claudia Jones’ magazine the *West Indian Gazette*, whereby she depicts the main factors that have influenced the need for West Indian’s to obtain their place in Britain:

‘The constant pressure and concern with daily problems of survival; the groping in [West Indian’s] minds for the fundamental significance of their national identity; and the lack of an organised perspective for a progressive, united West Indies at home [in Britain]’ (Jones in Tulloch, 1988).

This growing desire for place by the West Indian community is reflective of cultural geographers asserting that ‘place is [in fact] linked to the formation of personal and group identities’ (Castree, 2009: 163). Darcus Howe (1993) efficiently narrates this increasing desire for a place in Britain. His article was produced in anticipation of the Carnival 1993 and adopts a temporal perspective which highlights that in the 1960’s the black Caribbean community were merely ‘West Indians in somebody else’s place’. A common method that emerged in an attempt to dissolve the pervasiveness of racism in Britain was the implementation of ‘tea and sympathy’ exchanges (Howe, 1993). This would involve white Britons inviting members of the West Indian community into their homes to indulge in the drinking of tea. Such a seemingly innocent and mutually beneficial practice had the covert intention of ‘cultivating’ the West Indian attendees to attain a ‘certain social and cultural finesse’ after regularly indulging in this activity (Howe, 1993). The efforts to reshape aspects of West-Indian identity in order for them to have more ‘cultural finesse’ can be interpreted as having strong resonances with imperialism. As you cannot conceive of imperialism ‘without important…imaginative processes at work’ to ‘subordinated’ targeted subjects in a particular ‘space’ (Said, 1989: 218). However, a resistive spirit to this subversion arose. As there was a heightened desire within the West-Indian community for individuals to be themselves without refining and shaving their identity which subtle imperialist practices such as ‘tea and sympathy’ discreetly entailed. This spirit of rebellion is neatly demonstrated by the performance of Andre Shervington, in the 1966 Carnival, which was richly inspired by his ancestral roots (Howe, 1993). Andre deeply embraced his ancestry through dressing like an African on Britain’s Notting Hill Streets and dancing in the rain ‘bareback and barefoot’ with a ‘spear’ adjoined to his palm (Howe, 1993).

Granting attention Andre’s performance is significant because it was done in a period of time whereby it was not common for the performers to go to this extent of embodying their ancestry. Howe (1993) highlights the impact of Andre’s novel performance and asserted

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that it ‘captured the essence of what [the] carnival was going to become’. The performers may appear ‘ecstatic’ and seemingly ‘possessed’ but this remembrance and celebration of their ‘ancestral’ past is integral to cultural expression at carnival (Dearden, 19807). This illustrates how Sharp’s (2008: 123) contention that spaces of ‘mimicry…[at] colonial administrations’ are merely ‘trivial’ is a simplistic outlook. Carnival is more than an evocative ‘colourful pageantry’; rather, it is a site that influenced the ‘marginalised’ West Indians to ‘shape… [their] cultural identity through resistance, liberation and catharsis’ (Nurse, 2010: 662).

### 4.4 Spectacle Performances as Political Guises

Portes et al (1999) accentuate that within advanced metropolitan centres, there are processes that operate to link Caribbean immigrant’s groups to their ancestral country, respectively. As demonstrated above The Notting Hill Carnival can be suggested to be an exemplifying representation of Portes et al’s (1999) notion. In a similar vein, this is reflective of Adri who has been attending the carnival in excess of 20 years: since she was aged two. She asserts that the likely rationale as to why her Caribbean-born parents brought her along at such a young age is that the Carnival ‘reminded them of back home’. The collectivisation of ‘street partying’, the Caribbean-inspired sensual ‘dancing’, the distinctive and aromatic smells of jerk food are all features that make Adri feel that the Carnival expresses her culture.

Whilst, the Notting Hill Carnival is a space that helps to make Portes et al’s (1999) notion a tangible reality it can be critiqued for being reductionist. As it overlooks diasporic communities’ ability, within metropolitan spaces, to connect with other physically disparate spaces that are beyond the Caribbean ‘home’. This is neatly demonstrated by Nelson Mandela (19938) who declared that the Carnival has evolved to be a ‘splash of colour and spectacle’ that has become a metaphor for a non-racial and democratic future for South Africa (Appendix). This underpins Bosco’s (2004) view that particular places should not be reduced to merely being bounded and enclosed. Instead, geographers have sought to attend to the routes that link places to other places rather than merely looking at a particular locality (Jackson, 2005). This justifies attending to the relations between the Carnival and other places, such as through social networks. Adopting this relational guise, is reflective of attending to the fact that the organiser of the carnival, Claudia Jones, was

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7 See footnote no.2
also a part of an international fascist campaign including one to free Nelson Mandela (Tulloch, 1988). The carnival presents a place that is filled with ‘imaginative geographies’ in which ‘connect[ions]…are elaborated in some registers even [if] they are disavowed in others’ (Gregory, 2004: 256). This is reflective of Carnival 1988, whereby despite the risks of supporting an Anti-Apartheid regime in South Africa the carnival performers still conveyed messages through the guise of artistic spectacle. This is reflective of the Yaa Asatewa Mas Band commemorating South African history in three distinct movements (Tulloch, 1988). The first consisted of costumes symbolising African history, the second sought to narrate an Anti-apartheid narrative and finally the third was about narrating the future. This final stage was performed by children. The semantic meaning behind this final epoch is that children are the future and will be the bearers for a more democratic future for South Africa. This demonstration, which championed the need for a demise of the South African Apartheid regime illustrates that Carnival, can be interpreted as ‘politics masquerading behind cultural [spectacles]’ (Cohen, 1993: 132).

4.5 Summary:

Notting Hill Carnival’s history reveals its fundamental importance in establishing solidarity amongst the West-Indian’s and giving them their ‘place’ within Britain. The Carnival became a conduit for West Indian’s identity in Britain and provided an alternative to the refining of Caribbean culture that practices such as tea and sympathy arguably entailed. It is important that the carnival performers who wear the costumes in the present day continue the legacy of understanding the history of the event (Ansel,). This reflects Elimu Mas Band’s mission to always firmly place their costume-designs within the ‘cultur[al], arts [and] politics’ of Afro-Caribbean history and not subscribe to designs that are too ‘abstract’ and merely festive (Ansel).

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See footnote no.5
5. Commercialising the Notting Hill Carnival.

5.1 The Quest for Controlling Carnival

‘Ha, ha, ha, ha, nobody could stop dis Carnival. Is we ting Carnival, dis Carnival is we ting. Se Bagay nous, not for sale officer, not for Sale!... We Carnival is Boss. Give me tempo, give me tempo’. (Pascal, 1991)

In many ways the Notting Hill Carnival derives from humble beginnings; from 1958 to the early 1970’s the event was operated by a very small group of individuals from the West Indies (Gutzmore, 1982). However, the year of 1975 can be argued to be a turning point for the event’s operation. This year saw the amount of attendees of the event exceed past a million, for the first time. However, it is within this context of the significant carnival growth that opposition grew from local residents, the local police commissioner and a local community action group (Gutzmore, 1982); they sought for the event to be banned or removed from the streets. This resulted in widespread efforts from the Home Secretary attempting to take it off Notting Hill streets and placing in a football stadium such as Millwall’s (Gutzmore, 1982). Unsurprisingly, these developments did not reside well with many of the performing band organisers and members. Consequently, there was the establishment of the Carnival Development Committee (CDC) in the wake of the 1976 riots. Their key mission, at the time, was to ensure that the Home Secretary was unsuccessful in their efforts of evacuating the carnival from Notting Hill (La Rose, 1989). The CDC won the battle but ceased to be victorious in winning the war. With the continuing growth of the carnival there were heightened needs for funding and commercial sponsorship. This placed the CDC in a pressured position. The British authorities capitalised upon this pressuring circumstance by instigating the strategic formation of the Carnival Arts Committee (CAC). The British authorities supported the new committee to a halt and this influenced the eventual demise of the CDC. In many ways, this process illustrates that the ‘British government cannot destroy carnival…but [instead] it can be controlled and licenced’ (La Rose, 1989).

Ansel boldly contends the present-day Carnival is a ‘Caribbean-inspired’ event that has become ‘quintessentially British’. This is influenced by the view that the CAC, who have the greatest share of authority, have empowered the police who see the event as more of

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10 See footnote no.1
11 See footnote no.3.
'public order problem' than a 'cultural festivity' (La Rose, 1989). Despite this, Routledge (2014) accentuates the need for geographers to attend to spaces of social movements that may act as forms of resistance. Notably, in response to the greater control obtained by the British authorities over the event members from a multitude of performing Mas Bands, such as Peoples War Carnival Band, Elimu, Mangrove Steel Orchestra, coalesced and attempted to formulate the Association for a People's Carnival (APC). This new social movement was premised upon re-gaining principles that were key to carnival's fruition; most notably, the freedom to appropriate the streets. Alex Pascal is the former Chairman of the CAC. He departed from the CAC as he favoured the ventures of the new APC and accentuated that in his former role he 'resisted all attempts to sell out the Carnival' (La Rose, 1989: 15).

5.2 The Media and Imaginative Geographies

A key element to the operations of the carnival is the masquerading competitions. This was introduced by Claudia Jones in 1962 and has become a key dimension to the events ceremony ever since (Tulloch, 198813). This consists of prizes for the artistic dimension of the carnival: the best costume, the best Calypso band, the best steel band, the best performing mas band (Ansel). A news publication entitled 'Race Today' produced an article in the wake of carnival 1987 (Witter, 198714). The contents of the article pay considerable attention to the festivity of the event. They highlight the myriad of ways in which the carnival was filled with vibrancy. Ranging from the performers of the Soka Mas Bands proceeding through the carnival with shoulder roll dance moves synchronised harmoniously to the melodic Soka sounds to the performers at the static sounds systems who creatively danced to the 'inventive lyrics of the [Reggae] DJ' (Witter, 1987). However, Ansel emphasises that the media grants insignificant attention to these scenic performative aspects within Europe's largest festival. Rather, news reports and press releases prefer to be laden with the number of arrests at the event and the associated violence. An article produced in 1986 charts that there has been a longstanding tendency for media publications to produce an array of sources, in the pre-carnival build-up, that would create a sense of 'alarm' and 'fear' amongst the wider public (Moore, 198615). The amalgamation of these factors and the omission of attending to the performative aspects

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13 See footnote no.5
results in negative imaginative geographies being inscribed upon the event. The media’s power means that it has the capacity to generate representations of ‘other places’ that the wider public may not have attended such as the Notting Hill Carnival (Gregory, 2009: 369). In particular, by virtue of the media placing greater emphasis on the violence that occurs and less attention to the celebratory performance dimension, it can be argued to heighten ‘fears’ for the wider public in relation to the event (Gregory, 2009: 370). For instance, the opening chapter of Figure 2\textsuperscript{16} consists of a brief narrative that attends to the spectacle and celebratory nature of the event. However, the emboldening of the message in the second paragraph implies that it is the dominant narrative being conveyed by the publication and it serves to illustrate that the violence and social disorder is of superior importance to the cultural aspects. Moreover, incorporating Orford’s (2003) stance on imaginative geographies helps to reveal that the media’s normalisation of its narrative to document Carnival’s violence helps to justify and legitimise greater policing and regulation of the event.

\textsuperscript{16} Moore, T. (1990) Keep it Cool! \textit{Police: The Voice of the Service}. Black Cultural Archives, Collections, Files RC/RF/20/03/D
5.3 Corporate and Local Sponsorship

Nurse (2010) adopts a cultural economy approach to researching the carnival and highlights the increasing precarious nature for carnival organisers and performing bands to obtain sponsorship. A press release document produced by The Greater London Authority documents the continued granting of public funding towards the Notting Hill Carnival despite the extensive publicity of the violence pertained in the 1976 event (The Great London Authority, 1987\textsuperscript{17}). On the whole since the 1976 Riots there has been an increase in private business sponsorship, an increase in public funding and most importantly, and arguably as a consequence of the first two factors, there has been heightened restrictions on the Carnival’s operations by the British authorities (La Rose, 1989\textsuperscript{18}). Waterman (1998: 61) makes the strong suggestion that ‘unless a festival [or carnival] is privately endowed…it is likely to get caught up in the politics’ of ‘the government subsidizers or commercial sponsors’. This is reflective of Carver’s (2000: 42) contention that the continuation of Lilt’s commercial sponsorship for three years, from 1995-1998, was contingent on the event focusing upon the ‘festive aspects’ rather than its deep-seated ‘context’. However, academic attention has only sufficiently granted attention to the corporate level of carnival sponsorship. Rather, processes of commercialisation, within the carnival, is occurring at ‘multiple scales’ (Marston et al, 2009: 665). Consequently, attention needs to be granted to find out if there is ‘operational distinctiveness’ that exists between the corporate (global) and the local ‘scale’ (Marston et al, 2009: 655).

Ansel asserts that there is a challenge in obtaining sponsorship at both the local level and corporate scale, respectively. The local scale is composed of the individual Mas Bands and sound system organisations. Whilst the corporate scale consists of large corporations sponsoring the whole event, this is illustrative of the 1995-1998 events being called ‘the Lilt Notting Hill Carnival’ (Carver, 2000). Nonetheless, individual performing bands are receiving less funds from public bodies such as the British Arts Council. The media’s violence-centric media publications can be argued to be plausible factors that deter many potential sponsors from sponsoring independent Mas Bands. As Ansel underpins, a

\textsuperscript{17} The Great London Authority. (1987) Press Release: The GLA Supports Carnival. Black Cultural Archives, Collections, File RC/RF/20/03/D.
\textsuperscript{18} See footnote 12
corporate company is simply not going to want their brand to be literally written on the back of someone’s clothing in a space that is coined as being filled with ‘social disorder’. Consequently, there is a scarce pool of well-known sponsors for independent bands and by virtue of there only being a small niche this endows these sponsors with greater purchasing power to gain a higher return from sponsoring a band (Ansel). However, even within the context of the heightened need for funding, Andre Shervington is a seminal figure in driving through the importance of the event staying culturally rooted. Andre asserted the importance that those involved in organising the carnival should not merely let the ‘western capitalist(s)’ run with the carnival. In particular, he placed attention on the ground by asserting that individual Mas Bands’ should not go to ‘funding agencies’ with a ‘begging bowl’; rather, Andre implied that they should ‘remain solid’ and find alternative solutions (La Rose, 198919). This illustrates Andre’s cohesive culturally grounded approach to the Carnival. As identified in chapter 4.1, he pushed the boundaries for the carnival performers in 1966 to produce performances that strongly employed their ancestral history. Three decades later he still retained this culturally grounded approach and highlighted the need to not let the essence of carnival be lost to ‘Western capitalist(s)’. Moreover, grounding this perspective further, the carnival is said to be founded on the spirit of self-reliance and community engagement (Hamid, no date20). In this light, it is commonplace that mas band organisers utilise their kinship networks to obtain sponsorship from local enterprises. Devan (1999: 22) contends that the group that obtains the greatest share of authority has the transformative ability to influence what should be ‘forgot[ten]’ by a cultural group. However, the Mas Bands, who have less regulatory authority, still obtain the capacity to retain particular traditions as a form of resistance.

5.4 Summary:

The Carnival is placed in a contradictory stance where it has grown to be a Europe’s largest festival. However, in order to manage this growth, it can be argued that the carnival has become less self-reliant than in previous decades. At a broader scale, the quest for corporate sponsorship results in the event being re-imagined to suit a narrative that is more desirable for the sponsoring body. Consequently, these developments threaten the loss of ‘knowledge’ about West Indian’s ‘struggle’ to establish the carnival in the first place. If this continues to occur, then Darcus Howe accentuates that ‘the carnival as it was conceived is in danger of dying’ (Carver, 2000: 37).

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19 See footnote 12
20 Hamid, R. (no date) Carnival. Black Cultural Archives. Collections, File RC/RF/20/03/D
6. Claiming Notting Hill Carnival’s Streets:

6.1 Regulating Movement in Notting Hill:
Carnival is integrally caught up in a web of power relations; it is of use to attend to the ways in which the event is being continually (re)shaped by this. As Anderson (2010: 53) declares, ‘power’ can be interpreted as a transformative activity, which entails the strategic ability to ‘influence others’ by ‘chang[ing] what they do and where they do [it]’. During my attendance I was amazed at the extent to which, on many of the side streets that were next to the main processional route, several police officers denied the public any access into these roads. Lee Jasper, a member of the Mangrove steel band, coined the streets, that were only accessible by the police, as ‘sterile roads’ (La Rose, 198921). This displays an overt policing strategy whereby the police’s actions are highly visible to the audience’s naked eye. My experience of a carnival that was filled with several ‘sterile roads’ reflects a stern department away from the 1975 event. As the 1975 event is depicted as being a truly free event for the public movement in space: notably, this was the first year that parking was banned which allowed more mobility for the performers (Moore, 198622). Many of the organisers attributed the freedom to a successful carnival event. In contrast to these views, the police felt it was ‘disorganised’ and implemented harsher conditions in the subsequent 1976 event (Moore, 1986). This disparity in views lead to a heavily and overtly policed carnival of 1976 Carnival which resulted in a riot as many performers and organisers despised this strategy and acted accordingly. Trivial breakings of the law such as the unlicensed selling of alcohol or stallholders obstructing the highway were the sort of activities that the police turned a blind eye to in the 1975 event. However, such endeavours in the 1976 event resulted in numerous arrests (Moore, 1986). This coercive policing strategy created ‘palpable oppression’ which impeded on the festive event feeling like an authentic ‘carnival atmosphere’ (Gutzmore,198223).

The police realised the extent to which they imposed on the performers’ ‘freedom’ in 1976 and they consequently introduced subtler strategies for the surveillance of the Carnival. This departure away from overt measures is influenced by a central component to the Carnival’s conception being the ability for the attendees to have the right to ‘spontaneity’ and ‘freedom’ without too much intervention from ‘regulatory authorities’ (Ansel).

Consequently, the post-1976 riots saw the authorities regulating carnival in a manner that

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21 See footnote no. 12.
22 See footnote no. 15.
23 See footnote no. 3.
was likely to have made the performers feel more free and empowered. Contrary to popular belief, the Police Review journal produced in 1986 (Moore, 1986<sup>24</sup>) illustrates the reality that despite fewer police occupying the streets, relative to 1976, there was arguably just as much regulation and surveillance being enforced upon the performers. This consisted of the police authorities discretely occupying local schools and vacant buildings within the Carnival space (Moore, 1986). Video Cameras fed directly into these hidden locations, which meant the police authorities were constantly informed about the day’s proceedings. Subsequently, the police were able to still quickly deploy officers and regulate the carnival but in a way that seemed less imposing on the performers and wider public. This can be interpreted as a panoptic strategy, under the influence of Foucault’s (1977) disciplinary power. This is due to the strategy incorporating ‘minute [and arguably invisible] regulation of bodily…activities’ through the form of disciplinary power (Hannah, 1997: 171). Attending to these subtle panoptic structures reveals the ways in which the carnival is a licenced space where an individual’s freedom is contingent on their activities being rendered as acceptable by the invisible regulators who are well positioned to remove them accordingly.

Moreover, paying critical attention to the physical geography of the Notting Hill Carnival’s processional routes reveals that it ‘reflects every level of empire activity from the making of wealth in plantation and factory to the displaying of it in the grand houses’ (Tompsett, 2005: 49). In particular, the north of area consists of an industrial canal and old factories located behind Kensal Road. Whilst in the south of Notting Hill on premises such as Kensington Park and Westbourne Grove they consist of ‘handsome white stucco fronted houses built with the wealth of empire’ (Tompsett, 2005: 49). Consequently, any changes to the processional route create a risk in destabilising this imaginative geography. Despite this, because of pressures from the local authorities and the police, the physical space that of the carnival has shrunken significantly over the last 3 decades. Meanwhile, the number of attendees is still incrementally increasing; the carnival continues to fly the flag Europe’s largest festival. Resultantly this presents a contradictory space whereby the physical geography of the carnival is getting smaller whilst the number of attendants is still increasing. This leads to various implications on how the performers interact with the space.

The prevention from entering particular streets and changing the physical geography of the route may appear as nothing more than a couple of mundane restrictions;

<sup>24</sup> See footnote no.15
nonetheless, it is integrally important to the cultural performers involved (Anderson, 2010). This is clarified by Ansel declaring that in its original conception Notting Hill Carnival was fixated with the West Indian’s ability to ‘enjoy themselves without the physical boundaries of space’. The appreciation for kinetic movement around the space is always a key consideration for costume designers. The historic geography of the carnival procession routes resembled the shape of a circle. Whereas, the present day carnival processional route (Figure 4) resembles a narrower ‘horse-shoe’ (Ansel). The processional route of 1983 encompassed a much broader area of the Notting Hill area; it extended to to Harrow Road and Kensington Park road (Figure 325). In the present-day roads like Harrow Road are merely used to bring the procession to an abrupt halt for the performing mas bands (Figure 4). Upon Harrow Road, performing bands, such as Ansel’s Elimu Mas Band, are required to move in silence without a treacle of carnival performing behaviour and they are even required to disrobe their larger costumes. In conjunction with this, the present day route has moved further south and no longer encompasses Kensal Road; this serve to destabilise Tompsett’s (2005) imaginative geographies that linked the processional route to the different dimensions of empire activity. This effectively encapsulates that whilst the carnival has grown over the decades it has become a space subject to intensive regulation. Consequently, it can be argued that the performers have less ability to appropriate the space as freely as some of their historic peers and this means they have less scope for cultural expression.

25 Carnival Arts Committee (1986). Notting Hill Carnival’ 83. Black Cultural Archives, Collections, File RF/RC/20/03/D.
Figure 3: The Carnival 1983 Processional Route. Harrow Road is the road located furthest north on the map whilst Kensington Road is the road furthest South.
Figure 4: The Processional Route for the Notting Hill Carnival 2015. (Source: Time Out London, 2015).
6.2 The Performers’ Battle for Notting Hill’s Streets

The extent of mobility that performers and attendees of the Notting Hill Carnival have has become a key interest for policing authorities in recent decades (Jackson, 1988). The method of establishing the 7pm closure of the main processional route in 1988 by the police and the local authority has had profound spatial consequences on the events proceedings. The implementation of such restrictive strategies is reminiscent of the early years of the Trinidadian tradition. Notably, in 1881 the colonial authorities sought to impose a time restriction upon the event (Hamid, no date). Several studies have highlighted that most of the chaotic violence at the carnival happens when the police begin to start closing the main processional route at 7pm (Waddington, 1994). In a similar vein, Carver (2000: 40) likens this post 7pm violence to the performer’s last attack on ‘the structure of authority’ in society. Nonetheless, there is an omission in academics engaging with the battle between different types of performers that takes place as a consequence of this time restriction. The carnival can be argued to consist of at least two types of performers, of whom prior to the 7pm closure, they are situated in different areas of the event. On one hand there is the masquerading performers of the Mas float bands who are located on the main processional routes on the outskirts of the event (Ansel). The sounds that characterise these spaces are traditional sounds that would be found in the Trinidad carnivals: Glitzo, Soka, Zouk and Rio. In many ways, the masquerading performers’ intentions are to perform to an audience. Whilst on the other hand, there are the performers who are there to perform for themselves. They are located within the inner space of the carnival where the sound systems are situated (Ansel). In the present-day carnival the soundscape to these sound systems are truly diverse; they are frequented with an array of international music encompassing everything except the traditional Trinidadian vibes of ‘Soka, Rio and Zouk’ (Ansel). Therefore, a critical inspection of the types of sensory performances reveals that there are quite distinctive features that separate these different types of performers. Consequently, the closing of the main processional route leads to a number of the masquerading performers coalescing and moving into the inner sound system terrain. It should be noted that even prior to the closure of the main processional route, the inner territory, where the fixed sound systems are, is already a ‘battleground’ for who has the loudest and most explosive music (Christie and Jay, 1988). Resultantly, this space, which already has a competitive nature

26 See footnote no. 20
becomes evoked with tension when the masquerading performers arrive. This is partially due to the differentiation between these two types of performers rather than it solely being due to a sudden heightening in the density of the population within a more confined space. It is more complicated than the explanation merely being the alcohol setting in and having a negative effect on a homogenous group of people as Waddington (1994) suggests. This effectively illustrates the extent to which a temporal change to a regime can have unintended spatial consequences.

6.3 Resisting Regulatory Use of Notting Hill’s Streets:

In many ways, the actions by the police and the local authorities can be likened to them attaining dominance over the event. However, within spaces of power, ‘domination and resistance’ are seen as ‘entangle(d)’ (Routledge, 2009: 647). As a result, the heightened policing and regulation of movement in the carnival has not been without several illustrative cases of resistance. On the afternoon of the 1989 Carnival, flaming tensions arose between the police and the Mangrove Steel Band (La Rose, 1989). This tension arose precisely over differentiating views on how the space should be appropriated. The Mangrove Steel Band sought to take a route through the procession that was different to the one espoused by the policing authorities. The band felt the road was too narrow and filled with too many cars. Because of escalating tensions, including numerous arrests of the band’s performers, the Mangrove Steel Band were rejected from entering the carnival.

It is noteworthy to assert that whilst the original 1958 Notting Hill event had no official tag, it is said to have ‘deserved the banner of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity’ (Tulloch, 1988). Consequently, the fact that all the performing Mas Bands – notably, Ebony Steel Band, Eclipse and People War Carnival Band - stopped imminently when they heard that the Mangrove Steel Band were denied entry by the police is a testament to this ‘solidarity’ (La Rose, 1989). The Ebony Steel Band Director, Pepe Francis, effectively encapsulates this resistive spirit, which seeks for the masquerading performers to have full creative agency in how they engage with Notting Hill’s space:

‘Bands provide the spectacle but don’t get any benefit. Other people licence everything on our backs. We should go back to the old freedoms of carnival on the streets. We can take over and form our own body’ (Francis in La Rose, 1989).

This quote illustrates the unease that some of the Mas Band organisers and directors hold in response to the way in which the Carnival’s physical space has come to be licenced

28 See footnote no. 12
29 See footnote no. 5
and regulated. This seeks to tease out the way in which geographical assessments of power are not merely confined to notions of domination. Rather operations by the ‘dominating power is constantly fractured by the struggle of the subordinate’ (Sharp et al, 2009: 21-22).

6.4 Summary:

The way in which the performers have been able to appropriate the physical area of Notting Hill has altered over the decades. The alteration to the Carnival processional routes, over recent decades, destabilises the ability for the performing bands to ensure that the event maintains its traditional use of the physical space. Nonetheless, many of the performing bands have illustrated the ability to rise up and resist to these significant changes in their use of the landscape.
7.0 Conclusion:

Notting Hill Carnival’s history reveals the difficulty that a diasporic group has faced in obtaining free access to the streets and finding their place in Britain. Moreover, Hall (1996) asserts that attending to diasporic identity is not merely about who a cultural group is and where their history derives from. Rather, it is about teasing out what that cultural group may become, how they are being represented in space and the implications that this may have for how they represent themselves (Hall, 1996). Consequently, this highlights the significance of attending to the imaginative geographies inscribed upon the event. Notably, the media’s negative portrayal of the event helps to normalise an imaginative geography of the carnival that is characterised by a sense of ‘fear’ from the public (Gregory, 2009: 665). This fear placed further legitimises narratives that the carnival is a space of social disorder (Tompsett, 2005). This resulted in the British authorities obtaining greater control of the event, under the guise of sponsorship and funding. In conjunction with this, these developments aided the police to implement greater licencing of the event. Ansel emphasise that the event has now become ‘quintessentially British’ partially because of its over-emphasis on public safety and the marginalisation of the cultural dimension of the event. This is neatly encapsulated by the physical geography of the event altering from a shape resembling a circle prior to the 1990’s to a horse-shoe shape that utilises fewer of Notting Hill’s streets. The myriad of these factors encroach on the sobriety and freedom that was so pivotal to the events initial formation (Carver, 2000).

The heightened control and regulation of the carnival heightens the plausibility of Clifford’s (1994: 306) contention that places ‘wax and wane in diasporism, depending on changing possibilities’. Nonetheless, ‘power… is at the root of cultural geography’ (Anderson, 2010: 66). Not only in the form of ‘stabilising borders’ but also in the marginalised groups capacity to resist and ‘destabilise borders' (Anderson, 2010: 66). This resistance is encapsulated by the solidarity of the Mas Bands who literally stopped performing because of the police refusing the entry of the Mangrove Steel Band. This places the carnival in a contradictory space whereby the regulatory authorities continually run the risk of encroaching on the carnival’s fundamental principle: the performer’s freedom to move on the streets.

It is noteworthy to assert that the study was informed by sources that are readily in favour of the performative dimensions of the Notting Hill Carnival. This can marginalise the perspectives of stakeholders who fall outside of this remit: notably the police authorities,
local councils and sponsors. Stoler (2002) accentuates the need to engage with an archive as a site. The Notting Hill Carnival was originally conceived with the intention of helping a new population of West Indian migrants find their place in Britain. In many ways, the formation of the Black Cultural Archives can be said to continue this journey. The Black Cultural Archive centres upon the history of black people within Britain; this destabilises the conventions of westernised archives as exclusive spaces preserved for ‘generally elite sources of knowledge’ (Hannam, 2002: 114).
8.0 Reference List:


9.0 Appendix:

1.0 Introduction:

Alex Pascal (Former Chairman of the Carnival Arts Committee) Poetic Narrative entitled ‘We Ting’ (1991).

“We Ting”
Notting Hill Carnival
“Mas” Confusion

I’ve s-e-e-n and heard it all Lord
Through dis Nottinghill Carnival,
Baachanal nearly s-e-e-nd me mad, mad, mad
Tension, dissension, man and woman leak false information.
Don’t mention ’bout committees C-D-C-A-C-E-C
Dis s-e-e-en tall ah mele and bitter confusion
It change we carnival construction
Yes! no thanks to Mr Ladbroke-D.Grove
And the officers of misinformation;
Murder, media, police and de-press sensation.

A: A; while people jumping in de band
Police milling round and round and round
Action on de bridge, the carnival under seige
News men running wild, tempers flying high
Not a smile from man, woman nor child
Me dear Ms Lolita with she roti stall start to bawl, Lord!
Bon dyé music stop, mas stop, road block, riot start
Mr Speaker the year 1976 was Blue, Bottle and sticks
‘Ah! We carnival turn ole “Mas”
Yes we carnival, dis Nottinghill festival

Before 1965 we strive to keep alive
This glorious celebration
Derived from emancipation, exploitation
Deprivation and immigration.
We carnival, the pride and joy of a Caribbean Nation
On narrow streets where people meet people
In a joyful ripple of nostalgic action
Feeling high in an atmosphere
Eating and Drinking we can of Red Stripe and Carib Beer
Rum, Roti, Mauby, fry fish, rice and peas and we ginger beer
Make this Carnival we annual affair’
Yes, we ting dis Nottinghill Carnival
“Mas” Music and Movement throughout the year
In Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester
Preston, Bristol, Huddersfield, Oxford
Birmingham, Reading and Swindon

In the Boroughs of Brent and Waltham Forest
Scene -- is we carnival jammin’
From London city to Holland
Paris, Nice and Italy
’tween Land and Sea
All ah we jammin’

Every August Bank Holiday dey jammin’
From night till ’foreday morning
All saints, sinners, police and thief
Raggamuffin and nun, politicians and priest jammin’
Inside, outside, front and backside jammin’
“Mas”, music and serious movement
In and out de Grove, man and woman jammin’
In the rain singing a constant refrain we jammin’
Shortney tramping up and down
Shadow playing history ‘mas’ like Jesus carrying the cross
Johnno wid he quatro singing
Ole ‘mas’ is boss
From North to South people come from all about jammin’
Mangrove, Tabernacle, Powis Square,
Under the bridge and Meanwhile Gardens
Is sound jammin’
Wid scoa on de move, we carnival is a party groove

But since Europe come to celebrate
The funding system arrest we gate
And so in nineteen eighty eight
They Orchestrate commercial hate
With a lieband, ‘mas’ debate
And a police raid on December eighth
Lord you should see dem snakes celebrate.
Man, woman and song, but fe how long?
I’ave s-e-n and heard it all
Before and after late
Sey-sey-Joe! na fret, na stuups, just wait
you thought you’d, s-e-e-en and heard it all to date;
Through de press, TV and radio
Well, well, surprise, surprise! take five, take five;

I'll summarise nineteen eighty nine
No Panorama, no Gala, no Bleeches
Just more Police, journalist and horses
And a Zeppelin, a big, big, floating balloon
Flying high in the sky, circling Nottinghill wid de Bill
Like a pirate ship full ah tricks
Space drama without a murmur

Come seven o'clock all roads block
Coppers start to flock
Is bright daylight, sun shining, not dark
Dem tell we party done, home bound
A; A; and that’s not all, is what happen
To all dem people stall
Lord! ah start to bawl, till ah reach
Kensington Town Hall
Is then the penny drop; bap. who dat?
Yes, is who dat get piece of the Berlin Wall wid a scroll
Even dat and all
Yes Massa, top prize, congrats! what a police bacchanal.

God! give we back we carnival
Stop this police bacchanal
Give we back we festival
Yes, is we ting, this Nottinghill Carnival
What, What? who say dem could stop we carnival
Bossman, selector, music, music, turn on the music
Leh we play ‘mas’, come leh we jam
Groove to the music, play de pan, play de pan
Jump in the line and shake you bodyline
Leh we go, leh we go, tempo, tempo.
Chorus chorus chorus don’t play de-R- look
Wine flag woman wine, is we carnival

Last wine, last wine, put you hand on
Me waist and wine, play de bass, play de bass.
Wine Mr pound wine, shake you bum bum
Wine dollar bill wine, wine like a ball a twine
Wine Lira, wine Yen, wine Mark, wine Franc wine
Everybody wine, dat is fete the whole ah Europe
Winting up and down, in London town
White wine, Red wine, wine, you can wine?

Jerk your waist and wine, wave something and wine
Gee wees look we people wine
From head to toe, to Pan Reggae and Kiaso
Wine wid Sparrow wine, Leggo, Leggo
Now put you hand in the air and shake it.
Come on, everybody shake it
Jump to the beat, drag you feet, feel de heat and shake it.
Shake it on the street, come on shake it up and down.
Look man, take off your suit and shake you - Lord
Like Pan gone to she head, she bazadie look the riddim on
she waistline

Play ’Mas’, play ’Mas’, ’Mas’ in you ’Mas’
’Mas’ ah know you, heh-heh-heh, de bill in disguise, you jammin!
Dis ting call carnival, nice, nice, nice, yes ah feeling nice
Hey, hey, hey. Stop who carnival! we Carnival
Is we ting, dis Nottinghill Carnival
Se Bagay nous Notting Hill Carnival Sala

Ha! ha! ha! pass the bottle, pass the bottle
Take a drink leh we celebrate
Ha, ha, ha, ha nobody could stop dis Carnival
Is we ting, Carnival, dis Carnival is we ting.
Se Bagay nous, not for sale officer, not for sale!
Is we ting se bagay nous
Leh we play Mas play mas. We carnival is Boss
Give me tempo, give me tempo.
3.0

Interviews and communication

- Table of interviews and communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Respondent(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21.12.15</td>
<td>Ansel Founder of Elimu Mas Band, Trustee for the Notting Hill Carnival Trust</td>
<td>Notting Hill, London</td>
<td>1 hour 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.10.15</td>
<td>Adri Performer in the Soka Saga Boys.</td>
<td>Croydon, Surrey</td>
<td>58 minutes</td>
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Sample of Transcripts:

Ansel:

A: So I guess that neatly brings me onto my next question in that from my research of you – I understand that you make the link between culture being political. So what is it about costume making, with relation to the carnival, makes it political, if anything?

B: Well for a start, for us, the representation of carnival on the streets and all the performers is always linked to what is called a ‘theme’. The performing group is called a carnival band. A carnival band has a kind of orthodoxy in its presentation which we take from Trinidad. It usually is a king and a queen, a flag woman and a flag man. And then different sections. And each section is differentiated according to the whole theme of the band. What we decided is that if we are to present a band. That theme should always be related to an understanding of the culture, the arts and the history of black people and particularly the Caribbean. Because that is key that they know about it. So that we chose things that could be incorporated into the curriculum. Because we were working with schools. And we were working with young people in youth clubs. So rather than anything about fantasy anything around creativity and abstractness – everything was rooted to culture, arts, politics. And that ranged over the 34 years. Starting from the history of the carnival to looking at a particular festival like Canboulay in Trinidad and then designing costumes around that festival or that historical event which is the burning of the sugar cane before harvesting it. So we would teach young people before we started making costumes – what does Canboulay mean? Canboulay – which is the French – which is the burning of the cane. Why that had to burn the cane to harvest it? Why there was sugar cane production in the Caribbean. What’s the relevance of that in terms of history – in terms of African slavery and so on. So it gave us a good opportunity to explain, explore, all of those issues for young people before we even get to the costume that people were going to be wearing. So that’s the kind of ting, up till modern times which is about 2 or 3 years ago which our theme was ‘There is No Black in The Union Jack’.

A: Paul Gilroy, right?

B: Yes. So what we said is that there is black in the union jack. So we had a black union jack – the whole idea of people of colour who have contributed to the development of
the United Kingdom. So our theme was to show that there is black in the union jack even though it is red, white and blue. The black is Claudia Jones, the black is Septemus and so on. So we took 6 to 7 characters’ personal journeys and said these are the people. Dr Ruginord Capediro – who’s a quantum physicist. He contributed to British knowledge and understanding of quantum physics. He is from Trinidad. Claudia Jones, we know. Mary Seacole, we know. So we took all of these individuals. And the young people themselves were told and searched for that – they would go to the internet and look for Mary Seacole and look for all of these people. And look at what contribution they have made to British society. So they gained the understanding. So when they go on the road and wear their costumes they understand where it comes from. So that was our rationale – that anything we do has to be rooted in education, knowledge and acquisition or history.

: That is interesting. Speaking of Claudia Jones, I understand she’s very integral to the formation of Carnival itself. It’s very interesting to hear that you’ve helped to educate young people to know about the likes of her existence and her contributions. Do you think that, that is still the case in contemporary society? For instance, do younger people and black people in this country know enough about Claudia Jones’ contribution to the Carnival?

B: I think we have not done enough. We have not done enough to try and capture and try to promote the contributions that people from the Caribbean and Africa have made to this society – the British society. I think from the celebrated individuals who have a public profile to the ordinary parents who have struggled, your own grandparents who migrated and came. . .now their struggles, their narratives are important, they’re important for you but they are also important for me and my grandchildren to understand that somewhere in another part of London a family had faced those struggles and what those struggles are is very significant: struggles against corporate greed, struggles against trying to get money for a mortgage, struggles of survival, employment or other indices of development. So for me, the capturing and the archiving and the promoting of those narratives are important and I don’t think that we are doing enough. Yes, we have picked out certain key individuals as a public profile. I’ve started on a project called ‘Lest We Forget’. The idea behind the project is to capture this exactly. So I have a list of 168 people who have died but whom each one have in their own way contributed to the development and the success of integration for black people into this society – British society. And we are hoping to create a website such that when you go onto it – when you click onto one of the 168 names’ it’ll then delve into the history, the biography, the narrative, the photographs and everything about that person. So you know about those people. So you go onto Claudia Jones and you will get the background to her. If you go onto an ordinary person, like Winston Best, many people do not know what his contributions are. He has been very significant in developing education in Britain and working with young people – he set up an influential youth club. This was an important development in North London. But many people would not know about that because it is not propagated. So maybe that is one way of dealing with it. Not only with our carnival band portraying that but also with the digital platforms that young people, from your generation, access. So we have to populate that space – those digital platforms with the narratives, with the successes and with the information about our ancestors, our grandparents or parents and the struggles that they have undertaken. So that for me is important. So Claudia Jones, Lesley Palmer
and all of the pioneers in the London Notting Hill Carnival also have to be recognized. There are some who are still alive and probably people of your generation when they graduate might take on the mantle and complete their narratives. But for the moment I want to focus on the ones who have died – even for the ones who have died, it would have been nice for us to have recruited young graduates to do the research on each individual. There’s no money for that, nobody wants to pay for that. So we have to do it as a self-help project. So I have a link with Leicester University and some of the students who are doing Caribbean literature and so on – volunteered to do the research. There is a lot of scope for young graduates to engage in this area and produce the research and that subsequently become a site of memory for us.

Adri:

A: That’s a very good point. Process of gentrification taking place. It’s interesting that you spot that difference in the shops that are there. Bringing in back to a more personal touch – what would you say to a proposal to move the carnival elsewhere? How important is that it stays in Notting Hill to you?

B: Well, I remember when it was the riots they said that they were even going to cancel the Carnival or move it elsewhere to Hyde Park. That did not settle well with me. It just didn’t feel like it would be Carnival anymore. As you would be restricted to one area. The whole point of Carnival, which makes it so much more fun, is the fact that it is a large mass of people in the street. It is a street party. You do not get that anywhere else. Other carnivals in other areas, for example Hackney Carnival, they shut down about 2-3 roads. But Notting Hill Carnival is the whole area of West London. It is one whole area of West London. So it makes it really diverse. I feel like that is why a lot of people go as well, because there is a lot of different sections to the Carnival by the very nature of it being so big.

A: That is interesting and your perspective is something I have come across in the wider debates about proposals to move the carnival. Moreover, what is your views on the policing of the event?

B: I am up and down because there is some police that are really nice and helpful and there is some police that are just rude and abrupt for no reason. The ones who are rude and abrupt make you feel like they hate it so much and they don’t want to be there. You also see them attacking people – this year’s carnival I saw a girl on the floor and 9 policemen around her and I was just thinking to myself how violent could she really be for 9 officers to have to surround her. But I did hear, I am not sure if this is true or not, one of my friends told me that there’s (I don’t know the official name for it) – but let’s just say there is entertainment police and then there is the actual police that safeguard and the like. The ones that dance with everyone – apparently that is their job in order to try and get everybody together so that it is not such a strict environment every time that you see a police officer. They can be happy and jolly too. I am not sure how true this is.
A: So if we go on the assumption that it’s true, what do you think towards that strategy? Do you admire it?

B: To be honest, when my friend told me that I was like well that explains it because I feel like a few years ago – when one of the first pictures came out in the media with a policeman dancing with a girl – I feel like as that went so viral they latterly used it to their advantage. They saw how that strategy could bring everyone together. They know that people aren’t really ecstatic about the police, in general. A lot of people do not really like policemen. So, I feel like they use that to their advantage to get everyone together.

A: Okay. A lot of the attendees of the Notting Hill Carnival years, are relatively young – perhaps under the age of 25 – what do you think the motive(s) are for younger folk in attending the event?

B: I think the motives for them are: for the boys to get as many numbers from potential girlfriends, girls and for the girls to do the same thing.

A: In the years that you have been attending the carnival would you say that there has been a diluting interest on the role of culture for these younger folk attending the event, in favour of the things that you just pointed out?

B: Yes definitely, I feel like people see it as an opportunity – literally a golden opportunity. People don’t say I want to go to Carnival to enjoy the music and the food anymore because they can listen to music at home and get Caribbean food on their road or something. Rather, I usually hear people saying ‘oh there’s going to be a lot of girls there’ or ‘guys there’. So, it’s potential future girlfriends or boyfriends.
Example of Interview Analysis Coding:

**Coding symbols.**
- **Black** - used for elements that are centred on Culture and establishing West Indian’s place in Britain.
- **Red** – Themes that draw out the sensory dimension of the carnival and its history.
- **Blue** – Themes that draw out the ownership of the carnival. Notably to do with the commercialisation of the event and the British authorities obtaining more control.
- **Green** – Themes that draw out the territorial concerns for carnival. Who’s physical space is it to make use of?

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A: That is a very good account. In my archival research I found that post-1989 there has been constitutional challenges to the carnival in terms of the committee. I understand that there has been disputes between the Carnival Arts
Examples of Archival Analysis:

**Coding symbols** (The same as the ones applied to the interview transcripts).
4.2 ‘it was formerly called Canboulay. Prior to the the takeover of Trinidad by the British Empire, the French colonists initiated the Canboulay whereby they implemented the practice of slave masters’ blackening their faces, which at the time was ‘a signal of disorder’ in the European tradition (Dearden, 1980).
the present-day operations of the event as there is a constant worry that the ‘masses’ who perform ‘may shift from mock[ery]’ of the authorities towards ‘real rebellion’ (Gutzmore, 1982).
4.3 Howe, D article which discusses the ‘tea and sympathy exchanges’ and the performance by Andre Shervington.
4.4 Nelson Mandela speech supporting the cultural spectacle of the Notting Hill Carnival.
5.3 The Great London Authority granting support towards the Notting Hill Carnival in the wake of the social disorder.
6.1 1993 Carnival route (Three decades are illustrated the 1983 event, this one and the recent map of 2015)