London, race and territories: Young people's stories of a divided city

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London, race and territories: Young people's stories of a divided city

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Abstract

This article examines the relationships between children's everyday lives and geographical education. Drawing on research with five young people in London, the article examines their narratives, analysed as relating to race and territory, critically considering the relationships between children's geographies and the geographies of race and racism in schools. Following hooks, the article begins with the argument that there is value in 'teaching to transgress' to challenge both legacies of imperialism in geography and education, and the inequalities and injustices that many children face. Following this, the article introduces the research, drawing on Aitken to argue the importance of consideration of children's voice, presence and rights in (geographical) education, before sharing the narratives of the young people. The article concludes by arguing for a reconceptualization of how 'the child' is constructed, and valued, in education.

Keywords: geography education, children's geographies, race and racism

Introduction

> As a text to be read, everyday life is a perpetual palimpsest: it is continually being re-written. (Elden, 2004: 111)

This quotation is taken from Elden's analysis of Lefebvre's *Critique of Everyday Life*. Lefebvre was committed to everyday life, arguing that the philosopher should not set 'himself' above it and should watch over its development from within, for 'at the very heart of the everyday, he will discover what is hindering or blocking the march forward' (Lefebvre, 2008: 97). For Lefebvre, the relationships between theory and praxis were of critical importance in both investigating the everyday and ensuring that the day to day is not merely passively experienced (Elden, 2004).

As 2020 unfolded, these arguments increasingly resonated with me. The social and spatial inequalities embedded in what Harvey (2020) describes as 'an old collapsing bourgeois society … pregnant with all kinds of ugly things – like racism and xenophobia', although ever-present, have found themselves in the spotlight shone by the COVID-19 pandemic and (governmental) responses to the virus, anthropogenically induced ecological and climate crises and movements such as Black Lives Matter responding to events including the murder of George Floyd and continually challenging systemic racism. Inequalities, along with socio-spatial, political and environmental injustices exist, but as individuals and communities, we all have a part in 'writing' and enacting what comes next for ourselves, for our communities, for society's children and for the world.

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This article considers these arguments with regard to race, everyday life and geography education. Drawing on my doctoral research (Hammond, 2020) throughout, I examine how and why listening to, and valuing, children's experiences and perspectives can support teachers in enabling children in their everyday lives, and ultimately in writing the futures they want for themselves and for the world. While recognizing that 'race' is a socially and politically constructed concept and term (Dwyer and Bressey, 2008; Jackson and Penrose, 1993), which has connotations of exclusion (Bloch and Solomos, 2010; Eriksen, 2010), and is what Morgan and Lambert (2001: 235) describe as 'the bedrock of racism' – and in contrast to my thesis, where I use the term 'ethnicity' to promote inclusion – following Puttick and Murrey (2020), I use the language of race in this article to make issues related to the limited inclusion, and/or recognition, of the geographies of race and racism in geography education visible, and to actively challenge systemic injustices in the field.

In the first section of the article, I examine the relationships between geography, education and race. In doing so, I reflect on the imperialist history of geographical education (Dorling and Tomlinson, 2019; Morgan and Lambert, 2020; Noxolo, 2020; Tomlinson, 2019), and the contemporary challenges that the field faces in addressing these legacies, but also the role that geography education can play in enabling young people to actively participate in society, challenge inequalities and contribute to a more just world. I then move on to introduce my research, which was 'an investigation into children's geographies and their value to geography education in schools' (Hammond, 2020). Following this, I examine the findings of the research – specifically focusing on young people's narratives related to race and territory in London. I conclude the article by arguing the value of connecting with children's everyday geographies and listening to their voices in education.

It is significant to note that the research did not set out specifically to examine geographies of race and racism, but to enable young people to share their geographies and imaginations of London. As a 'white British' person and former schoolteacher, actively listening in the research to young people that I had previously taught made me critically reflect not only on myself, my privileges and my geographies, but also on my relationships with, and knowledge of, the children I taught. This experience – of actively listening – in turn made me further consider how geographical education can enable children in their lives and futures, a key theme that informed the writing of this article.

Geography, education and race

When reflecting on her own education in the racially segregated Kentucky (USA) of the 1950s and 1960s, hooks (1994: 2) recalls how even though her black female teachers at Booker T. Washington School never articulated it, 'they were enacting a revolutionary pedagogy of resistance that was profoundly anti-colonial'. hooks explains that 'teachers worked with and for us to ensure that we would fulfil our intellectual destiny' (hooks, 1994: 2). Here, it can be seen that hooks's teachers were challenging oppression and dominant sociopolitical norms at the time, through the act of teaching. As reflected in the title of her 1994 book, they were 'teaching to transgress' and enacting 'education as the practice of freedom'. However, for hooks, all of that changed with racial integration, when she was forced to attend a desegregated historically white school, where through both what she was taught, and how she was taught, white teachers subordinated her and other black children.

When critically reflecting on her experiences as both a student and an academic, hooks (1994: 13) explains that she has been most inspired by 'teachers who have had the courage to transgress those boundaries that would confine each pupil to a rote,

assembly-line approach to learning'. For hooks, respecting and valuing the presence of every child in the classroom, and supporting everyone (including the teacher) to contribute to dialogue in an open manner, is key to transgressing the traditional relationships between teacher and student (hooks, 1994: 13). hooks describes her book as an intervention – arguing the importance of 'confronting the biases that have shaped teaching practices in our society and to create new ways of knowing, different strategies for the sharing of knowledge' (hooks, 1994: 12). hooks shares how both her experiences, and feminist, anti-colonial and critical pedagogies, have shaped her teaching and the strategies she has used to enact education as the practice of freedom. This includes using the classroom as a space to acknowledge, recognize and examine the complex relationships between everyday life and education – with children (and teachers) entering the classroom with diverse experiences and imaginations of the world, having faced different injustices and inequalities – and education having the potential to enable children to better understand, and to empower them in, their everyday lives.

Although England in 2020 is separated by both time and space from Kentucky in the mid-twentieth century, young people can still feel a sense of exclusion from education, educational spaces, communities and places due to their intersectional identities, and relational connections and ties, as has been powerfully explored by black, Muslim, female, British and Somali students and prospective students at the University of Cambridge in the film *Somalinimo* published in *The Guardian* (2020). As explained by *The Guardian* (2020), the film was a 'collaboration between the writer Awa Farah and the film-maker Alice Aedy'. In the film, Farah and Aedy engage in a conversation with two other students at the University of Cambridge to reflect on their experiences of living in Cambridge and studying at the university. The embodied experiences shared by the women in the film highlight how both building design, and the physical and social spaces of Cambridge, can be at once empowering and also lead to a feeling of being out of place. When unpacking the reasons for this, Farah and Aedy explore how the representation of their homeland and people in both education and society has affected the identities of the women in the film, and their sense of belonging to Cambridge – the place where they live and study.

As hooks (1994) describes, and Farah and Aedy represent, education can affect how a person feels in their everyday life, and their relationships to places, educational spaces, their teachers and what they are studying. Children and young people spend the majority of their waking hours in education during term time, and these experiences and geographies matter. As de Certeau (1988: 108) poetically reflects, 'there is no place that is not haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence, spirits one can invoke or not'. Put another way, if a child's education is dominated by curricula and pedagogy that oppress them, or educational spaces and materials that contain racist (or otherwise unjust) representations, then this can affect a person's experiences and imaginations of education, and their lives more broadly. These spirits and histories cannot, and should not, be hidden, but openly and actively deconstructed with children to help them make sense of their everyday lives and educations, and the world in which they live, and to which they contribute.

The relationships between geography, education and race have been considered and conceptualized in many ways. These have included: examination of the geographies of race and racism (Dwyer and Bressey, 2008; Jackson, 2008); movements to decolonialize both geography and the school curriculum (Baldwin, 2017; Noxolo, 2017, 2020); examination of institutionalized racism and imperialism in educational policy and praxis (Morgan and Lambert, 2001; Tomlinson, 2019); consideration of the geographies of

educational spaces (Kearns, 2020); and examination of inequalities and injustices faced by 'black, Asian and minority ethnic' staff and students in geography and education (Desai, 2017). In addition, other geographies are influenced by race and racism. For example, with regard to the geographies of Brexit (Boyle et al., 2018; Dorling and Tomlinson, 2019), what children learn in school also impacts on their imaginations of the world and relations to people, places and environments, both today and in their futures (Hammond, in review a; Hopkins, 2010). In turn, education impacts on sociopolitical environments that are shaped by people and systems. As Dorling and Tomlinson (2016) argue, the practice of teaching children that countries coloured pink on the political world map were colonies 'owned' by Britain, that Africa was being 'opened up' by Europeans, and even 'nurturing' (predominantly private school) children as future rulers of Empire until the 1960s, fed into the Brexit vote and racism.

As Puttick and Murrey (2020: 126) state, there can be no doubt that 'geography education in England has a problem with race', and although work has begun to decolonize geography (Noxolo, 2020), legacies of imperialism in the discipline of geography, and in schooling, remain (Tomlinson, 2019; Dorling and Tomlinson, 2019; Morgan and Lambert, 2020). Through their analysis of *Teaching Geography* (a journal aimed at school geography teachers published by the Geographical Association), Puttick and Murrey (2020: 126) demonstrate that there has been a lack of consideration of race and racism in school geography – highlighting that between 1975 and 2019, 'race is only explicitly mentioned in just one article'. Although 'writing about race does not necessarily result in the eradication of racism' (Dwyer and Bressey, 2008: 7), in the context of geography education, where very little has been written, it can be seen that what is written and shared, when and by whom, really matters.

It was therefore welcome that in response to the death of George Floyd, the Geographical Association (2020) published a statement on their website in support of, and to express that, Black Lives Matter. However, although the statement acknowledges that geography 'has a distinct role' in what it describes as the 'ongoing injustices of racism and inequality to be addressed' (Geographical Association, 2020), the statement provides very little information to teachers and students about the history(s) of geography, nor does it touch on pedagogy and its role in enabling and empowering children in their lives and futures (see, for example, hooks, 1994). Significantly, while the statement welcomes comment from readers, no space is provided for this dialogue.

The voices of children, and those who are in education more broadly, should be included and valued in these discussions. As Hopkins et al. (2018) assert when examining how school geography might be made more inclusive, consideration must be given to young people (and their views, values, everyday lives and geographies), so as to make geography less 'adultist'. In moving these debates forward, I argue with Hopkins et al. (2018) that the relationships between everyday life and (geographical) education should be further explored – in considering both the geographies that children bring with them to the classroom, and how geography can enable children in their lives and futures. This position is supported by my research, which I now move on to describe in some detail.

Children's rights, storytelling and everyday life

Through a 'storytelling and geography group' that met fortnightly for six sessions in autumn 2014, the research sought to encourage young people to share their geographies and imaginations of London (the city in which they lived and attended school) in a manner which was accessible, concurrent with everyday life, and enabled

them to have control of the narratives they shared (Hammond, in review a, in review b). The group was comprised of five young people (pseudonyms: Jack, Tilly, Rachel, Alex and Jessica) who 'opted in' to the research, all of whom were aged 13 at the time of data collection. Although I offered the opportunity to take part in the research to all Year 7 and Year 8 students in a school in which I had previously taught, all of the young people who chose to opt in to the study were students I had previously taught and/or tutored, meaning I had a professional relationship with them (Hammond, in review a, in review b).

In taking care to ensure the confidentiality of research participants, yet maintain the agency of narratives with a name rather than writing in an impersonal manner (Hopkins, 2008), I allocated the young people pseudonyms reflective of their 'Western' given names during data analysis. Increasingly, pseudonyms are recognized as more than just a 'simple way for a researcher to confer confidentiality and anonymity on research participants', and as 'a far more nuanced act of research, affected by issues of power and voice, methodological and epistemological standpoint, and considerations of the research consumers (whether institution, funder, participants, or journal reader)' (Allen and Wiles, 2016: 153). On reflection, I recognize that in assigning the pseudonyms, I have the potential to shape how the young people are represented, and it could have been a more meaningful process for the young people to choose their own pseudonyms. This process could further enable the young people to actively participate in the research, and to shape how they represent themselves (Allen and Wiles, 2016).

The research was underpinned by the belief that children and young people are social actors who shape, and are shaped by, the place and time–space in which they live, and that their experiences and imaginations of the world are important. The research straddled the sub-discipline of children's geographies – in which literature regularly expounds the benefits of active citizenship (Gurchathen et al., 2018; McKendrick, 2009; Skelton, 2010), participatory and enabling methods are used to conduct research with, and for, children, and research seeks to examine children's experiences and imaginations of the world to better understand children, childhood and society (Aitken, 2001, 2018a; Fass, 2013) – and the field of geography education. In geography education in schools, there can be seen to have been what Catling (2014: 352) describes as a 'dominant yet implicit approach which subordinates children'. Through a combination of the creation of cultures of compliance and conformity in behaviour (Morgan, 2019), the design of educational spaces (Giddens, 1984; Philo and Parr, 2000) and decisions made about curricula, pedagogy and purpose (Dorling and Tomlinson, 2019; Lambert and Morgan, 2010), children have not always been empowered in and/or through their (geographical) education.

When considered in the context of wider society, there can be seen to have been a lack of any real opportunity for young people 'to have a say on social and political matters' (Ralls, 2020). Aitken (2018b) argues that universal treaties, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC; see United Nations Human Rights, 1989), designed to enable child rights, in reality fail to serve young people. For Aitken (2018b: 34), the UNCRC neglects local communities and intersectional differences with identities, provides 'a model for the child as a neoliberal subject' and fails to consider how a more just world might be (co)constructed. In addition, Aitken (2018a: 12) argues that such treaties often lack consideration of sustainable ethics and relationality, asserting that child rights should instead 'stick with purpose to the lived worlds of children and young people through a sustainable ethics of care' and that 'it is from caring communities and radical ethics that young people are able to create

and recreate their spaces and their lives so as to live life fully'. Here, it can be seen that Aitken (2018a) is arguing for a radical transformation of the spaces and places that we (as individuals, communities and societies) (re)produce, with a focus on enabling children to live the lives they want, (re)create spaces in a manner they choose and write the futures they choose for themselves and for the world.

When these arguments are applied to geographical education, the significance of valuing, and exploring, children's everyday geographies in education becomes clearer, and it can be seen to support the development of more just relationships between the child, their teachers and geography through recognizing that the child has voice and presence. For, 'not to recognise the presence of a citizen is itself a form of oppression' (Aitken, 2018b: 49). Recognizing children's agency and authorship over their own lives is also essential in considering how children can use geography as a discipline to better understand their own lives and geographies, so that they are not just passively experienced. I argue that actively listening to young people, and empowering them to speak about what matters to them, is a helpful step on a journey to considering children's geographies in education.

In an open and dialogic manner, and following the philosophy that the first thing a children's geographer should do is listen (Matthews and Limb, 1999), the storytelling and geography group aimed to construct a space in which children were empowered to share their geographies. The group was semi-structured, and it began with a discussion of the 'expectations' of the group, such as respect and confidentiality. Following Goodson et al.'s (2010: 10) strategy of using open questions such as 'can you tell me about your life?' in their work on life histories, the young people then shared elements of their lives and geographies they chose to – with a key philosophy of the research being that young people had control over the narratives they shared, when and how (Hammond, in review a; Langevang, 2009).

Data generated through the storytelling and geography group were, at first, inductively coded to allow themes to emerge from the young people's narratives. After this, data were coded using Harvey's (1990) 'grid of spatial practices'. Following Harvey's (1990) argument that to transform society, we must critically explore, and seek to understand the complexities of spatial practices (Hammond, in review a), the use of the grid aimed to facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the young people's everyday lives and geographies. The value of this ultimately lies in considering how the young people shape, and are shaped by, the place and time–space in which they live. I now move on to share the findings of the research, focusing specifically on young people's narratives related to race and territory.

Research findings

The research had three overarching findings: first, the young people in the study navigated multiple, sometimes contradictory, social spaces when constructing and representing themselves and their identities in London; second, the young people imagined London as a jigsaw of territories with distinct social rules existing in different spaces and places within the city; third, London was perceived by the young people as a place of not only opportunity and hope, but also inequality and injustice (Hammond, in review a, in review b). The young people's narratives analysed as relating to race were present both in their discussions of their identities (specifically being British, or not), as well in their discussions of territories. Here, I focus on the idea of territories, which I briefly introduce before sharing the young people's narratives. The focus on race and territories is of value in examining both

how the young people experience London and how they imagine the relationships between people and place.

A territory can be conceptualized as 'a unit of contiguous space that is used, organized and managed by a social group, individual person or institution to restrict and control access to people and places' (Gregory et al., 2009: 746). For Massey (1998), the continual aim to territorialize is integral to conceptualizing space and the social construction of identities. Massey (1998) argues that with varied, and sometimes multiple, motivations, individuals and groups continuously try to include some people, while excluding others, from spaces and places. The scale of territorialization varies enormously, from nation states to a gang claiming a postcode as its territory. These examples also reflect that some territories are legally and politically recognized, while others are not. Indeed, territories may be recognized by some people and not others; they may also be continuously disputed and contested. In this way, territories can inform and affect people's spatial practices, identities and everyday lives.

Analysis found that the young people in the research acknowledged and questioned the appropriation of space and territories by people that they identified by their race in London. In doing so, it highlighted that the young people were both aware of, and affected by, conflict over place. Analysis highlighted several themes in the young people's narratives: first, 'flows of people – race', referring to the movement of people between places; second, 'turf – territory and race', referring to different groups appropriating, or being enclaved in, a specific area; third, 'friction of distance', referring to individuals or groups expressing a feeling of social distance due to their race; fourth, 'geopolitics', referring to geopolitical issues relating to race; and finally, 'race and nation', referring to the relationships between race and nation state. As these themes are interrelated, I examine them concurrently when sharing the young people's narratives.

All of the young people who participated in the research, apart from Alex, shared narratives related to race and territory. Alex's father is from England and his mother from Northern Ireland, and he states that he identifies as being 'white Irish'; his narratives on territories related primarily to nation and identity, and gangs and turf, in London.

One of the ways in which the young people considered race and territories was through the comparison of London, or the UK, to other places. For example, in the following narrative, Jack shares that he went to Cardiff and notes how demographically different it was from London, expressing that there is 'only one type of people'. He then reflects that London is 'really multicultural', noting in the same sentence that 'Cardiff is not'. Jack – who shares that his parents migrated from the Middle East to another European country due to geopolitical issues, before coming to England to seek work and educational opportunities for their children – goes on to express that he perceives this as an advantage, noting 'the thing is, Miss, about London, yeah, is that London, from every single country, there's one person'. Jack explains that he feels this is due to flows of people moving to London through migration, and he quotes 'an American' as saying 'if I was in London, I wouldn't really have to go to every country, because a person from every country lives there'.

This perception can be seen to be echoed by Tilly. For example, when sharing a story of visiting her grandparents, Tilly explains that her mother is from Spain, her father is from Ghana and that her father was the first black man her mother saw. When Tilly reflects on visiting the village in which her maternal grandparents live, she states that she feels that it is the safest place that she has ever been:

Tilly:	It's where I went in Spain with my grandparents, it's really quiet. Where I went before, it's a small village, and it's on top of Portugal, and it's literally just a village. Everyone knows each other. So when we came there, they were just going up to us, asking us questions, they were just staring at us, it was kind of weird.
Researcher:	Why were they staring at you?
Tilly:	I think it's because we were new, and it's because we were the only black people there, and it's not a lie, we were. And, erm, but everyone looks so friendly! And whenever I was speaking to my mum about police and stuff, she said that when she was small, she'd never heard a report about someone dying or something. But I was like, 'Well, what if someone was killed in the woods or something?', because there was a massive forest, but she was like, 'that would never happen, not here.'

Although in this narrative Tilly expresses that she felt unique with regard to her race in the village in Spain, her narratives suggest that she felt safe there and that it was a friendly place.

In contrast, when discussing how multicultural London is, Tilly's narratives can be interpreted as reflecting her feeling, and/or perceiving, a friction of distance related to race. The following two quotations from Tilly on this matter are from different discussions in the storytelling and geography group:

| Tilly: | Even though people say that 'London is so multicultural', yeah, maybe they are right. But, deep down, no one really accepts you. |
| Tilly: | I think, you know how people say that London, or the UK, is really diverse and everyone is accepting. On one hand, this is true, because people start to live with it. But, after a while you start to realize, that some people don't accept. They act like they do, but deep down they don't accept. |

Analysis of Tilly's narratives suggests that she polarizes her experiences, and imaginations, of London and the village where her maternal grandparents live in Spain. In rural Spain, Tilly expresses that she feels racially different from the majority of the population. Tilly feels that she intrigues people, but equally that she is safe, whereas in London, she recognizes that she is in a multicultural city, but expresses that she does not feel accepted. Rachel echoes this sentiment. For example, when she talks of Belfast, where her cousin lives, Rachel notes, 'I really like Belfast better than London, I don't know why, there's just a different atmosphere. Like everyone is really accepted.' Both of these narratives can be read as the young people perceiving that some people are excluded in London.

Rachel shares that her mother is English, her father is Scottish and some of her family are involved in the English Defence League (a UK-based, far-right, anti-Islam organization, founded in 2009). Rachel made the decision to convert to Islam a few years before the research, expressing that she feels that she has experienced both day-to-day and institutionalized racism as a Muslim in London. In this narrative, Rachel and Jack discuss the discrimination that they have experienced due to their religion:

Jack:	The thing is, like, I'm Arab, yeah, and I feel like people say, 'You're a terrorist' and stuff like that, yeah.
Researcher:	Does anyone say that to you?
Rachel:	Lots of people say it and I'm not even Arab, man.

An example of institutionalized discrimination considered by the group is a discussion about a YouTube video in which a man of Arab appearance is searched to 'check for bombs' (Jack) in an American airport. Tilly and Rachel express that they feel that this is racist behaviour, with Jack stating that he feels the man was stopped just because he appeared to be an Arab. The group state that this also happens in London, with Jack's narratives suggesting that he perceives the police in London to be institutionally discriminatory against Arab people. All three of these young people then express that they feel that they are unable to report this behaviour to those in power.

Analysis shows that the young people in this study feel that there is a shared social imagination that 'racial minorities' are not always accepted in London and/or the UK. The narrative below can be interpreted as Jessica and Rachel considering the historical reasons for this:

Jessica: Because Britain used to be a white country, so they don't want
             black people or Somalians, or …
Rachel: And it's a Christian country too.
Jessica: … or Muslims coming and taking it over.

This narrative can be read as Jessica and Rachel expressing that they feel that the UK wants to maintain, and to socially reproduce, what they perceive to be its ethno-religious heritage. Jessica (whose mother has Irish heritage, but was born in the UK, and whose father is Grenadian) expresses that this impacts on her identities, when she states, 'I feel like I'm British, but if I told a white person that feels really strongly about it that I'm British, they probably wouldn't believe me.' Following this discussion, Jack raises that he perceives that black people commit more crime in the UK and that they are the most targeted by the police. Rachel, Jessica and Tilly debate this idea with him, referring to statistics (from an unnamed source) about crime by race and questioning the reasons for his views. In this discussion, Tilly's narratives suggest that she perceives that this representation of black people is born out of an ingrained shared social imagination that black people commit more crime.

The group then attempt to unpick why black people experience racism in London. Rachel relates this to the history of slavery, and Jack shows awareness of groups such as the Ku Klux Klan that have targeted black communities. These discussions suggest that the young people are aware of, and interested in, how history(s) and sociopolitical organizations across the world have shaped shared social imaginations of race at a variety of scales.

In addition to discussing London as an entire city, the group also raise the idea of racial territories in different parts of London. They express that these vary in scale, from localized gatherings of one racial group in a park to established ethnic enclaves such as Chinatown. Analysis shows that the group express both a sense of intrigue about these areas, and a sense of otherness and exclusion when they enter what can be conceptualized as an ethnic enclave. An example of this is shared by Rachel, who states: 'I walk through Harlesden, and there's, like, loads of, like, it's dominated by mostly, like, Somali people and Arab people.' In this narrative, the group use the language of territory to describe the gathering of a racial group in one particular area:

Jessica: I go Acton Park, it gives me a headache when I go there.
Researcher: Why does it give you a headache?
Jessica: I don't know.
Jack: There's so many Saudis.
Jessica: I go Shepherd's Bush Park.

Jack:	I'm not even joking, it's like you are going Saudi.
Researcher:	Which area of London is this, it's like Saudi Arabia?
Jack:	No, no, no. You see Acton Park, yeah? Have you ever been Acton Park?
Researcher:	No.
Jack:	Basically, Acton Park, yeah, there is so many Saudis. There's more Saudis there than you will find in Saudi Arabia.
Researcher:	Is that a bad thing?
Jack:	No, it's just where all the Saudis meet in London!
Researcher:	Why do you think that happens in London? You know how if you go to some areas, there's more of one ethnicity?
Rachel:	Yeah, like Wembley.
Tilly:	I think it's like their territory, sort of, like Southall, when you go there, there's loads of Indians.
Rachel:	Yeah.
Tilly:	It's awkward, though, I remember once …
Jack:	It gets awkward.

These narratives can be interpreted as the young people expressing that racial groups and nationalities appropriate, and sometimes dominate, areas of London and that this sometimes results in them feeling a friction of distance. For example, Tilly tells a story of when she went to Southall to buy a sari for an Indian-themed party at her primary school and explains, 'and then I went around, and they were trying to rip us off!' Tilly articulates that she felt that this was because 'my mum's not Indian, and it's so obvious, and I think it's kind of mean!'

Rachel echoes these sentiments in her discussions about Chinatown. Although Rachel expresses intrigue about Chinese food and culture, when I ask her about whether she feels that it is important that there are areas such as Chinatown, she responds with the following narrative:

Rachel:	I don't really like it in a way, because there are lots of Chinese people near where I live. I'm not being racist, but the Chinese people are really, like, insular in that place. Because they think they like own it, like it is China.
Tilly:	Like it's their own place.
Rachel:	And then I get really dirty looks when I'm walking along there.
Tilly:	But I think that Chinatown, I get what Rachel is saying, but I also think that some people in Chinatown, how they've got the restaurants, they want people to know their culture.

These narratives can be interpreted as Tilly and Rachel debating the benefits and challenges of social reproduction of heritages in a specific place, for example, in sharing and sustaining cultures, and also places becoming insular and exclusionary to other people. It can be read as the young people perceiving London as a city of villages, with different places and neighbourhoods in the city having different characteristics. For example, in discussing why London is socially and spatially the way it is, and the impacts that this has on both their geographies and London's populace more broadly.

Finally, Jack raises the idea of race-based violence. He links this to gangs and turf, discussing what happens when someone from West London visits East London, noting: 'if you went East London, yeah, and you got a YouTube rap, yeah, they'd get curry and

beat you up, because they're all Indians and Bangladeshis. I'm not trying to be racist.' In this narrative, Jack is linking race and territory, articulating a sociocultural distance from East London. Harvey (1990: 260) argues that low-income populations are often unable to own or command space, often resulting in 'an intense attachment to place and "turf"'. Further to this, Harvey (1990: 261) argues that 'fine-tuned ethnic, religious, racial and status discriminations are frequently called into play' as a process of cultural construction. When challenged on his racist representation of Indian and Bangladeshi communities, Jack stands firm that there is a division between communities that could lead to someone being attacked, or even killed, if they stepped into the territory of another racial group in London.

Analysis identified several shared themes in the young people's narratives related to race and territory. First, the young people recognized London as being a multicultural city, and they perceived this as both a benefit and a challenge. Second, the young people felt that different racial groups appropriate space at different scales in London and expressed that this can cause feelings of exclusion to others, as well as allowing the sharing of cultures. Third, the young people related racism to historical geographies. I draw on the arguments put forward so far, and the young people's narratives, in the conclusion of the article.

Conclusion: On teaching to transgress in (geography) education

Through challenging dominant imaginations of adult–child relationships in institutions such as schools – in which the adult often 'holds' a position of power and authority – and through actively listening to young people's stories about their everyday lives and geographies, this article has explored their experiences of, relationships to and perceptions about London. With regard to race and territory, the article has revealed the complexities of the young people's everyday lives in the city and how they negotiate spaces and places, related to their own identities and relationalities. It can be seen that race matters to the young people in both where they go and how they, and others, are treated and feel in the city.

In concluding this article, I argue that drawing on the methods and ideas of children's geographies, and geographies of race and racism, has the potential to enhance geographical education. Through recognizing children's voice and presence, and actively listening to them in both educational research and praxis, those who work with and for children can gain a more nuanced understanding of their lives and geographies. The value of this lies both in respecting the child as a person and social actor, and in informing educational decisions about curriculum, pedagogy and purpose – including when an educator needs to 'teach to transgress'.

As we saw earlier, bell hooks (1994: 10) has written about how her experiences as both a student and an educator have informed the development of her pedagogical approaches. She explains how, for her, the 'mutually illuminating interplay of anti-colonial, critical and feminist pedagogies' has made it possible 'to imagine and enact pedagogical practices that engage directly both the concerns for interrogating biases in curricula which reinscribe systems of domination (such as racism and sexism) while simultaneously providing new ways to teach diverse groups of students' (hooks, 1994: 10). Engaging with both children's geographies as a sub-discipline, and the geographies that children choose to share (including those which can be seen as 'challenging' and relate to geographies of race and racism), can inform teachers in using geographical ideas and methods to enable children to use the discipline to

better understand (their own) lives and geographies, and the inequalities and injustices that exist in the world. The value of this ultimately lies in enabling children in their lives and communities to write the futures they want for themselves and the world. As has been explored by McKendrick and Hammond (2020) in the context of neighbourhood geographies, this could be done by exploring with children ideas about the right to the city (Harvey, 2013; Lefebvre, 1996), and examining how different people experience the city/neighbourhood/area in which they live, using participatory methodologies. For example, children could be asked if they are happy to share their experiences of, and feelings about, their neighbourhood. This might be done by supporting children to map spaces and places where they feel included or excluded, and to consider which elements of their neighbourhood could be improved, and how and why, using the place standard tool (www.placestandard.scot/). 'By encouraging young people to rank their neighbourhood (or school, town, city, etc.) across fourteen domains on the place standard tool, each on a seven-point scale', a visual summary of children's perspectives can be generated (McKendrick and Hammond, 2020: 120). This visual summary can be used as stimulus for discussion about how children feel about the domains of their neighbourhood shown on the place standard tool, including 'natural space' and 'housing and community'. These discussions can also include consideration of how their place might be made more sustainable and how the young people can actively participate in their communities and neighbourhoods.

These arguments highlight the importance of teachers and educators drawing on, and engaging with, research in the discipline of geography (in the case of this article, on geographies of race and racism and children's geographies) and the field of education (for example, in considering 'education as the practice of freedom' (hooks, 1994)) to inform and develop their professional practice. However, as Rawling (2020: 72) argues, teachers cannot be 'asked to compensate for poor curriculum decisions at national or sub-national level', and we should recognize that in an accountability system, teachers are rewarded when they 'do not teach against the grain' (hooks, 1994: 103). As such, for children to be truly respected and enabled in, and through, their education, the arguments put forward in this article also require active consideration from school managers, (educational) policymakers and society at large. Educational spaces, policies and materials at every level need to actively challenge inequalities and injustices, and enable children as informed social actors in their lives and futures. This is no easy or straightforward task, but as this research has shown, a critical element in creating a more just education is actively listening to those who are taught, about both their everyday lives and their educations, and about the complex relationships between them.

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Notes on the contributor

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The author declares no conflict of interest with this work.

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