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The Colour of Racism

The Criminalisation of Black Music Culture in Postwar  
Britain.

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## Abstract

To understand how British society became entangled in a conflict of cultural conflict, this paper will examine how black music culture influenced the ethnic community and angered the establishment. The research will suggest that the lack of British values led to a crisis within British society, an issue that remained dormant until the end of the First World War. Through misinformation, institutional conflict and cultural differences, the British Government was forced to recognise that unfair policing practices led to the criminalisation of the Black and Asian communities. This study will move to demonstrate that colour is not the central issue, although it has become a method of popular discourse among those who were opposed to a multicultural society, in short racism in Britain is not a matter of Black and White, but cultural distrust and misinformation. The research will suggest that friction between the white British and diverse communities, especially, the Caribbean community is related to issues of social cohesion, values, entitlement and memories of conflict both in Britain and Jamaica long before the Empire Windrush docked in the June of 1948 with a cargo of hopes and old resentments. Furthermore, the study will suggest that previous attempts to resolve relations between the police and ethnic communities by recruiting higher numbers of police officers from non-white communities, has created an environment of prejudice within the force itself. Underpinning all of these assumptions is the premise that the fuel of the last one hundred years of cultural conflict is the black music culture, namely, Jazz, Reggae, Hip Hop and Drill music, all of which have been used to both unite and divide.

## Methodology

To focus this argument, the study will adopt a qualitative approach, using pre-existing data relating to music culture, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities to compare how these factors affect relationships and attitudes within the criminal justice system. To achieve this, the study will build a body of evidence drawn from parliamentary legislation, Government reports and commissioned investigations, academic studies in the field of criminology and newspaper reports.

## Ethics

It is necessary to recognise that this is an emotive subject, which may include racist opinion, therefore, the research should be sensitive to notions of hate, racial prejudice and descriptions of unequal practice. Therefore, the data must be analysed in a non-prejudicial fashion and critique should be focused on factual content and not create unfair judgements towards official or professional practice, neither should prejudicial comment be associated with cultural customs or religious belief. However, it is necessary to review and (or) criticize political attitudes towards ethnic communities and policing methods, where this is included the study will include appropriate evidence to justify such opinions.

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## 1 Introduction

The subject of multiculturalism, ethnic communities and race relations has received its fair share of attention over the last few years, the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, the election of Donald Trump and the killing of George Floyd all receiving significant media attention and polarizing social attitudes. However, these events are not isolated incidents, they are just three monuments in time, their very existence and the impact they had on society are part of a long history of conflict between different cultures. The relationship between Africa and Europe is one of conflict between very different cultures. To suggest that the problem of racial disparity is one of skin colour does not address the real issues of this cultural conflict, skin colour merely highlights the visual difference between the cultures. At this point, it is important to note how language can play a significant role in community relations, when referring to different communities words like black, white, race, mixed-race and a variety of other references can conjure images of the type of people in question and opinions that create hostility (Eberhardt, 2003). However, there is one label that is rarely used, Human, that reference suggests equality. Marx theory of Alienation connects the labelling of different categories of people according to capability and organised labour, attempting to make sense of the fast pace of change during the industrial revolution, Marx suggests that human labelling became an essential part of human advancement (Meszaros, 1970). Much of the Marxist theories can be summarized as a man and his value to society. Since the early nineteenth century, corporate interests have become ever more conflicted with human interests, the development of capital (profit) has become the mainstay of the developed economy. The most significant element of production is the cost of labour, therefore, to decrease cost an evaluation of a person's worth is a useful tool. In this respect, the labelling of different types of people can assist in the valuation of labour. An example of this can be seen during the Nazi era of the 1930s and 40s where enslavement and human devaluation of the Jewish community was part of a system of social control. As Britain and the United States strive to construct a new economy (NeoLiberalism), ethnic differences once again rise to the surface, as this study will reflect in chapter four. This era will lead to an unequal society, not merely on an economic level but principally a human one, to overcome this disparity the once enslaved Afro Caribbean will use music to create only hope but also a community. This construction of community amongst the

Afro Caribbean population was met with hostility from the British establishment, who used previous colonial differences to suggest that the black and Asian communities were nothing more than criminal and immoral. As Eberhardt (2003) argues this subtle suggestion was made easy by the obvious common characteristic of the community, their visual appearance. However, as the first chapter of this study argues, the principle behind this labelling was not appearance but attitude, it was the nature of humanity to demonstrate independence of the state and individualism, however, the state requires obedience. As immigrants arrive on British shores music would become the principal method of cultural identification, soon the medium will begin to influence and educate a generation of Afro Caribbean youths, who, unlike their parents, have to cope with the difficulties of a dual identity. Attempting to exist with one foot in the white community and the other in the black this new generation of British born Afro Caribbean people must have found life very difficult. Boland (2020) refers to this social phenomenon known as “Hybrid identity”, although the writer’s case study focuses on Spanish society and multicultural religious groupings, the research emphasises how the children of immigrants born in their parents adoptive country accept the roots of their heritage alongside the norms of the predominant culture. However, this could cause a cultural conflict on both sides of the cultural divide, especially when sexual relationships are involved. The first study will discuss British colonial rule and the responses to sexual activity, the chapter will analyse some of the first approaches of institutional racism and passive criminality.

## 2 Literature Review

This review will discuss the research of four writers;

1. William Maxwell, *Sampling Authenticity: Rap Music, Postmodernism, and the Ideology of Black Crime*
2. Adam Dunbar, Rap music, race, and perceptions of crime.
3. Mike Brake and Gregory Shank, *Under Heavy Manners: A Consideration of Racism, Black Youth Culture, and Crime in Britain.*
4. Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race and Politics.*

*Maxwell. W (1991) Sampling Authenticity: Rap Music, Postmodernism, and the Ideology of Black Crime.*

The objective of the Maxwell (1991) study is to highlight how new forms of urban music can create a moral panic and cause Policing Institutions to react irrationally. The begins by highlighting how rap not only emphasises violence but almost condones it. Unlike any other genre, the writer suggests that Rap music is a stolen art, borrowing small samples of music from pre-existing recordings. In the light of this observation, rap could be perceived as an illegitimate art form. However, other more accepted practices use similar methods to communicate new ideas, academic research being just one example. However, unlike academic research, rap music chooses to adopt a direct approach when communicating with its audience. To help understand the genre of rap music the author draws similarities with Punk rock, not by comparing the sound but through examining the appeal of the music and the demographic of the audiences. This comparison led the author to suggest that the genre of both Punk and Rap were linked by disenfranchised communities, this connects with the premise of this research paper, suggesting that music holds the power to infuse community and inspire people. Nevertheless, the content of the music raises concerns amongst established institutions, the graphic criminal content suggests that if music has the power

to inspire, what will it inspire its listeners to do? However, the lyrics portray a poetic art form, just as William Shakespeare highlighted war and politics in the fifteenth century, so contemporary Rap artists conjoin strings of words to communicate the complexities of urban culture. Considering the title of this journal article, the research focuses to a greater degree on the music and its legitimacy, than its connection with criminality. However, the author does provide an informative picture of the emergence of Rap music and its influence, and place in music culture.

*Dunbar, A (2019) Rap music, race, and perceptions of crime.*

Similar to the previous writer (Maxwell, 1991), Dunbar (2019) also acknowledges how Rap music is associated with criminality, however, the writer (Dunbar, 2019) maintains a sociological standpoint, the paper aims to dispel the myths regarding rap music. The narrative of this research provides a clear link between criminal stereotypes and black culture, moreover, the writer challenges the authenticity of the presumption that Rap music is the exclusive domain of black culture. This standpoint suggests that society may have associated Rap music with black culture not for the origins of the genre itself, but as a result of the ethnicity of the majority of artists who have become successful Rap musicians. In the same thread, it is easy to associate the black culture with the content of the genre, Dunbar (2019) suggests that the glamorization of criminality through Rap music does not necessarily represent the artists choice of narrative, but the industries need to meet the aspirations of the audience. Dunbar's argument suggests the Rap artists are social researchers and the genre itself is a form of education, providing an insight into urban life, disenfranchisement, inequality and social conflict suffered by the Black and Afro Caribbean community. From Dunbar's (2019) research it is possible to suggest that Rap music is no more responsible for criminality as video games are to violent crime. This paper has a strong argument that challenges the perceptions of the criminal justice system and criticizes the academic community for its lack of research in the field of music culture.

*Brake, M and Shank, G (1983) Under Heavy Manners: A Consideration of Racism, Black Youth Culture, and Crime in Britain.*

The opening statement very much sets the tone of the research, the author's unsubstantiated suggestion that the Conservative government of the early 1980s deliberately inflicted



unemployment on poor communities is both difficult to evidence and overly emotional. The narrative of this paper is angry and emotive, moreover, the narrative is anti-establishment and unbalanced. Although the writers represent perceived attitudes of the time, their research provides little academic evidence and at times overly criticizes government policy in an unfair and biased manner. The research is very critical of policing tactics, furthermore, the writers make sweeping statements regarding the adolescent male black community, suggesting that unemployment amongst black males leads to drug use and other forms of criminality. This pendulum from one standpoint to another, neither seeks to address the issue or provide any explanation for the actions of the police, government or the community. However, the paper does provide a good historical account of cultural difficulties and a variety of statistics that are aimed at emphasizing their standpoint, subsequently, the objective of the paper is unclear. However, the paper provides good background knowledge and would provide an excellent overview of the emotions experienced by the different communities of the era.

The previous three writers have provided a good basis of sentiment and raw emotion accurately portraying the perception of the era (Brake, M and Shank, G, 1983), as well as a clear understanding of the emergence of Rap music and its perception as both a legitimate and established genre (Maxwell, 1991). Further research has provided a concise base of knowledge in regards to the cultural ownership of Rap music and the message it offers (Dunbar, 2019). The next review moves away from British black music culture and concentrates on the roots of cultural prejudice and the use of misinformation as a form of social control.

*Levine (2003) Prostitution, Race and Politics. Chapter 7 - Prostitution, Race and Empire.*

The premise of this chapter concerns itself with three fundamental ideas, health, morality and mobility. Levine (2003) clearly explains how the dominant ruling culture attempts to apply social control over women in the colonised regions, principally for the purposes of hygiene and morality. However, there is another underlying principle behind the need to regulate prostitution. The writer establishes the link between the sex trade and financial requirements, suggesting that women who work as prostitutes are not perverse or immoral they are merely attempting to raise enough money to provide for basic necessities. However, much like the Black music culture, which is assumed to

promote criminal behaviours, prostitution is also linked with criminality. however, in this instance, it is assumed that criminality leads to prostitution, whichever direction this assumption flows the basic premise of this misinformation is remains the same. When white western culture encounters a phenomenon by which it feels it has no control, those in power, either socially or politically associate a false assumption to the problem with the aim of creating moral panic and widespread condemnation. As the writer suggests these falsehoods help to justify penalties that may be considered unfairly severe. Overall prostitution was used by policymakers to justify colonisation, suggesting that the particular society was in moral decline, full of disease and criminality, in this instance the writer (Levine, 2003) suggests that the prostitute became a scapegoat and maybe the very epitome of the moral decline of society itself, however, the men who used their services are barely mentioned.

### 3 Roots of Prejudice

The most obvious distinction between white British and colonial communities would be skin colour, however, as this chapter will argue, an individual's appearance constitutes only a small part of the discussion of racism. The principal factor is culture, which involves notions of civilized practices and values.

Britain's relationship with foreign civilizations could be described as contrasted, attitudes towards other cultures vary from welcome opportunity to undesirable alien. These very different opinions are influenced primarily by circumstance, whether the association is encountered at home or abroad. This chapter will discuss both of these settings, starting with attitudes towards nineteenth-century women in the colonies, then moving the emphasis to early twentieth century Liverpool and the broad range of working men and their interaction with English society. The final part of the chapter will suggest how these two periods are connected and the implications for social cohesion at home. Arriving as masters of countries such as India, South Africa, Australia and Hong Kong, Britain's primary objective may have been economic, however, its attitude towards gendered roles became one of civilised values, for men the ideal was the building of society, for women the expansion of population (Hall, 2007). Arriving on foreign shores the Christian Missionaries, Administrators, Military leaders and Governors found a different reality to that back in Britain. Levine (2003) discusses how attitudes towards indigenous women painted a picture of disease-carrying women of questionable values, far from the image of nurturers and the family makers expected by British Victorian society. The question of prostitution and its relationship with military men caused much concern in the colonies (Levine, 2003). Firstly, there was the matter of sexual hygiene, referred to as venereal disease (VD), so great was the anxiety that legislation was passed in the 1850s to control and regulate the spread of the infectious diseases, primarily those of a sexually transmitted nature. This legislation created prejudice and inequality, requiring ingenious prostitutes to register the occupation. As Britain's occupation of the colonies continued to increase so also attitudes and prejudice, leading to the consideration that the majority of women in the colonies were prostitutes and therefore a hygiene and health risk or to reframe perceptions, dirty and immoral. However, there may have been other elements at work underpinning subtle objectives and narratives. Degenhardt (2014) reflects on social norms, suggesting that prostitution

is incompatible with the values of family units and the privacy of sexual acts. Furthermore, the writer (Ibid) discusses the financial benefits of prostitution, this introduces notions of feminine independence, which in itself disrupts the established role of gender and identity. The very existence of prostitution could be considered as rebellious and insubordinate, to allow such activities to challenge the dominant authority could be considered an intolerable threat to British rule, especially when such authority is not welcome by all. Therefore, any move to create an outrageous affront on to British values, in suggesting an exaggerated threat to society, popular social thinking believes the political propaganda and is duly outraged and simultaneously reassured by the actions of those in authority. Using misinformation subjects people to unfair impressions and prejudice. Whatever the intentions of colonial rulers, their acts and attitudes towards women in the colonies would have long term consequences. However, this would not have been deemed an issue for nineteenth-century politicians as there would have been little or no thought that Indian or Chinese women would come to form cohabiting societies with white communities in Motherland Britain.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Liverpool was regarded as a world-class city, renowned for commerce and cosmopolitanism (Belchem, 2014), far from prejudice the writer (Ibid) suggests that the presence of foreign nationals was a welcome addition, which formed a significant part of the cities character setting it apart from other cities in the northern British provinces. In less than a hundred years Liverpool had transformed itself from the epicentre of the British slave trade, with its connection to racial indifference, to a celebrated global hub. The changing landscape of the cities also provided new forms of entertainment and new opportunities, Belchem (2014) suggest that reminders of the American slave culture provided entertainment for visiting sailors in the form of a dance genre known as la Juba, described as a fast rhythmic dance performed with a group of people to the music of a fiddle (Dett, 1913). The racial undertones and foundation of Afro-American slavery must have seemed alien to working-class Englishmen, however, with a diversity of people in the city is followed by a diversity of culture. Belchem (2014) suggests that African Americans experienced a sense of freedom from prejudice in Liverpool that Americans would not be so generous to allow them to experience. Visiting foreign nationals, including Asians and those of African descent enjoyed a sense of liberation in Liverpool, however, the onset of war would

change these characteristics and tensions between white British citizens and Black and Asian migrants would lead to hostility and even violence. Belchem's (2014) study maintains that attitudes towards once welcome visitors shifted to a notion of entitlement and loyalty. Inter-race relationships became an unexpected and unwelcome phenomenon (Belchem, 2014; Bland, 2005). Bland (2005) suggests that the hostility towards Black men in relations with White women was considered as sexually immoral, the years during and immediately after the first world war were a time of social tension. The regular requirement of proof of identity, which could be perceived as an early form of contemporary "stop and search" was met with hostility (Belchem, 2014). The benefits of cosmopolitanism soon faded away, riots on the grounds of race were not the exclusive domain of Liverpool, but also other Northern British cities including Glasgow and Hull (Belchem, 2014; Bland, 2005). The post-war depression would experience further riots, violence and civil disobedience. A lack of employment and poor living conditions began a period of marginalisation of mainly Blacks (Belchem, 2014). Returning from war to Liverpool, a place some Afro Caribbean men called home, they found a city very different from the one they left a few years earlier. They may have been considered loyal subjects on the battlefields of Europe, but they were rapidly becoming unwelcome amongst once familiar communities.

Although these two examples of prejudice do not fully represent a fully inclusive study of racism in Britain, they do create a colourful illustration of how ordinary British citizens, military personnel and politicians alike, both at home and abroad, not only reacted to the challenges of a multicultural society but also managed the perceptions of social opinion. With a firm emphasis on trade and commerce, the objectives of the empire were achieved by establishing a balance between a strong economy and social values. Consequently, to maintain such a balance certain moral ideals were deliberately overlooked, for example, prostitution, such was the case in dockland cities such as Liverpool. However, this was considered an advantageous move within the borders of the motherland, although it was far from tolerated in the colonies. These polarized attitudes may have represented a sense of dominant entitlement on the grounds of superior citizenship, nevertheless, impressions of slave management and objects may still have been a dominant factor when relating to colonised citizens long after abolition. The true purpose of Britain's imperial objective was to dominate and not incorporate multicultural society, this could be achieved by separating the races,

however, sexual relations both by marriage and prostitution perhaps threatened and maybe even weakened that objective. Therefore, it could be suggested that racial prejudice was a political construct to maintain authoritarian dominance. The next chapter will explore immigration during the postwar years from the late 1940s onwards. The objective is to establish how socio-political values were challenged by the perceived threat of a multicultural society and implications for community cohesion as migrants from the former colonies established their British citizenship during a period of social transformation.

## 4 Conflict of etiquette

As migrants began to settle in Britain, society expected these new communities to assimilate to British values, however, the early postwar years were a time of both social, economic and political transformation. This chapter will discuss how the expectation of national values was replaced by civil membership.

Social cohesion is not a matter of a cohort of individuals who naturally respect one and others beliefs, privacy or rights. Goffman (1956) discusses how a combination of political will, laws and customary expectations, such as dress codes and greetings, all combine to establish how general society coexists in relative peace. However, there is also a third dimension to this social construct, Berkowitz (2004) examines how society can be affected by the attitudes of those with power and authority, such as politicians and the media; this type of social influence is known as social norms theory. This paragraph will discuss how social etiquette is challenged by social norms, a contemporary example of this conflict can be viewed through the lens of fashion. A person wearing ripped jeans in public could be seen as acceptable, the fashion industry and social media create trends to direct its products, however, a ripped coat or shirt could be perceived as unacceptable. Society's idea of what is considered acceptable depends on the social influences, as with fashion the internet, social media and celebrity create a norm. Another example of social acceptability is tattooing (Treadwell, 2014) this particular topic creates a variety of responses, which depend on how the image is represented, whether it be a love heart on somebody's arm or a teardrop on another's face, which could be perceived as the representation of a criminal offence. As the last chapter discussed another example of social norm theory is the belief that all Indian women are prostitutes (Levine, 2003), this attitude became part of popular nineteenth-century colonial thinking not by gossip, but as a result of political opinion, the predominant social influencer of the period. In a time before mass communications political views shaped how society perceived social etiquette, for example, the working class would not need to concern themselves with the proper procedures of afternoon tea. These examples demonstrate how society constructs opinions of people and everyday culture; social norms theory suggests that the higher the authority the greater the influence (Prosser, 1998). However, the theory also suggests that these influences are based on distortions of the truth, in contemporary society this could be perceived as spin. However, as

the next part of this chapter argues, postwar racial opinion was influenced by political elites as part of a plan to instil a greater sense of British values at a time when Britain and Britishness was experiencing a period of flux.

Towards the end of the previous chapter the study acknowledged how combining different cultures could be perceived as a threat to British values, intercultural marriage represents a prime example, another being the labour market. Prosner (1998) suggests that political opinion can provoke discrimination through the promotion of values. However, these values may not necessarily derive from the established political system and actors such as the media, trade unions or other community leaders, for example, the church, all influence public opinion. This paragraph will discuss how Britishness became lost in the postwar years of the 1940s and how the arrival of Afro Caribbeans threatened the balance of British values. Examining national identity through the lens of education, Revell and Bryan (2018) suggest that there has never been any definitive sense of British values. The writers (Ibid) argue that in the absence of any consensus of Britishness, the vacuum has been filled with a requirement for national responsibility. When this is translated to the general population there is no distinction between Natural and overseas citizenship, therefore a sense of membership can be claimed by any person, whether British or not, who believes they fulfil the expectation of responsibility to the state and society. Figures such as Mosley and Powell suggest that the National responsibility for Britain rests on the shoulders of the British people (Taylor, 2018). However, public policy makes no such presumption, consequently, these opinions lead to conflict and riots, such as that of 1958 in Notting Hill, London (Taylor, 2018). In the absence of constitutional Values, the foundation of social conflict becomes a cultural issue, which will be discussed further in the next chapter. The next part of this study will now examine political responses to the new post-war diversity.

The post-war years of the 1940s brought about significant change for Britain, both politically and socially, however, the most notable and least discussed change was that of national identity. Kumar (2006) suggests that among the four nations of Britain, the English are most reluctant to demonstrate or promote any sense of national identity. Consequently, Englishness became an issue, not of heritage but conquest and achievement (Ibid), the origins of this change in social attitude can be seen in nineteenth-century victorian science and Darwinism specifically,



Strawbridge (1988) argues that the conquest of scientific achievements superseded that of social concern and replaced identity with a sense of superiority. Subsequently, the second world war was won and another type of empire was defeated, however, the conflict created a political and social vacuum; to the British and its empire, Nazism could have been perceived as a reflection of all that was wrong with British colonialism. Furthermore, the destruction of world war two caused British priorities to shift from overseas conquests to homeland social issues, this was especially poignant for England. The remainder of this chapter will discuss how the British Nationality Act (1948) (BNA) had implications for the social fabric of Britain from the later part of the twentieth century. In relation to these early social issues, further chapters in this study will examine how initial prejudices became entrenched in the criminalisation of the sons and daughters of the so-called “Empire Windrush generation”, subsequently creating conflict between community and state, which consequently produced a sense of otherness towards entire communities and cultures. Europe by the end of the war with Germany experienced an extraordinary geographic and social transformation across the continent, however, as Britain’s colonial interests incorporated multiple continents the empire was plunged into crisis, the most notable call for sovereignty came from India. The commonwealth’s crisis of citizenships was brought to the forefront not by India but as a result of political changes in Canada (Hansen, 2000), the writer (Ibid) suggests that BNA was an instrument for citizenship and a definition of British identity, moreover, its original purpose was not as an immigration invite to existing and former colonies of the empire. This suggests that the primary purpose of the 1948 Act was to strengthen ties between countries such as Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and Britain, however, The BNA itself makes no mention of the Caribbean colonies, which are still part of the British empire. Subsequently, interpretations of the BNA varied between the Westminster Government and ordinary citizens of colonial Britain, however, the failings of the BNA would come to cause social issues as citizens of the West Indies arrived in Britain to seek employment. The rigidity of the BNA restricted definitions of British nationality to that of geographic residents and entitlements of citizenship, however, British Caribbeans arrived in London with little or no knowledge of British Values or customs, therefore, it could have been very easy to offend the almost exclusive white communities. Chessum (2017) considers how Black immigrants were subject to simultaneous gestures of acceptance and rejections, they were considered a vital part of postwar labour shortages, however, they were not

welcome to live in established British communities. The writer (Ibid) provides a clue as to why these attitudes may have existed, focusing on postwar Leicester Chessum (2017) suggest that both emigration was as much a factor as immigration, however, British nationals moving abroad settled in predominantly white counties such as Australia or Canada, this suggests that the bonds of British heritage and common ancestry may have drawn them to these countries. However, using this idea, immigration produces a problem of social conflict, Caribbean heritage has no such British connection. Therefore, the new arrivals could be considered aliens by the settled white communities, however, British by entitlement. With no definitive idea of what it meant to be British, both communities would inevitably become entangled in conflict as the new arrivals were never officially inhibited from maintaining the customs and values of their individual heritage. By the early postwar years, Britain would experience expressions of national pride not of their own heritage but that of a foreign community, therefore, creating a crisis of identity amongst white communities on their own doorstep.

## 5 Expression of culture or social threat

The objective of this chapter is to understand how Afro Caribbean influences challenged the boundaries of cultural expression in British society and helped unite the generations in a new community through jazz music.

Cultural expression can be driven by a variety of different factors, fashion, religion, politics and even food, however, it could be said that the most influential factor is music. This was demonstrated clearly during the second world war, with artists such as Vera Lynn. Reflecting on Lynn's morale-boosting efforts, Moss (2020) suggests that music can generate a sense of collective strength and social identity. However, Black Caribbean Jazz created a new tone, unlike Vera Lynn's Sentiments of Britishness with songs such as "The White Cliffs of Dover". Jazz completely changed the tone of music culture and with it forged a new sense of cultural and social capital. McKay's (2003) study of 1950s British Jazz music suggests that the genre became political and associated itself with early cold war politics and protest movement CND. This may have given the impression that the jazz genre had rebellious tendencies capable of challenging the ideological anti-communist stance of both British and western world governments, however, British jazz was in its infancy and McKay offers an alternative explanation and more fitting with the culture, that it was merely attempting to increase its popularity and cultural following. However, the establishment could have used the association with the CND movement to construct a recognised narrative, namely, black culture is the hidden enemy within. Early British jazz may not have had the following to challenge government policy, moreover, influence British international relations, however, the genre was beginning to build community and socially influence black Afro Caribbeans, if not unite them. Further exploration of jazz would demonstrate how the genre evolved and become a powerful voice for British youth both black and white, the hip hop genre, a form of contemporary poetry, would become a movement both political and powerful. As popular culture became big business, jazz always struggled to break out and become economically viable (Banks et al., 2014). However, the genre gained social capital and gave a voice and sense of membership to Afro Caribbean immigrants, especially in the inner city, at a time when music culture was incorporated into the fabric of social identification. Unlike the rock and roll genre, jazz was able to unite generations (Ibid) and strengthen communities. Research by Banks et al. (2014)

suggests that jazz in the 1970s and 1980s became a symbol of resilience similar to that of Vera Lynn in the 1940s. It could be said that jazz helped unite the Caribbean immigrants and create support communities at a time of racial unrest (Toynbee, 2013). However, the establishment considered jazz as a dangerous influence, Toynbee (2013) echoes McKay's (2013) analysis that jazz music was considered political and anti-establishment. This became all more apparent as the economic transformations of the late 1970s and early 1980s created significant inequalities, causing the disenfranchisement of almost all of the British Black community (Toynbee, 2013). By this time the sound was changing and so to the attitude, jazz was finding a new voice and politics were the central message, these were to become truly dangerous times.

The last paragraph explored how music culture helped unite communities during key points in history, the perception of jazz as a dangerous instrument of anti-establishment norms was misperceived by political leaders, some might say this was created deliberately to incite anti-immigrant sentiment for the purpose of political capital. However, the subtleties of misinformation during the 1950s and 1960s were about to be replaced by a new sound, jazz was now about to evolve and enter a new era with a clear and blatant message. The very community that nurtured the younger generation of jazz artists may have regarded the reggae and hip hop genre as beyond the spirit of jazz culture, however, this new sound evolved from the very same foundation of jazz itself. Williams (2010) suggests that the jazz genre became a symbol of black culture in the 1980s, influencing the black community, influencing society at an academic level and sparking black empowerment at a political level, eventually evolving into hip hop. Early hip hop was independent, energetic and political, the genre challenged sexuality, especially the dominance of patriarchal society (Perry, 2004) and featuring a Marxist message (Williams, 2010). By the 1970s other music genres had an impact on society, reggae music began to influence the black community, so strong was the narrative that followers began to establish a sense of identity through its message. The genre gained popularity through the works of Bob Marley, the lyrics openly brought notions of social injustice and equal rights to a community in cultural turmoil, however, with its connections to Rastafarianism illicit drugs became the establishment's principal concern (Schreiber, 2019). This conflict of culture and state would fuel a battle of cultures between the black community and

London's Metropolitan police by the turn of the decade, resulting in social unrest and rioting in south London.

By the early part of the 1980s, most of the popular music content concentrated on romance, however, a small cluster of musicians incorporated a strong and challenging message into their lyrics. The British Jamaican band Musical Youth found success with a song about poverty, the band was composed of a group of children from Birmingham, England. Their song "Pass the dutchie" had a highly charged message. Johnson (2018) suggests that the song about a traditional Jamaican meal was misinterpreted as a glamorisation of drugs. The song incorporated a sound unlike any other in popular music culture at the time. The opening lyric suggested a challenge to established society, referring to authority and undermining established social culture (Johnson, 2018). Achieving the accolade of the highest-rated song throughout Britain and Europe during the summer of 1982, the band demonstrated that black music culture could deliver a powerful message, with the essence of the song referring to a lack of basic necessities, food. While other artists represented love and relationships with their songs, Musical Youth openly brought social inequality to an already buckling society during a time of economic transformation. Politically, the Government of the 1980s pursued policies that brought Britain's industrial era to an end, moreover, the transformation ushered through a period of expressive liberty. Another example of the incorporation of race and popular culture is the 1980 pop song "embarrassment" by an all-white London band, Madness. Duffy (2005) reports how the band reflected on the social attitudes towards mix race sexual relations. The song itself was highly charged, the lyrics and tune relayed a realistic fear amongst communities at that time, albeit in a subtle and almost passive manner. Both songs accurately portrayed the cultural fears and disappointments of British life in the 1980s, however, the reggae band Musical youth, set a precedent and challenged the establishment, by highlighting the disenfranchisement that was felt by many in the black community. Just as a century earlier with Indian prostitutes, the black community was demonstrating a sense of independence, the popularity of the genre gained a sense of social capital. Although the black community established strong geographical communities such as Brixton in south London and Handsworth, Birmingham, employment, education and economic inequalities continued to exist. However, music would become the medium providing the power and influence the black

community required to find the strength to maintain a sense of identity and social membership, this would become essential to the era that was to follow. Social change and the realignment of society from micro-communities to macro society threatened to create an increased sense of disenfranchisement among immigrant communities, which would impact the Afro Caribbean youth more than any other. The 1980s social attitudes, influenced by decades of political brinkmanship, brought communities to the point of conflict. The music that once influenced the black youth was now about to be utilised to criminalise an entire community with disastrous effect and it all began with a house fire in south London.

## 6 The foundations of institutional prejudice

The aim of this chapter is to examine how the settlement of Black culture in Britain during the 1970s and 1980s led to conflict and civil unrest. The study will examine how reggae music inspired and strengthened the black community during a time of economic transformation and the effect on social injustice.

Barber (2010) argues that racism is based on the human and political need to categorise, the writer discusses how politics has become the principal influence of this practice. The writer's narrative continues to argue that this categorisation process creates natural, social and economic inequalities. The premise of this discussion (Ibid) almost presumes that race itself creates a divide amongst communities, which suggests a sense of inevitability beyond the control of society and influenced by economic need. However, this chapter will argue that the racial divide was part of the economic transformation of the 1980s and the introduction of neoliberal society. As discussed in the previous chapter, the message of black music culture focused on rights and equality, however, this is not compatible with neoliberalism, political will in the 1980s turned Britain away from socialism and towards economic opportunity. Kapoor (2011) discusses how racism and neoliberalism are one of the same, unlike Barber's suggestion of human need and economic balance, Kapoor's research moves the narrative towards an act of ethnic cleansing. Moreover, the writer suggests that the Thatcherite Government of the 1980s was very aware of the inequalities in the new economic policies and exploited the problem for political capital. This in turn created a state-sponsored culture of division, suggesting that the instruments of the state, namely the police, were permitted to institute a state of cultural conflict (Kapoor, 2011). However, the true conflict for those in the black communities was not economic success, but identity and membership. Jefferson (2012) provides an in-depth account of the roots of social and cultural conflict in the early 1980s, which culminated in a series of civil disturbances throughout Britain. The paper (Ibid) highlights two principal factors that led to conflicted police and community relations, firstly aggressive policing methods, and secondly, unsubstantiated claims of a high level of street crimes involving black youths. Underpinning these two elements was the Government's neoliberal policy. Jefferson (2012) suggests that the police were over-bearing and overly suspicious of the black community, furthermore, the force was supportive of political anti-race organisations such as the National Front.

Kapoor (2011) boldly argues that such aggressive policing was part of a project to create conflict between the police and the black community. This is corroborated by Jefferson's research, this suggests that a large amount of stop and search procedures carried out by police in Brixton prior to the 1981 riot may have been a deliberate attempt to provoke conflict. Other such provocations occurred during the same period across England. It is a bold statement to suggest that in the light of only circumstantial evidence of black street crime, provoking the black community into an act of violence would provide the police with substantial evidence to link black youths to undeniable criminal activity. When labelling a community or race of people factors such as geographic location, Howarth (2002) discusses how an entire community can be stigmatised, another prominent factor is culture, this could be divided into a variety of meanings, traditional wears, food and the arts. As discussed in the previous chapter (Banks et al, 2014), music became a strong element in the formation of black identity. However, Williams (2010) discusses how black music culture is in conflict with the white western arts, suggesting that film media portrays jazz as having criminal elements, this fictional representation could cause a sense of moral panic and therefore be labelled as dangerous to society. As the narrative of reggae music moved towards a political agenda, black music culture could now be perceived as not only anti-establishment but more essentially seditious. Anti-establishment sentiments in music culture were not exclusively restricted to the black community, 1970s punk rock also provoked concern within society, however, the panic was short-lived and never prompted a criminal subterfuge. Nevertheless, the two genres share similar traits, Moliterno (2012) argues that punk began as an anti-racist cultural movement, however, punk became hijacked by racists groups, the writer suggests that prominent figures within the punk culture aligned themselves with the National Front, a political group at the forefront of the racial and social unrest in the 1980s. Moreover, the punk genre almost became the anthem of the anti-immigrant agenda and the protests that followed, no longer was punk rock the enemy within, but the energy behind the cultural fear and growing conflict. Therefore, it could be argued the cultural foundations of the racial unrest of the early 1980s was music and specifically how the message was received by the different communities.

The social unrest of 1981 led to a government enquiry, known as the Scarman report, Gramaglia (2007) provides a revealing insight into the events of the April riot. The writer suggests that a



significant amount of hostility and distrust existed between the police and the community, recalling that acts of assistance by the police towards injured civilians was being mistaken as hostility towards the rioters. However, underhanded tactics were being employed by the Metropolitan Police, the writer (Ibid) suggests that stop and search was being employed by plainclothes officers, far from preventing further criminality the searches increase hostility. Several hours of violence followed, fueled by rumours of heavy handed police tactics (Gramaglia, 2007). The Scarman report found that social inequalities, unemployment and poor living conditions were the main reasons for the unrest, the same narrative of popular black music of the time, by focusing on social implications Scarman steered the review away from racial tensions (BBC News, 2004), suggesting that the riots were social and not racial in nature. Although there is plenty of evidence to support this finding, the images of that time undoubtedly feature a conflict between black civilians and white police officers. In comparison, the miner's dispute of a mere three years later featured a similar confrontation between civilians and police, this time both parties were white. It may be acceptable to suggest that the 1981 riots were not a racist conflict, however, statistics show how the issues that fueled the conflict affected the Asian and Afro Caribbean community more than the white British community (BBC News, 2004). On this premise, race was a significant factor, which if officially admitted could cause a crisis within the British Government, any proof of institutional racism could suggest a two-tier system of governance and undermining the newly emerging neoliberal agenda. Moreover, the Scarman report led to significant changes in police powers. Lord Scarman presented a report that suggested that the police were not properly trained to police ethnic communities. With a lack of cultural representation within the force. However, the report would lead to a new and damaging era in policing in Britain, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the introduction of stop and search powers (GOV.UK, 2013). In the final chapter, the research will move toward attitudes within the Police as an institution and the damage caused by stop and search events. Furthermore, the research will examine how the murder of a Black teenager led to an admission of institutional racism. The last part of chapter five will discuss how after nearly forty years since the Scarman report black music culture has once again led to a cultural conflict, which has implications for free speech.

## 7 Crisis in the ranks

From the 1990s mobility within ethnic communities has been improving as second-generation Asian, African and Caribbean children receive schooling qualifications akin to the social norm. However, Afro Caribbean adolescence continues to be disadvantaged, to the cost of their safety. This chapter will discuss how decades of conflict between the mainly black community and the police led to a public relations catastrophe and an inevitable truth, in short, the police are officially judged as racist.

A study of Hall's (1999) analysis of race relations in Britain between the early 1980s and the late 1990s suggests that once again British people face another crisis of identity, the writer (Ibid) suggests that unpopular, yet imposing, membership of the European Union coupled with the British devolution of Wales and Scotland led to a redefinition of Britishness. This would lead to mixed results in respect of dual identity (Park et al., 2013), surveys demonstrated that post-devolution led to a significant decline in British nationality identification and this applied to both Scotland and England. Moreover, the 1990s would experience a cultural revolution, for the first time the 1991 national census would include data regarding national identity, however, the term Black British would not be included for another ten years, 2001 (Laux, 2019). Both of these changes could be perceived as a result of cultural tensions and events of the 1980s and 1990s, they are a clear attempt to offer ethnic communities an opportunity to have their ethnicity and communities recognised both socially and politically. However, political recognition alone was evidently not enough to alter the views of the institution charged with law and order, the police. The next part of this study will examine how police officers can enforce the law while maintaining individual social and political opinions. A mere twelve years after the Scarman report and death of a black teenager in south London brings racism once again to the forefront of public concern. However, over a decade further on from the Brixton riot Li (2018) offers a positive view of ethnic integration in Britain post Brixton, the writer suggests that second-generation immigrants have greater social mobility and are better educated than their parents. The writer (Ibid) explains these changes through greater awareness of social welfare and educational attainment with full British recognition (GCSE's) as an explanation of greater success amongst British born Africans, Caribbean and Asians. Nevertheless, the Afro Caribbean community achieves less than all other

cultures including, the white community, Asian and black African. One suggestion for this could relate to strong cultural bonds, the data (Li, 2018) clearly conveys a distinct difference between the educational attainment of Black Caribbean women and their male counterparts, female Afro Caribbeans are more than 30 per cent more likely to graduate with a degree level qualification than Caribbean males. A possible explanation for this may relate to family expectations or the influence (or lack) of male role models, however, with a less educated Afro Caribbean cohort it is much easier to assume that Caribbean men have a greater interest in criminality than their more educated counterparts in other communities. The divergence between Afro Caribbean communities and other ethnic societies could be the result of the unique matriarchal family unit, Kutnick et al. (1997) recognised that this type of female dominance can create a lack of opportunity for adolescent males. Furthermore, this type of social structure opposes normal British society, creating a deviation, possibly resulting in a social disadvantage. With a lack of male influence, adolescents may turn to strong male artists, such as Bob Marley, for a sense of personal identification. However, Marley's narrative was predominantly anti-establishment, this sets in motion a perception of Afro Caribbean men as rebellious and even harmful to normal British society. With the publication of the McPherson report, suspicions of institutional racism were confirmed (Quinn, 2019), cultural conflict was once again a realistic possibility, in 2011 a little more than a decade after the report England experienced further race-related rioting.

Re-examining the legacy of the Mcpherson report Bartkowiak-Theron and Asquith (2014) suggest that the finding of Mcpherson were as such to have international significance, providing a platform for community policing reform not only in Britain but most other democratised countries. The writers (Ibid) suggest that the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the poor quality of investigation methods employed was not isolated solely to the Lawrence case. This implies that crimes involving persons from different races were handled differently to similar crimes involving same race parties, either whites and white or ethnic persons from the same community. The complexities of community policing are vast ranging from religious beliefs and cultural values, which differ between genders and generations within the same community. The research by Bartkowiak-Theron and Asquith (2014) further highlights the complexities of community policing, their examination of the vulnerability of cultural knowledge amongst police forces at a community level clearly

emphasizes the need for specialist community offices and the importance of police officers from ethnic backgrounds. Further concerns of police procedure post McPherson were expressed by a Government select committee in 2009, the committee chaired by Vas (2009) raised a variety of concerns over policing methods and attitudes towards the Afro Caribbean and African community, the committee highlighted the issue of stop and search procedures and their discriminatory tendencies, as well as arrest figures amongst black ethnic persons. The principal concern was the DNA records held on the police database, the committee highlighted the fact that the ethnic Black community, principally men, had three times more records on the database than those from the Asian and white community, who both represented 10 per cent of all records in 2009. The report cited the Equalities and Human Rights Commission when raising this concern, this suggests that the hold of these records may raise human rights concerns permanently labelling the male black community as inherently criminal in nature, at the time of the committee's report the records were able to provide a permanent sample of a person identification regardless of criminal status (Staley, 2005). However, the idea of permanent retention of records was challenged in the European courts in 2008 and the records of people either not charged or found innocent at trial can only be retained for three years in most cases (GOV.UK, 2013b). Nevertheless, despite the 2012 changes, the records of those cautioned (including youths) continue to be retained indefinitely. This procedure continues to unfairly label the Black and Afro Caribbean community, resulting in what amounts to a permanent criminal tag, which will continue to affect how police perceive those suspected of a crime. The final part of this study will examine new challenges for police relations and fresh conflict involving black music culture, this time a narrative seems to call for direct conflict and is a sea change in urban music culture, which utilises modern technology to reach a new audience of disenfranchised youth.

## 8 The future of black music and community policing

This final chapter will provide a brief analysis of two principal aspects of this research, firstly the emergence of new forms of urban music and its relationship with modern technology, and secondly, the implications for Black community relations in the light of the latest diversity and equalities review.

The emergence of Drill music over the last half-decade or so has alarmed social institutions, especially the police, with its direct references to violence. As Lynes et al. (2020) suggest, the genre has been attributed to gang culture and violent crime, this is especially poignant within inner city communities in London where violent crime has been a concern for more than a decade. This genre is perhaps the first new subculture of the music sector to be fully free of official channels of publication and promotion, relying instead on publicly accessible channels such as Youtube to reach its audience. As a result of this type of media reach, it is possible for the first time a music culture can react to social events in almost real-time, producing tracks not in an expensive studio, but in private homes using laptops and mobile devices. As Lynes et al. (2020) suggest, the genre differs from other Hip Hop subcultures in that the lyrics provide the audience with more than a mere generalisation of the challenges faced by those living in the inner cities, Drill music can provide real depth of emotion and feeling. The genre is able to reach out at an individual level and respond to the interaction between people rather than institutions. The culture provides an outlet for young people to vent frustration and fantasise about the type of response to perceptions of unfair criticism and practices, using words as a form of non-violent confrontation. Fatsis (2019) argues that the very existence of socially cultural music such as Rap, Hip Hop, Grime and Drill music is directly related to economic public policy, the writer suggests as neoliberalism creates disenfranchisement, so the narrative of these genres appeal to disadvantaged youth. Therefore, it could be said that the government itself is responsible for the very culture it continues to fear. Again in the same sphere as prostitution (Levine, 2003), the perception of the activities of a minority culture are used as a scapegoat to justify policy decisions that would normally be considered as unacceptable. In this instance, Drill music is blamed for a rise in violent crime and police apply pressure on the genre's broadcast outlet to remove content (Fatsis, 2019), which could be considered as an aggressive move against freedom of speech and expression.

This final reflection will discuss the future of community policing in the light of the latest policy recommendations of 2021. Bhopal (2021) argues that the report failed to address the concerns of institutional racism. The article raises a concern discussed in this research study, educational attainment of Afro Caribbean boys, Bhopal (2021) expresses concern that the report makes no recommendation of this education attainment gap. Moreover, the 24 recommendations of the report suggest alarming considerations, the recommendations of the commission (Sewell et al., 2021) highlight that in the twenty years since Mcpherson and the forty years since Scarman very little have changed in regard to equality and community policing of diverse communities. After decades of social conflict between communities and police the same problems continue to exist, lack of cultural knowledge, effective community relations, lack of trust and so on. However, of the recommendations, the final consideration is possibly the most contentious. This study has continued to emphasise the importance of identity, especially in a cultural setting, the commission recommends that the acronym describing Black Asian and Minority Ethnic should be abolished. The music industry itself suggests that this acronym assumes that, with the exception of white British culture, all other cultures can be categorised as one, this is the view of Sheryl Nwosu, chair of the Black Music Coalition (cited in Glynn, 2020). Consequently, the spirit of this acronym might provide one explanation to decades of assumptions, misinformation and offence between established socio-political institutions and ethnic communities. However, abolition of the term is not a golden key, it is merely a move in the right direction. Ultimately people need to understand the concept of the cosmopolitan society of modern Britain and work towards building on the similarities between our different communities.

## 9 Conclusion

This study has suggested that cultural prejudice is a historical problem that is often denied by public institutions, however, these cultural conflicts are often associated with certain social constructs, such as sexuality and music culture. Since the times of Empire, the British Government have used these constructs to control mainly ethnic communities, the use of misinformation can create moral panic and justify policy decisions that would otherwise be criticized as undemocratic or intolerant. However, in the case of music, the culture can act as a two-edged sword. One side of the blade uniting a community and providing inspiration and identity, the other side is used to divide communities and provide evidence, albeit with little or no foundation, to suggest immorality, criminality and danger. This in turn provides reasonable grounds to enforce controls upon these identities and in some cases the communities themselves. Stop and search is one such control method, others include ignorance and indifference. As the study suggests, social control methods used, mainly by the police, act to damage the legitimacy of ethnic identity and attempt to mould the different communities into an acceptable universal British society. Furthermore, the lack of British values could explain the complexity of multiple identities, however, over the years values have been substituted with rights and the rule of law. Time and again these rights and laws have served to act as barriers to British membership against other communities. Since the arrival of the first migrants from the west Indies social conflict has become part of everyday society, with music culture as the battleground. Increased communication might be the solution, however, implementation is likely to cause a significant barrier.

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