Abstract

This research looks at the emergence of queer and trans people of colour (QTPOC) activist groups in the UK, considering the tensions around inclusion and belonging across lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) and of colour communities for these individuals. The research sought to explore what QTPOC activism means in the UK context, how it operates and for what purpose; the ways QTPOC activisms support the negotiation and affirmation of marginalised sexual, gender, racial identities and/or help navigate racism, queerphobia and transphobia; and in what ways personal involvement with QTPOC activisms impact subjectivity. The research was grounded in a critical psychology approach, firmly situating QTPOC within wider social, political and historical contexts to understand how subjectivities were formed and shaped. Drawing on postcolonial and black feminist theory, the research emphasised coloniality and the postcolonial context of the UK as well as utilising an intersectional lens to explore the intersections of race, gender and sexuality at the macro and micro levels. Inspired by Johnson’s (2015) psychosocial manifesto, the research also focused on ontology and the feeling, embodied experience of being-in-the-world. Knitting together postcolonial, black feminist and queer theory alongside critical psychology a novel phenomenological interpretative framework was developed which attended to both the wider contexts and the everyday lived experience of being a queer and trans person of colour involved in QTPOC activism. Utilising interventions into phenomenology by Fanon (1986) and Ahmed (2006) a queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis was developed. This was used to analyse the data from focus group and photo elicitation interviews with participants from three different QTPOC groups across the UK. The research highlighted QTPOC experiences of exclusion from mainstream LGBTQ communities and of non-belonging as a racialized, gendered, sexualized Other within the postcolonial British context. Participants shared the difficulties of finding the language to understand their own lived experiences within a society orientated around and towards white (hetero)normativity. QTPOC activist
groups were experienced as spaces of belonging; in which to disidentify from white heteronormativity; of affirmation; and in which one could begin to decolonise gender and sexuality. The difficulties of activist organising were also considered; the privileging of paranoid reading and how to manage conflict and abuse, the possibilities of reparative reading (Sedgwick, 2003) and how to relate to histories of politically Black struggle. This is the first research of its kind to explore QTPOC activism in the UK. It will be of interest to critical psychology, psychosocial and gender and sexuality scholars to explore intersectionality and coloniality and the postcolonial further. The development of an original and creative phenomenological interpretative framework will be of interest to researchers exploring the lived experiences of those racialized, and of minoritized gender and sexuality. It provides recommendations for further research and interventions into practice for counsellors, third sector organisations and activists.
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Acronyms and definitions

BME: Black Minority Ethnic

LGBTQ: Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer

QTPOC: Queer and Trans People of Colour

QTIPOC: Queer, Trans and Intersex People of Colour

Cisgender or ‘cis’: People who are not transgender; those whose gender aligns with the gender they were assigned at birth.
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Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed

Dated
Chapter One: Queer and Trans People of Colour in the UK

Introduction

Over the last five years in the UK we have seen the emergence of networks of Black Minority Ethnic Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans and Queer (BME LGBTQ) activists and groups, operating in spaces distinct from mainstream LGBTQ organisations and activists. These include activist and social group spaces, as well as community events such as Black Pride and the Cutie BPoC (Black and People of Colour) Berlin Festival (of which many organisers and attendees are UK based), art collectives and club nights such as Batty Mama and Bootylicious in London, Urban Slag in Birmingham and Akbaar Umm in Manchester.

Concomitantly LGBTQ rights have moved from the margins to become a central concern for modern politics in the UK. Increasingly ‘openness to sexual diversity’, and perhaps more incrementally gender diversity, have been ‘hailed as… quintessential feature(s) of Western societies’ (Colpani and Habed, 2014, p.73). Contrasting the progression of LGBTQ movements in UK politics with the emergence of BME LGBTQ activist networks raises questions about the inclusion of BME LGBTQ populations. Specifically, what is the meaning of BME LGBTQ activist groups for those involved, why do they exist separately from other LGBTQ organisations and what can their lived experiences tell us about modern LGBTQ movements and British society more widely? To understand this, we must also understand the place of BME populations in Britain and the specific British histories of immigration in a post-colonial context.

From my own practice in community development and continuing involvement in these activist groups, there is also a question of BME LGBTQ inclusion within wider BME communities, third sector organisations and activist networks. The position of BME LGBTQ people within LGBTQ and BME communities raises issues of the intertwining of race, gender and sexuality; belonging and how BME LGBTQ individuals and communities negotiate these possible tensions. The focus of this research is on the meaning of these networks for those involved and what this collective work
provides for individual subjectivity. The explicitly activist and social support group networks that are the focus of this thesis self-define as ‘queer and trans people of colour’ or ‘QTPOC’, and this term will be used to refer to these groups and their members in the research.

The term ‘QTPOC’ is generally described by UK activists as:

‘Queers are: Intersex, Bisexual, Transgender, Lesbian, Gay, Queer, Gender-Queer, Gender-Variant or non-conforming, Undefined, Questioning, and Exploring persons

Of colour: Those who are descended (through one or more parents) anywhere in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Indigenous peoples of Australasia, the Americas, the Islands of the Atlantic, Indian Pacific, and Roma Sinti (and) Travellers. We explicitly welcome and invite mixed heritage people. Our group includes people with varied race, ethnicity and sexual and gender identities. We welcome anyone who self-identifies as both queer and persons (people) of colour.’

(Taken from the QTIPOC [Queer, Trans, Intersex People of Colour] London Facebook group page)

The term ‘people of colour’ has emerged from the US context and its uptake in the UK is a move away from the use of ‘political Blackness’, which developed within British histories of anti-racist struggle in the 1970s onwards. Political Blackness brought together recent immigrants to Britain from the British Commonwealth, most notably those from South Asia and the African Caribbean, developing a Black consciousness uniting those who experienced the brunt of colonialism and racism. Most importantly, this encouraged solidarity work in resistance to the racist oppression of the British state.

Mehmood (2008, p.5) describes Black as a ‘political colour that could only exist in a white world’. Political Blackness continues to be used by some communities and activists today; however, it continues to be a fiercely contested term. The definition used by QTIPOC London of ‘people of colour’ is utilised across many QTPOC groups in the UK and by all groups involved in this research. However, the definition of ‘people of colour’ used by the organisers of QTIPOC London is based on a definition of politically Black by the Black Lesbian and Gay Centre that had existed in Peckham, London in the 1980s. This ties the contemporaneous network of QTPOC activism to
the histories of Black (both politically Black and of African descent) lesbian and gay activism in the 1980s and 1990s across the UK.

In this research, I will move between the use of the terms Black Minority Ethnic (BME), Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Queer (LGBTQ), Men who have sex with Men (MSM), Queer and Trans People of Colour (QTPOC), black (of African descent), Black (political Blackness), Asian, South Asian, depending on the different social/political/historical contexts I am referring to, the use of different terms in previous research and the preference of participants. It should be noted that participants use a number of different terms for their own personal identities as well as positioning themselves under the umbrella of QTPOC.

The research focuses on the possible tensions within LGBTQ and BME communities for queer and trans people of colour within the specific British post-colonial context alongside the changing political conditions for LGBTQ people. The research is concerned with how QTPOC activist networks provide space for the negotiation of these possible tensions, the intersections of racism, queerphobia and transphobia and marginalisation; questions of belonging and the multiplicity of subjectivity. Therefore, I take a critical psychological approach, exploring how QTPOC subjectivities are shaped by wider social, historical and political contexts while also considering how QTPOC collectivism may provide forms of resistance to multiple oppression and isolation, further shaping subjectivity.

Utilising the critical theory of black feminist, post-colonial and queer theory, the research will explore the intertwining of race, gender and sexuality – specifically using the theory of intersectionality to understand how subjects are interpellated through intersecting processes of racialisation, gender and sexualisation. Building on the work of Frantz Fanon (1986), Mama (1995), Butler (1997), Lewis (2000), Phoenix (2013), and Nayak (2015) in and outside of critical psychology, I consider how post-colonial, racist, sexist, queerphobic and transphobic social structures may structure the psyche and subjectivity, how they are ‘inverted’ back onto the self and others, and resisted and contested through collectivized political action (Rassool, 1997,
p.195). This will be framed within the wider post-colonial context of queer and trans people of colour as post-immigrants, and how QTPOC are positioned within mainstream political rhetoric which has embraced the language of women’s and LGBTQ people’s rights in the UK.

**Situating Queer and Trans People of Colour within Histories of Struggle in the UK**

Before exploring QTPOC activism and subjectivities further, it is critically important to briefly trace and situate QTPOC within histories of Black and ‘of colour’ immigrant political organising in Britain. It is important to note that I can only provide a brief and partial history due to the limits of the thesis. These histories are important in understanding the lived experience of being an ‘ethnic minority’ in Britain and to consider how multiply marginalised identities and subjectivities are shaped within the context of political consciousness, collective action and resistance.

South Asians, West Africans, African Caribbeans and African Americans have long and multiple histories of political organising in the UK, resisting colonialism, imperialism and racism, and shaping British Black and of colour subjectivities (Ramamurthy, 2013; Hesse, 2000; Boyce Davies, 2007). Hesse (2000, p.99) is critical of the popular narratives which claim the 1948 Windrush era of immigration to be the ‘originary’ moment for African and Caribbean communities in the UK and for black British subjectivity. This narrative occludes the existence of African, Caribbean and African American sea-faring communities in the UK from the 1830s onwards in places such as Liverpool, Cardiff and London. Hesse (2000, p.103) argues that the ‘continuity of this development into the twentieth century became part of the outward looking formation of [for example] Black Liverpool anchored in pre-Windrush, regionalized, urban Black affinity with some of the diasporic lineages of the Atlantic world’.

Pre-Windrush Britain was a centre of black [of African descent] political action with Pan-Africanist and anti-colonial organising, with visits from many anti-colonial activists such as Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, C.L.R. James, George Padmore, Jomo Kenyatta and Amy Jacques Garvey. This
work developed within the ‘overlapping discourses of the African diaspora, the British Empire, anti-colonialism, decolonization, migration, Black settlement and British nationalism’ (p.103). Several anti-colonial, Pan-Africanist campaigning organisations emerged in the UK in the 1920s and 1930s such as the West African Students Union, The League of Coloured People (LCP), the International African Services Bureau (IASB), and the Pan-African Federation, and in 1945 the fifth Pan-African Congress was held in Manchester. Hesse (2000) argues that these histories are integral to understanding the emergence of political Blackness and the development of black [of African descent] British subjectivity, of a diasporic consciousness in specific ‘regionalized’ black experiences rooted in Pan-Africanist, anti-imperial and anti-colonial discourses.

Boyce Davies (2008) illustrates how the work of African and Caribbean activists, such as Claudia Jones in the 1950s, helped to develop black British forms of subjectivity and identity through the establishment of carnival and other cultural forms. This work was a form of ‘cultural affirmation’, supporting the development of a post-colonial African and Caribbean diasporic consciousness and subjectivity cementing ‘black solidarity and…inter-racial friendship’ (p.173). This work created space for “new associations which were being formed” and play[ed] a role in the definition of Afro-Caribbean identity in Britain, replacing the earlier “British colonial subject” identity that many of the immigrants carried with them to the United Kingdom’ (p.173). These connected immigrants to ongoing anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggles on the African continent and in the Caribbean, as well as the opportunity for organised resistance against racist discrimination in housing, employment, health care and education in Britain. Black solidarity also supported the struggle against racist violence on the streets of the UK.

Similarly, Ramamurthy (2013) notes the long history of South Asian political organising in Britain which called for Indian independence as well as addressing South Asian worker’s rights in Britain. The Workers Welfare League of India was set up in 1916 by Shapurji Saklatvala of the Communist Party, the Lascar’s Welfare League and the Indian Seaman’s
Association were set up in the 1920s, and Indian Workers’ Associations (IWA) were established in the 1930s. After Indian independence in 1947 the IWA’s went into decline, however these were re-established in the 1950s in areas in the UK with large Punjabi populations – to address both post-colonial struggles in India as well as addressing racial discrimination, such as the ‘colour bar in housing’ in Britain and being ‘forced to accept the lowest paid, most dangerous jobs and unsociable working hours’ (p.11, 13; Josephides, 1991). In facing social exclusion, more informal organising developed to share resources among ‘extended families and former village networks’ (Ramamurthy, 2013, p.11).

As both Hesse (2000) and Ramamurthy (2013) suggest these early forms of African, Caribbean and South Asian political activism in Britain lay the foundations for the development of ‘political Blackness’ from the 1960s onwards in ‘resistance against the rising tide of racism and fascism’ (Ramamurthy, 2013, p.12). Black became a ‘political colour’, a form of inter- and intra-racial solidarity (Sivanandan, 1983, p.3).

Sivanandan (1983, p.2) describes the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act as the point at which racism ‘begins to get institutionalised’, and in which immigration becomes and remains a key policy issue for all the main political parties through to the present day. The 1960s saw the ‘nationalisation’ of racism, ‘crystallised in [Enoch] Powell’s 1968 “Rivers of Blood” speech’ with increasing violent, racist attacks on immigrant communities (Ramamurthy, 2013, p.11/12). These attacks and murders were ‘not simply perpetrated by gangs on the street but also by the police and state institutions’ such as in the murder of David Oluwale, a Nigerian stowaway, in Leeds at the hands of two police officers in April 1968 following years of ‘hounding’ by the police and mental health services (Ramamurthy, 2013, p.13; Aspden, 2008, p.1).

The intensification of racial discrimination and violence called for more vigorous resistance, and with the seeds sown from previous anti-colonial and anti-racist work African, Caribbean and Asian solidarity work developed through the project of political Blackness. Sivanandan (1983) describes
political Blackness as a ‘community and a class…we closed ranks and took up each other’s struggles’ (p.3). Mirza (1997) describes ‘being “black” in Britain is about a state of “becoming” (racialized); a process of consciousness’ (p.3). In being ‘located through your “otherness”, a “conscious coalition” emerges: a self-consciously constructed space where identity is not inscribed by a natural identification but a political kinship’ (p.3). Therefore ‘to be black in Britain is to share a common structural location; a racial location’ (p.3). The project of political Blackness supported the ‘shared experience of objectification’, making sense of place in a white world and importantly building resistance through ‘politicized collective action’ (p.3). This created space for the possibility of new forms of Black radical subjectivities (Mama, 1995).

In the 1960s and 1970s burgeoning Black Power and Asian Youth Movements espoused the right to self-defence for Black communities, campaigning for Black rights, against immigration laws, and ‘building a rich infrastructure of organisations, parties and self-help projects’ (Sivanandan, 1983, p.3). Parties included the United People’s Alliance, the Black Unity and Freedom Party, the Black Liberation Front, and the Black Panthers, whom all had their own ‘projects, newspapers, news-sheets, schools’ (p.3).

Organisations developed their own strike committees who would travel to different strikes offering support and learning from one another from the differing but also similar traditions of anti-colonial resistance. Sivanandan (1983, p.3) describes the ‘weaving’ of contemporary and past struggles of resistance from across the colonies, including Ireland, the Commonwealth and Black Power in the United States as creating a ‘beautiful massive texture that in turn strengthened the struggles here and fed back to the struggles there’. The weaving of these struggles can be understood to shape political Black subjectivities, as Rassool (1997, p.188) notes that Black identity and subjectivity ‘are not linear constructions but rather they reflect a tapestry of interwoven life experiences having their origins within different socio-historical epochs’.
Black subjectivities are ‘continually being shaped in their everyday interaction with the social world and thus they are flexible and engaged in a constant, reflexive, process of “becoming”’ (p.189). The history and legacies of political Blackness are therefore important to consider in the shaping of Black and ‘of colour’ subjectivities. However, Sivanandan (1983) cites the recession in the 1970s and the Immigration Act of 1971 as a point at which the project of political Blackness began to be undermined. Different communities began to have different priorities. South Asian communities struggled against the tightening of immigration controls, ‘arbitrary arrests and deportation’ focusing on legal defences which led to a less co-ordinated approach. African Caribbean communities, on the other hand, became more focused on the ‘Sus’ laws and the ‘criminalisation of their young, police brutality and judicial bias’ (p.4). The ‘Sus’ law is the colloquial term for Stop and Search under section 4 of the Vagrancy Act 1824 which allowed police officers to stop and search:

‘every suspected person or reputed thief, frequenting any river, canal, or navigable stream, dock, or basin, or any quay, wharf, or warehouse near or adjoining thereto, or any street, highway, or avenue leading thereto, or any place of public resort, or any avenue leading thereto, or any street…or any highway or any place adjacent to a street or highway;…with intent to commit…an…arrestable offence’.


The Sus law was seen to disproportionately affect black (of African Caribbean descent) communities and was seen to be a causal factor in the early 1980s uprisings across major cities in England. These important struggles meant in part that ‘priorities became separated’ and the rich infrastructure that had been built up began to be ‘eroded’ (p.3/4). At the same time, the state’s emphasis on *ethnicity* and state funding for community projects based on cultural difference ‘de-linked black struggle’, separating out different communities coalesced under political Blackness according to ethnic group (p.4; Brah, 1996). Activists were co-opted into working on state-funded community projects, which worked to an extent to neutralise the project of political Blackness. However, Sivanandanan (1983) notes that it was the Black women’s movement that managed to continue
much of the Black infrastructure from the 1970s to the 1990s, with a few lasting until the present day.

Throughout the 1970s Black women were beginning to demand the importance of addressing the intersections of gender and race in politically Black spaces as well as the women’s liberation movement (Mason-John and Khambatta, 1993). Through ‘ideological blind spots’, attending to race, gender and class separately, Heidi Safia Mirza (1997, p.4) describes Black women as occupying ‘a location whose very nature resists telling’. Black British feminisms have sought to speak to the gendered experience of racialisation within ‘patriarchal, colonial and now postcolonial discourse’ and ‘contest, and resist racist logics and practices in the everyday lives of black people’ (p.5/6).

The Black British feminist movement campaigned for the rights of immigrant women who were only formally able to ‘claim rights on the grounds of marriage’; against sexual and domestic violence; supporting ‘anti-colonial struggle’; supporting women’s labour struggles; sit-ins against ‘virginity tests’ for Asian immigrant women; reproductive rights, challenging the use of Depo Provera and the forced sterilisation of Black women; to resist racist politics and harassment by the state and police; in ‘defence campaigns’ for those arrested in the 1981 uprisings; anti-deportation protests and ‘challenging imperial feminism’ (Mirza, 1997, p.7/10). Black women’s organisations prospered in this time and these included, among others, Liverpool Black Sisters, Muslim Women’s Organisation, Manchester Black Women’s Co-Operative (Abasindi Co-op), Brixton Black Women’s Group, Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent (OWAAD), Southall Black Sisters, and Zanu Women’s League.

As with political Blackness more generally, Mama (1995) argues the Black feminist movement and particularly the work of OWAAD led to the development of ‘new cultural forms and articulations of identity’ (p.5). Similarly, Lewis (2000, p.155) notes that ‘challenges to the forms of thinking, knowledges and practices which articulate sexual, “racial” and other forms of difference have also provided the terrain upon which new
political subjects and constituencies have been formed’. Mama (1995, p.6) argues that the black feminist ‘articulation of black identities was about changing one’s consciousness of one’s position in the world, about constructing new subjectivities and rejecting the disempowering legacies of centuries’.

Mama (1995, p.100) identified two discourses that shaped her participants’ subjectivities – a ‘colonial-integrationist discourse and black radical discourse’. The colonial-integrationist discourse was a hegemonic discourse which encouraged assimilation and integration into the colonial or British ‘dominant order’ while the black radical discourse encouraged ‘a politics of resistance and subversion’ (p.100). Black radicalism has provided ‘innovative and creative’ theory and practice for resistance, such as, Garveyism, nationalism, Rastafarianism, negritude, Black Power, black feminism and political Blackness (p.107). OWAAD can also be situated within this history of black radicalism.

Research on Black women’s subjectivities highlights dis-identificatory strategies to subvert racist, sexist oppression – that they were and are not merely ‘passive recipients’ (Rassool, 1997, p.191; Munoz, 1999). I draw on Munoz’s (1999) concept of dis-identification here alongside Mama’s (1995, p.117) research in which she considers the ‘coexistence of subject positions and the…multiplicity of subjectivity’. Mama (1995) highlights the contradictory ways in which subjectivity is formed through identification with both colonial-integrationist and black radical discourses. Munoz (1999, p.12) adds to this tension the process of dis-identification – arguing that minority subjects do not simply assimilate or resist but that a third alternative emerges which is dis-identificatory in which the subject ‘tactically and simultaneously works on, with and against a cultural form’. For Munoz (1999, p.4) disidentification is then ‘meant to be descriptive of the survival strategies the minority subject practices in order to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform’.
Mama’s (1995, p.6) theory of subjectivity was informed by the study of the ‘ongoing process of cultural and individual change, change that was happening simultaneously within individuals and at the collective, social level’ for Black British women within black (of African descent) liberation and feminist movements. Post-colonial politically Black British subjectivities are therefore always on the way, in the ‘process of “becoming”’ while managing the complexity of the ‘interweaving of “past-present”’ (Rassool, 1997, p.188/189). It should be understood that this process of becoming is a ‘contradictory process’ given that Black people and people of colour ‘have been brought into Britain, and yet the history of their presence continuously denied’ (Mama, 1995, p.95).

Black feminist organising highlighted the need to address the intersections of political Blackness, addressing the lived experience of those who were minoritized within a minority. However, within some of these organisations the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality were a painful topic of contention (Carmen, Gail, Shaila, and Pratibha, 1984). The treatment of Black lesbians at OWAAD’s 1981 conference and the division over a lesbian discussion group on the schedule ‘contributed’ to the folding of the organisation the following year (Mason-John and Khambatta, 1993, p12). Despite this, the 1980s saw an ‘explosion’ of events for Black lesbians in London, and elsewhere in the country parties in people’s homes called ‘Blues, with a DJ, bar, and door charge, were the only meeting places for many Black lesbians’ (p.13).

In comparison to the small number of contemporary QTPOC networks a huge number of Black gay and lesbian groups and organisations developed throughout the 1980s such as the Gay Asian Group, which later became the Lesbian and Gay Black Group, which founded the Black Lesbian and Gay Centre, Black Lesbian Group, Chinese Lesbian Group, Shakti for South Asian lesbians and gay men, Latin American Lesbian Group, Lesbians and Policing Project (LESPOP), Young Black Zami’s, Black Lesbians Brought Up In Care Group, Black MESMAC Project (Safer Sex project for Black men), MOSAIC for lesbians and gay men of mixed race heritage, Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group, Black Lesbians and Gay People of Faith, the

In 1985 Zami I, the first British Black Lesbian conference, was held in London with over 200 women of African and Asian descent attending. A second Zami conference was held in Birmingham in 1989. To note, Zami is ‘a Caribbean word particular to the island of Carriacou. The late Audre Lorde in her book Zami: A New Spelling of My Name (1982) uses zami to describe women who have sexual and loving relationships with each other. Since then some black women have used zami to define their sexual preference.’ (Mason-John and Khambatta, 1993, p.38) The first national Black Gay Men’s Conference, ‘In This Our Lives’, was held in London in 1987.

These organisations and networks worked to support those multiply marginalised within Black, women, and lesbian and gay movements and communities; campaigned and gave advice on issues of immigration from a lesbian and gay perspective; challenged homophobia in Black media and culture; developed publishing houses for Black lesbian literature; and created media and culture such as Outwrite which was an ‘anti-racist, anti-imperialist’ monthly paper which discussed lesbian lives across the world (Mason-John, 1995, p.18). The group ‘Wages Due Lesbians’ (WDL) was an example of Black lesbians and white lesbians working together in solidarity in anti-racist struggle, with the main aim of reparations for lesbians (and all women) to be ‘compensated for their unrecognized work’ (p.18). WDL fought for ‘the Black woman not to be torn between her Black and lesbian identity, and has highlighted the link between homophobia, poverty and economic exploitation’ (p.18). WDL supported campaigns for the rights of lesbian mothers; campaigns against Section 28 which banned literature and discussion about lesbian and gay people in schools and local authorities in the UK from 1988 to 2003; and the testing of AZT (an experimental drug for HIV) on HIV-positive African children (p.19). Black lesbian and gay organisations overlapped with the struggles of the black feminist and the wider black liberation movements linking the international with the national
and local, supporting anti-imperialist and anti-colonial work and issues facing Black communities in the UK. However, as inferred by the proliferation of support groups and the work of the WDL these organisations addressed the existentialist dilemma of being multiply marginalised through race, gender and sexuality and their intersections.

Unfortunately, most of the Black women’s and lesbian and gay organisations, projects and networks had folded by the mid-1990s. Mason-John and Khambatta (1993) note how much of this work was supported financially by progressive Labour local authorities in the early 1980s, in particular the Greater London Council (GLC), however many were ‘sceptical’ about working with local government (p.17). This is echoed by Sivanandan’s (1983) concerns of co-option of more radical work into liberal institutions. The risks of being funded by local authorities also came to fruition in the late 1980s when Section 28 of the Local Government Act of 1988 was passed by a Conservative government. By the end of the 1980s ‘lesbian and gay, women’s, disability and race units were being dismantled’ (Mason-John and Khambatta, 1993, p.17). The severity of funding cuts, unemployment, and ‘repressive immigration measures’ disproportionately affected Black communities, particularly Black women and gay men and lesbians, who had been buoyed by the increased attention to equalities in the 1980s (p.18). The difficulty of sustaining community organisations and networks put activists under huge pressures, leaving many ‘burnt out or demoralised’ often with no-one else able to take up the mantle (Mason-John, 1995, p.49). The ‘plethora’ of groups that had once existed were diminished into ‘fragmented networks’, with many groups turning to organise around ethnicity with little emphasis on ‘building alliances’ (Mason-John and Khambatta, 1993, p.18). By the beginning of the 1990s many felt that they had lost the original sense of community.

QTPOC groups must be situated within these very recent and past histories of struggle. In fact, members of some of these groups include original members of the Black lesbian and gay groups from the 1980s. In considering the recent development of queer and trans people of colour networks in the UK, we must contemplate the place of these groups in how
they shape new forms of political subjectivities for post-colonial immigrants who continue to be positioned as outsiders to Britain and Europe, and in relation to progressive changes in the mainstream political rhetoric around women and LGBTQ equalities.

The Black feminist and the Black lesbian and gay movements of the 1970s onwards began the political work of complicating Black subjectivities in public, raising the issue of intersectionality and multiplicity, and contesting Black heteronormativity and ‘authenticity’ (Wright, 2013, p.4). Wright (2013) has described the problematic of ‘authenticity’ in black (of African descent) diasporic cultures which create hierarchies of authenticity – most commonly with the black cisgender heterosexual man at the top of this hierarchy. Africa is positioned as the seat of black authenticity, which creates a ‘signifying chain that does in fact suggest that some blacks are less ‘authentic’ than others’ (Wright, 2013, p.6). A heteronormative lens is used to define authenticity, suggesting queer and trans black people are somehow less authentically black. This in itself perpetuates ‘anti-black racist myths’ (Wright, 2013, p.6). Black feminist and Black lesbian and gay movements have had to navigate ‘black heteropatriarchal’ ideology within Black Nationalist, Pan-Africanist and some parts of Black Power movements as well as within wider black communities, which seek to exclude them (Wright, 2013, p.14).

Dudley (2013) notes the continued invisibility of LGBTQ people within black communities and black community institutions such as the church. Ward (2005, p.493) describes black churches in the US as ‘directly and indirectly…fostering homophobia’. He suggests a number of different root causes of homophobia within black churches, pointing to the need to contextualise this phenomenon within the history of black oppression in the US and the African continent. Ward (2005, p.495) considers the centrality of literal interpretations of the Bible in black churches as an issue which reinforces homophobia, and that this is shaped by a history of ‘refuge and…freedom in the literalness of Scripture’ found by enslaved black people.
Ward (2005) also puts forward the theory that silence around sexuality within black communities stems from a fear of the white gaze and the history of racialized-sexualised stereotypes of black people – such as the animalistic sexuality of the ‘African’, the promiscuous Jezebel and the hypersexual, predatory black man. The fear of black sexuality as already being seen to be queer and perverse may lead black communities to be silent and self-disciplining when it comes to public discussions of sex and sexuality.

Thirdly, Ward (2005) considers the ‘melding’ of Black Nationalist ideology, which suggests that the black race will be liberated through the centring of black masculinity and patriarchy, alongside the ideology of traditional Christianity and its homophobia. This has meant that whiteness and homosexuality have been regarded as ‘weakness and femininity’ while black masculinity has ‘been constructed in hyper masculine terms’ – that it is the place of the (heterosexual, cisgender) black man that needs to be affirmed to ensure the continuation and liberation of the black ‘race’ (p.495). Homophobia could be understood to be ‘used as a strategy of domination’, to affirm black men within a wider social context within which they are disempowered (p.497). This of course has potential emotional consequences for black LGBT people as well as heterosexual and cisgender black people. There have been similar tensions within other people of colour communities, and this is a pressure which queer and trans people of colour also have to negotiate.

The wider histories and legacies of politically Black and people of colour histories of struggle have laid the foundations for understanding the ‘central role that colonialism/neo-colonialism, diaspora, ethnic ‘Otherness’ and the development of cultural hybridity have played in the shaping of…subjectivities’ of the post-colonial immigrant (Rassool, 1997, p.192).

It is critically important to situate queer and trans people of colour within these historical, social, and political contexts. This research aims to understand what QTPOC groups mean for their members. It also seeks to explore how QTPOC come to understand themselves as subjects through
‘(post) colonial legacies’; the intersection of race, gender and sexuality; alongside questions of belonging within LGBT and BME communities and wider British society (Phoenix, 2013, p.102).

The research is the first of its kind to consider the collective action of QTPOC or BME LGBTQ activist groups in the UK, how this may shape individual subjectivities and living with multiplicity. I now turn to the limited previous research literature on queer and trans people of colour before exploring more explicitly the place of critical psychology in this thesis.

**Reviewing the limited research into Queer and Trans People of Colour**

There is a lack of research on queer and trans people of colour in the UK, and particularly within psychology. There is a gap in understanding how subjectivities are formed for those living with multiplicity, and how in particular the intersections of race, gender and sexuality are experienced. However, there is a small amount of empirical research literature on QTPOC in the American context and across other disciplines, such as sociology and public health. Much of the literature is focused on Black African and Caribbean queer men and HIV/public health, focusing on risk behaviours as ‘men who have sex with men’ or ‘MSM’ rather than issues of subjectivity (Millet et al, 2012; Clemon et al, 2012). However, in this literature there are discussions of individual behaviours and how these may be impacted by social contexts such as poverty, racism, homophobia and a lack of social support.

Social support is a key issue, however further research is needed into how QTPOC already negotiate these social contexts and lack of support from the multiple communities of which they are a part – from the tensions of homophobia and heteronormativity within people of colour communities and exclusion from LGBTQ communities.

The small amount of psychological literature on QTPOC research is themed around issues of identities and experiences of stress, resilience and oppression in the US. There is an exploration as to how QTPOC conceptualise their multiple identities; for some their racial and sexual identities form a cohesive identity whereas others may put one identity
above another and others related identities to public and private space (e.g. Hunter, 2010; Clemon et al, 2012). However, Meyer (2012) warns against dichotomizing racial and sexual identities, as this can play into problematic discourses which position people of colour and queerness as separate. The experience of being expected to choose one identity over another or as more important is troubling for QTPOC. For example, Yuen-Thompson (2012, p.420) interviewed biracial-bisexual women and found the single-issue focus on sexuality a challenge within the queer community as participants felt that they had leave their other identities ‘at the door’. The women found this fragmentation of identity uncomfortable and searched for places in which difference and multiple identities were welcomed.

Pastrana (2010, p.56) described an ‘intersectional imagination’ in the experiences of QTPOC he researched; those living with multiple identities and oppressions found it difficult to separate out their experiences from each ‘strand’ of identity – for them they were all interlinked. The expectation to leave other parts of the self ‘at the door’ works to overlook the lived complexity of subjectivity and fails to address the ways in which these histories and experiences of oppression interact and may exacerbate feelings of social isolation. Pastrana’s (2010) study illustrated how these participants shared a certain angle of vision with other QTPOC holding an analysis of dominant ways of understanding and being from their positions at the intersections of multiple forms of marginalisation. However, a criticism of much of this research is that it focuses on an individual’s conceptualisation of multiple identities in isolation from relational, community, social, historical and cultural contexts.

In the psychological and wider literature, the research points to the problem of the lack of social support for QTPOC. For those with multiple marginalised identities, such as QTPOC, exclusion from multiple traditional support networks because of queer phobia, transphobia, or racism could have a negative impact on wellbeing (Clemon et al, 2012; Millet et al, 2012). Clemon et al (2012, p.555) described the experiences of some black gay men who felt a ‘sense of estrangement from black communities’ and a ‘sense of alienation from all gay communities’.
Jones' (2016) research with a majority white LGBT youth group explored how the young people collectively constructed their non-heteronormative identities in opposition to what they positioned as an ‘homogenous’ homophobic Asian ‘other’ (p.119). ‘Asians’ were conflated with Muslims and constructed as ‘illegitimate British citizens’ and a ‘threat to LGBT equality’ (p.117). The young people utilised the process of ‘othering’ Asians ‘to authenticate their own status as legitimate citizens who should not be marginalised’; creating themselves as an in-group who were LGBT and not-Asian and an out-group who were not-LGBT and Asian (p.126). This erases the possibility of Asian LGBTQ people, and raises issues about how political rhetoric on LGBTQ rights has merged with mainstream British political concerns over the place of Muslims, immigrants and people of colour in the UK - positioning these groups as incompatible with sexual and gender diversity. Jones (2016, p.127) argues that this reinforces the idea that the ‘ideal queer citizen is typically white’, erasing the complexity and diversity of people of colour’s lives. It is interesting to note that one of the participants, Bailey, was mixed race and was recruited into this racist narrative. Bailey’s ‘own minority ethnic background did not prevent her from producing a group identity and thus positioning herself as a legitimate LGBT citizen; despite being non-white, she was—more importantly—non-Asian’ (p.127). This is troubling itself and raises questions about supporting young queer and trans people of colour and the possible consequences this may have for Bailey.

Walker and Longmire-Avital (2013) illustrated that for black lesbian, gay and bisexual people (LGB) studied connections to the black church and having religious faith was a source of support and wellbeing. It was found that religious faith was significant in contributing to resiliency for these black LGB people when their own internalized ‘homonegativity’ was high – this social support was key to their wellbeing (p.1). However, considering the homonegativity and conservative sexual politics of some black churches this social support may ‘create future vulnerabilities for their psychological wellbeing’ (p.6).
Balsalm et al (2011) found that microaggressions experienced by QTPOC are linked to depression and stress, particularly in experiencing racism in LGBT communities, heterosexism in people of colour communities and racism in personal relationships. Heterosexism in people of colour communities was found to be especially harmful to participants. Meyer (2012, p.853) explored QTPOC experiences of anti-queer violence and found that unlike white queer and trans people, QTPOC had to manage a politics of respectability within their people of colour communities, that they had to ‘contend with a discourse that they have disappointed their racial communities’. For the QTPOC interviewed, anti-queer violence was interpreted as a punishment for failing to represent their racial communities. The literature then points to the importance of social support for QTPOC and how this is often undermined by the multiple communities they are a part of failing to support and often openly discriminating against their complex identities.

The proposed research project seeks to understand how QTPOC activisms may function as a collective way in which QTPOC create shared social support addressing, embracing and affirming multiplicity while helping to navigate and address racism, queer phobia and transphobia. I propose QTPOC activisms actively address lack of support from multiple communities and discrimination against and fragmentation of multiple identities. This will address the gap in literature on collectivized political action by and for QTPOC, particularly in the UK, and what Akerlund and Cheung (2000, p.279) called the focus on ‘deficits’ of QTPOC experience in the literature, by exploring the possibilities of QTPOC activisms.

Pastrana (2010, p.63) argues that we must look at the oppression experienced by QTPOC, but also ‘incorporate how success and resilience is conceived, birthed, nurtured’. The research will explore the formation of subjectivity and the intersections of race, gender and sexuality within the specific British post-colonial context and how QTPOC activist groups may create possibilities for resistance and further shape subjectivity. The research will highlight the need for an intersectional lens in understanding subjectivity and complex identities. With the emphasis on the specific British
post-colonial contexts and the intersections of racial, sexual and gendered oppression the research is grounded in critical psychology. The research will seek to answer the following questions:

1) What does QTPOC activism mean in the UK context, how does it operate and for what purpose?

2) In what ways do QTPOC activism support the negotiation and affirmation of marginalised sexual, gender, racial identities and/or help navigate racism, queerphobia and transphobia?

3) In what ways does personal involvement with QTPOC activism impact on subjectivity?

**Conclusion and summary of chapters**

This chapter has situated queer and trans people of colour in the UK firmly within the British historical, social and political context of post-colonialism, racism and immigration, and the legacies of political Black and of colour community organising and resistance. Considering the previous work of Mama (1995), Lewis (2000), and Phoenix (2013), the research examines the shaping of the multiplicity of subjectivity for QTPOC. It aims to explore how QTPOC activism may support the negotiation of racism, queerphobia and transphobia and navigate the possible tensions between LGBTQ and BME communities within the current political and social context. The research will draw on previous critical psychological work into race, gender and sexuality, however it will bring these together with an intersectional focus, emphasising the British post-colonial context and the possibilities and limitations this provides for QTPOC subjectivities.

Chapter Two explores critical psychology’s engagements with race, gender and sexuality, providing grounding for research into QTPOC subjectivities. However, I will argue that intersectionality and post-colonial theory needs to be further drawn upon in critical psychology to address the intersectional lived experience of queer and trans people of colour.
Chapter Three further considers the post-colonial context of contemporary Britain and the place of the ‘ethnic minority’. I then draw together critical psychological work and intersectional, phenomenological, post-colonial, psycho-analytic and queer theory to develop an intersectional theoretical basis for understanding QTPOC subjectivities. From this I create a novel form of analysis – a queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis.

In Chapter Four, I describe how queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis was operationalised for the methodology, tracing the practical steps, and the method for data collection. I reflect on my role as an academic researcher and a QTPOC organiser. I also consider the use of psycho-analytic theory to develop the analysis of the data further.

Chapter Five presents the findings from the focus groups held with QTPOC groups.

Chapter Six explores the theme of belonging from one to one interviews with queer and trans people of colour.

Chapter Seven considers other themes that emerged from the analysis.

Chapter Eight provides a discussion of the findings and recommendations for future research, practice and activism.
Chapter Two: QTPOC and critical psychological engagements with gender, sexuality and race

Introduction
This chapter focuses on the possibilities critical psychology provides for understanding and researching QTPOC subjectivity. The chapter looks to the development of critical psychology as a discipline, its relationship to traditional forms of psychology and its turns towards text, discourse, language, representation, affect and embodiment to make sense of lived experience and subjectivity.

Critical psychology provides a theoretical base to complicating the subject, drawing social, political, economic and historical contexts into the formation of the subject. The various turns in critical psychology map onto tensions between addressing the structural and discursive in the formation of the subject; the subject’s negotiation of these wider forces; and the messy, material and embodied lived experience of the subject.

In charting these developments, I will be able to build a theoretical background for the study of queer and trans people of colour’s subjectivities; how these are formed, negotiated and affirmed through involvement in QTPOC groups. Therefore, this chapter also considers critical psychology’s engagements with gender, sexuality and race. I will then explore the concept of intersectionality and suggest that this research must draw on intersectionality and post-colonial theory in the UK context in making sense of QTPOC subjectivities.

The History of Critical Psychology
Critical psychology emerged primarily as a discipline in critical response to traditional psychology. Critical psychology has questioned the ways psychology has tended to work in the service of the status quo pointing out ‘the epistemological, ethical and political shortcomings of psychology, and how it serves the interests of powerful groups’ (Parker, 2015; Teo, 1999, p.122). Psychology has been critiqued for its attempts to elevate itself as part of the natural sciences through the use of positivist methods which reductively emphasizes the individual in isolation from the social. In this
approach to human experience researchers attempt to disconnect themselves from their participants, creating a hierarchical power dynamic in the name of ‘objectivity’ or ‘neutrality’ (Parker, 2015, p.4). This often leads to a failure to recognise social, historical, economic and political contexts and a tendency to ignore issues of power and structural inequalities. The subject of psychology has been traditionally defined as ‘unitary, rational’, helping to ‘constitute the very form of modern individuality’ (Henriques et al, 1984, p.1). Cognitive and behaviourist approaches have been favoured within the discipline, encouraging research which will find laws, rules, and prescriptions for understanding human behaviour.

Social psychology has also developed into a prolific field; however, it has been critiqued for taking a positivistic approach to social phenomena and utilising a ‘false divide between the social and the individual’, positioning the individual as separate from the stimuli of the social environment (Dashtipour, 2015, p.80). This led to a crisis in social psychology, from which critical psychology and sociological social psychology emerged. Alongside this, critical psychologists have noted the emergence of the psyche-complex, how psychology and other disciplines close to it encourage us to think of ourselves psychologically, with a troubling emphasis on the normative and ‘prescriptions for good behaviour’ (Parker, 2015, p.8). For critical psychologists, the disconnect between individual and the social, the emphasis on science, positivism, objectivity and the normative must all be radically deconstructed and understood to be historically situated practices in themselves. Henriques et al (1984, p.10) reject the idea of value-free or neutral knowledge, arguing that they ‘do not accept the innocence of theory…all theory is conditioned by historically specific circumstances’, questioning the epistemological and ontological orientations of psychology and its possible collusion with wider structural forms of oppression.

These critiques of psychology have originated from engagements with ‘critical theory and poststructuralist interrogations of the foundations of the discourses of modernity, feminist challenges to the phallocentric and masculinist model of subjectivity privileged in Western theory, and the
“postcolonial” questioning of the affiliations of the logocentric notion of the subject with ideologies of racism and imperialism’ (Henriques et al, 1984, p.ix). Critical psychology has tended to incorporate theory from outside of the discipline drawing on critical theory, philosophy, cultural theory, feminism, and post-colonialism to challenge traditional psychological approaches to the subject. These critiques have in part emerged from the subjugated knowledges of those minoritized through race, gender and sexuality. Critical psychology has explored socio-historical constructions of subjectivity and the ‘processes and dynamics that operate to constitute particular subjectivities or how subjectivity is “lived”’ (Henriques et al, 1984, p.xii). Henriques et al (1984, p.22) argue that an alternative approach to subjectivity would avoid ‘cognitivism, positing a unitary individual or rational intentional being as a point of origin, reducing the social to intersubjective, and assuming that individual and society are commensurate as theoretical notions’.

These critical engagements precipitated and unfolded from the oft-discussed ‘crisis’ in social psychology in the 1960s, borne of the frustration and discontent with traditional social psychological approaches. Social psychology was criticized for being, at times, ‘artificial’, ‘trivial’, ‘fragmented’, ‘reductionistic’, ‘conceptually and theoretically naïve’, ‘narrowly focused on individualism’, and ‘irrelevant for understanding social issues and problems’ (Kim, 1999, p.2). Critiques came from both within and outside of the field, and coincided with a wave of political unrest and social change in the West in the forms of Civil Rights and Black Power, feminist movements and gay liberation alongside a number of independence struggles in (formerly) colonised countries in the global south (Gough, 2015). The forms of experiential and theoretical knowledge emerging from these liberation struggles troubled the universalism of psychology, its role as a ‘disciplining institutional force’ and the ways in which certain subjects were positioned as problems (for example, black people, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people, those with mental health problems and their intersections) (p.108). At the same time critiques and experimental approaches from ‘human potential pioneers’ such as Maslow, as well as a
turn to the work of European philosophers such as Heidegger ‘led to the development of humanistic, experiential and phenomenological forms of qualitative research’ (p.108). These events inspired a proliferation of critical psychological work, for example, the emergence of feminist psychology, as well as the development of social constructionism and the turn to language, representation and embodiment in psychology to explore subjectivity.

The turn to language and the emergence of social constructionist approaches challenged psychologists to ‘extend…enquiries beyond the individual into social, political and economic realms’ understanding knowledge as ‘historically and culturally specific’ (Burr, 1999, p.13). This coincided with anti-colonial struggle and the collapse of Empire, challenging hegemonic Western epistemology. Burr (1999, p.5) broadly described social constructionist assumptions as including a critical approach to the taken-for-granted; that knowledge is historically and culturally situated; that knowledge is constructed through ‘social interaction’ particularly through language; and social constructions of the world are ‘bound up with power relations’.

Social constructionism argues that language is a form of social action, with ‘consequences, restrictions and obligations’ tied to what we say (p.8). Social constructionist approaches have drawn on the deconstruction work of poststructuralist philosophers such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida which is ‘concerned with how the human subject becomes constructed through the structures of language and through ideology’ (p.17). Power, discourse and ideology shape the subject, and to paraphrase Derrida, to analyse the formation of subjectivity ‘there is nothing beyond the text’. He suggests that it is through critically interrogating the use of language and discourse we may understand the subject.

Engagement with deconstruction theory in critical psychology has produced Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) which works to interrogate ‘prevailing societal discourses and their effects, particularly on marginalized groups’ (Gough, 2015, p.108). FDA focuses on the ‘reproduction, reworking and resistance to salient societal discourses’ (p.110). A discourse is a set of
‘meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on’ that present social phenomena, events and people in a certain way (Burr, 1999, p.64). The emphasis is on the ways in which phenomena are represented in discourse, and a discourse analysis, troubles what are described as common sense or taken for granted assumptions.

Foucault stressed that common sense assumptions and knowledge within a specific cultural and historical period are ‘intimately bound up with power’ and that by drawing on certain discourses we ‘exercise power’ (p.68). For example, Hollway (1984, p.227) describes the ‘male sexual drive’ discourse which is prevalent in Western society which understands male sexuality as a biological urge. This discourse represents sexual and gender differences as biological, sex as heterosexual and based on the ability to reproduce. This ‘hegemonic’ discourse represents men and women as having biologically defined roles, shaping power dynamics in relation to sexual practice and the formation of heterosexual feminine and masculine subjectivities (p.227). This has informed a large area of feminist psychology research into compulsory heterosexuality, sex and gendered power dynamics (Rich, 1980; Kitzinger, Wilkinson and Perkins, 1992; Jackson and Scott, 2004; Frith and Kitzinger, 1997).

The turn to language has also led to the development of discursive psychology, which specifically looks at the ways in which language is used during social interactions. For example, how a person’s description of events is produced ‘so that they will be regarded as “factual”’ or how ‘people actively construct accounts to try to build defensible identities’ (p.56/57). An example of this is Augoustinos and Every’s (2007) research identifying the ‘pervasive discursive repertoires and rhetorical devices that are combined flexibly by majority group members to justify negative evaluations of minority out-groups’ particularly in regards to racialized others (p.124). These included ‘the denial of prejudice’; ‘grounding one’s views as reflecting the external world rather than one’s psychology’; ‘positive self and negative other presentation’; ‘discursive deracialisation’; and ‘the use of liberal arguments for illiberal ends’ (p.125). The research provides a powerful interrogation of the development of discursive repertoires utilised to
‘rationalise’ continued racial inequalities (p.138). Although discourse analysis and discursive psychology are very different both are underpinned by an understanding of language as a form of social action and that language ‘is the basis for all thought’ (p.62).

These developments in critical psychology have aimed to challenge how the subject is understood within psychology, critiquing the idea of a rational, unitary subject and deconstructing this as a historically situated and socially constructed ideal. The turn to language, deconstruction and social constructionism provides an alternative - situating the subject within discourse, power and ideology. However, for some the turn to language and the idea that ‘there is nothing beyond the text’ leads to an ‘impoverished subject’; failing to address the complexity of subjectivity and the embodied experience of being-in-the-world (Gough, 2015, p.110). Blackman (2002, p.134, 135) highlights how the focus on the ‘subjectifying force of language’ has led to a lack of engagement in critical psychology with the messy, ‘bodily, sensuous’ experiences of the subject. She points out how discursive approaches may attempt to challenge the rational subject; however they work to reinforce this notion – of the subject as a rational ‘discourse user’ (p.135).

Similarly, Brown and Stenner (2009, p.90) draw on the work of Antonin Artaud to make similar critiques of discursive psychology; that language and text fail to capture our full lived experience. Artaud argued that ‘writing [or text] is pigshit when it reduces the movement of thought (aka “the obscure”, “the unknown”) to the empty abstraction of humanism, i.e. the self-contained, self-possessive model of the person whose mind is dominated by the faux-drama of petit bourgeois mortality and intimacy’ (p.92). Brown and Stenner (2009) are arguing against the poverty of traditional psychological research, as well as the purely critical discursive approach as incapable of addressing the chaotic, embodied experience of being human. It can be argued that discursive approaches are still tied to Cartesian dualism which remains foundational to Western thought; that is, the ontological idea that ‘to experience oneself as a “thinking thing”’ is then to experience oneself as immaterial, as divorced from a dubious and
untrustworthy body’ (p.94). Brown and Stenner (2009) highlight the limitations of focusing on language and text in psychology and encourage a turn toward embodiment and affect.

Feminist psychoanalysis has provided possibilities for attending to embodiment. Helene Cixous argued that women are ‘excluded from Western philosophy and culture’; and through this exclusion women have been ‘allocated everything that men deny about themselves’ (Craib, 2001, p.172). Similarly, the anti-colonial work of Fanon (2007) has criticised Western philosophy for excluding black people, people of colour and the formerly colonised in its conceptions of the world and the supposed ‘universality’ of, for example, Freud and Sartre’s work. Fanon (2007) chronicles the psychodynamic dialectic between white and black, in which the repressed and denied fantasies of the white man are projected onto the colonised.

The decolonial work of Quijano (2007) describes European ‘modernity/rationality’, within which psychology is rooted, as a form of coloniality, and as such the ‘most general form of domination in the world today’ (p.170, 171). The classification of humans via the constructs of race, gender and sexuality emerged during colonialism through which Europeans established their own biological, structural, and cultural superiority and their own epistemology as the ‘universal paradigm of knowledge’ (p.172). Within this paradigm male Europeans are defined as rational subjects vis a vis the objectified Other or objectified nature. Post-colonial critiques have thus challenged modernity/rationality as a distinctly geographic and historically located power-knowledge matrix, disputing its claim of universality. These have contested the foundations of European thought, and of traditional psychology’s rational subject as well as allowing the objectified Other to speak and be heard. Drawing on these forms of critical theory, critical psychologists have sought to complicate the relationship between self and society, psyche and culture challenging the dualism of traditional psychology and disputing the boundaries between interior and exterior worlds. These have worked to contradict the ‘atomistic image of social existence in general’ (Quijano, 2007, p.173).
Feminist psychoanalysis and Fanon’s (2007, p.2) anti-colonial writings provide glimpses into the experience of alterity, the ‘zone of non-being’ for the formerly colonised, and of being excluded from official histories. Kristeva (1980, p.166) considers the women’s struggle as ‘introducing ruptures, blank spaces and holes into language’, addressing the registers of embodied lived experience that have ‘not been grasped by the linguistic or ideological system’. While Fanon (2007, p.4) utilises phenomenological and psychoanalytic inquiry to explore the embodied experience of exclusion – the ‘internalization – or, better epidermalization’ of black inferiority. This work challenges the power of language; the classification of the human and of difference; and traditional ideas of the subject within Western epistemology and ontology while also attending to embodied experiences of alterity. However, Hook (2005, p.475) is critical of a lack of real engagement with post-colonial work, such as that of Fanon (2007) in critical psychology, noting that it is ‘conspicuous’ in its absence particularly as much post-colonial theory is ‘explicitly psychological in both its concerns and critical resources’. Post-colonial theory provides ways of thinking through ‘the psychological and the political, the affective and the structural, the psychical and the governmental’, fitting perfectly with critical psychology’s own aims and the need to extend these to embodied racialized, sexed and gendered experience (p.476).

Heeding some of these criticisms, Ussher (2008, p.1782) calls for a critical psychological engagement in corporeality particularly for research on gender, sexuality and race which are experienced at the level of the body suggesting an approach in which the ‘materiality’ of the body is always understood as ‘mediated by culture, language, and politics’. Similarly Burr (1999, p.196) has critiqued social constructionism for its focus on discourse at the expense of the body, failing to challenge the ‘mind-body dualism of mainstream psychology’. She describes embodied knowledge and experience as ‘extra-discursive’ lying outside of language and discourse. Durrheim and Dixon (2005, p.446/449) echo these critiques comparing ‘traditional attitude theory and discursive social psychology’ in their approaches to studying racism, finding that both limit the ‘racial phenomena
they set out to study, stripping them...of their basis in the lived experience of everyday life’. Both approaches are limiting and oftentimes abstract, failing to acknowledge the ‘material, practical and bodily aspects of racial interaction’ (p.451). In their research on racial desegregation in South Africa they look to ‘embodied practices located in spatio-temporal and institutional contexts’ (p.451). They examined racial divisions in seating and movement across a desegregated beach alongside interviews with those on the beach describing their own experiences of ‘racial interaction’ (454). This approach illuminated the lived experience of desegregation; the ‘tenacity of racism’ and the persistence of the after-effects of segregation and apartheid (p.457). It also highlighted the continued ‘experientially significant categories of “black” and “white”’ post-desegregation in which black people were still seen as entering the designated white space of the beach and were thus described as ‘pushing out’ the white people, while black people understood the white people as ‘running away from them’ (p.457).

Riggs and Augoustinos (2005, p.463) are similarly orientated toward embodied experience however they utilise discursive psychology and psychoanalysis together to both ‘deconstruct’ race while understanding how processes of racialisation shape subjectivity and embodiment. Meanwhile, other critical psychologists have engaged with concepts drawn from philosophy and cultural studies, such as phenomenology and affect, to enrich psychological studies of embodiment. Phenomenology is a useful method to explore the lived experience of being-in-the-world as it prioritises materiality and embodiment. Similarly, the turn to affect and emotion supports the ‘emphases on the interweaving of the material, the social, the biological and the cultural’ as well as exploring ‘the ways in which “bodies” very broadly defined...combine, assemble, articulate and shift into new formations, worked upon, as well as working on’ (Wetherell, 2013, p.350). Norman and Rail (2016, p.278, 281) employ discourse analysis and phenomenology together to attend to the ‘multisensual aspects of embodiment’ to explore the experience of the ‘feeling body’ and how this is ‘entangled’ with the ‘dominant obesity discourse’ for women. Wetherell (2013, p.360, 364) succeeds in a ‘rapprochement’ between discourse
analysis and studies of affect, illustrating the ‘entangling’ of discourse and affect in which neither can be removed from the other and placing both ‘within emergent patterns of situated activity’.

From these examples, it is clear that the turn to the material and embodied experience in critical psychology does not seek to leave behind deconstructive work but works to complicate it. Teo (1999) outlines three general methodologies in critical psychology; deconstruction, reconstruction and construction, and warns against a discipline which privileges one specific methodology over others. Deconstruction ‘refers to a pure critique of psychology’, such as drawing on the work of Foucault and the use of discourse analysis (p.122). Reconstruction is a methodology that ‘critically reconstructs psychological theories, methods, and concepts by theoretical, logical, or historical means’ such as ‘critical historical works’ (p.123). Construction relates to the development of new ‘critical theories, methods and concepts’ such as in the work of new perspectives on race and racism and the ‘critical construction of traditional concepts such as learning, perception, cognition, and emotion’ as considered in the study of affect and materiality (p.123).

Teo’s (1999) outline of critical psychological methodologies also sketch the development of the discipline, providing opportunity for reflection on strengths, weaknesses and building on this. For example, Riggs and Augoustinos (2005, p.463) consider their research to draw on reconstruction in challenging the traditional individualised subject of psychology and embedding subjectivity within ‘both the historical contingencies of racialisation, alongside the everyday realities of racism’. They also work to deconstruct the concept of ‘race’, while constructing a new theory to understand how ‘racialisation is foundational to the processes of subjectification and embodiment’ based on the work of Butler (1997) (p.463). These turns in critical psychological methodologies can be used together in the service of social change, illuminating the ‘pathologies of the status quo’ and in developing new and creative ways of understanding subjective experience in the world (Teo, 1999, p.133).
Critical psychology troubles traditional approaches to the subject and its engagements with race, gender and sexuality challenge the classification of difference. However, I concur with Hook (2008) that it could be further engaged with anti-colonial, decolonial and post-colonial critical theory on the particularities of racialisation, subjectification and embodiment and the intersections with gender and sexuality within the British context. In the next part of this chapter I look to critical psychological research in the areas of gender, race and sexuality and argue for an approach rooted in intersectionality and a Fanon-inspired post-colonial framework to ground research into queer and trans people of colour in the UK.

**Orientations to race, gender and sexuality in psychology and critical psychology**

Critical psychological work has explored the subjugation and subjectification of those classified as inferior and Other within Western society and through Western philosophy and science. Traditional psychology can be understood as a disciplining force, complicit in the oppression of women, people of colour and LGBTQ people and in the maintenance of the status quo. This has included the use of evolutionary theory to explain male dominance and women’s subjugation such as attempts to normalize sexual violence against women (See the development of Coercive Paraphilic Disorder by Vernon L. Quinsey, 2010); the use of typically white middle class western cisgender heterosexual men in research who are assumed to be the ‘norm’ against which others are compared and often classified as abnormal; and the use of essentialist arguments to define ‘sex differences’ in cognitive, developmental, psychoanalytic and neuro-psychology (Capdevila and Lazard, 2015, p.191).

Early traditional psychological and sexological work continues to shape contemporaneous approaches to the study of sexual orientation, of which homosexuality and its ‘causes’ remain a central focus. Johnson (2015, p.22) critiques the proliferation of biological research into homosexuality as pathologizing, noting that despite changes in the law to legalise homosexuality in the mid-twentieth century, this research as well as the public’s interest in it continues to position it as disorder and
Henriques et al (1984, p.xiv, p.59) have critiqued traditional psychological studies of racism because they ‘privilege cognitive factors’, describing the ‘conceptual poverty’ of social psychology’s work on prejudice, attitudes and racism. Henriques et al (1984, p.58) point out the ‘compatibility of social psychology’s concept of racial prejudice with existing power relations and its implications for social psychology’s reproduction of these social relations’.

Critical psychology has therefore engaged with feminist, queer and to a lesser extent post-colonial critiques with each providing scrutiny of the relationships between psychology’s positivist orientation, basis in Western epistemology and ontology and these different forms of subjugation. Feminists and post-colonial theorists have criticised the individualistic focus of psychology, and the separation of the individual from the wider social, political and historical contexts (Mattos, 2015; Henriques et al, 1984). Critical psychologists have used the work of Foucault and queer theory to interrogate how psychology has been involved in the construction of modern understandings of sexuality. Foucault’s genealogical approach has been utilised to challenge the common-sense assumption that we have moved from the sexually repressive ‘dark ages’ of the Victorian times towards an ever-increasing liberal progressiveness. Foucault argued that the psy-disciplines have in fact shaped the ‘technology of sex’ which has created sex as a concern for a secular society and a ‘concern of the state and all the individuals within it’ (Alldred and Fox, 2015, p.203). Alldred and Fox (2015, p.203) follow that psychology and its theories of sex and sexuality have increased the ‘surveillance and disciplining’ of our intimate lives. They point to psychology and the psy-disciplines as complicit in the construction of an individualistic model of sexuality which have shaped ‘Western understandings of what sexuality is, and the limits of what may be thought “sexual”’ (p.203).
Critical psychology then seeks to deconstruct the positivist claims to the ‘truth’ of human sexuality and illuminate how this research is ‘itself productive of how sexualities are understood more widely by people and by social organisations and by institutions’ (p.203). Queer theory has situated modern constructions of sexuality and sexual orientation as forms of ‘contemporary capitalist biopolitical action, where discourses and modern technologies about sex and identities participate in controlling life’ (Penaloza and Uback, 2015, p.341). Similarly, Henriques et al (1984) are critical of social and cognitive psychology’s individualistic focus on racism and prejudice as simply an aberration of individual rationality and logic obscuring the history of ‘race’ as a social and political construct. This erases how racist ideologies and the processes of racialization have been embedded within Western social structures post-colonialism and enslavement, shaping modern race-relations (Golash – Boza, 2016).

Some have suggested that the way to combat psychology’s complicity in these forms of oppression is to simply add women, black people and people of colour, and LGBTQ people to psychology without challenging the overall paradigm. For example, some of the work of the psychology of women has attempted to re-work traditionally female identified characteristics which were defined as negative, such as ‘relationality and emotionality’ as positive (Capdevilla and Lazard, 2015, p.193). This may have some political value to challenge the assumed superiority of masculinist values, however, critics argued that this type of work does not adequately challenge the social construction of these gendered dynamics nor does it refute how they are tied to women. This approach was challenged for taking a ‘depoliticized stance’ (p.195).

Similar patterns have been seen in Black and LGBTQ psychology. For example, Kitzinger’s (1987, p.202) work on the social construction of lesbianism critiqued the ‘liberal humanist discourse’ of affirmative psychology identifying it as an ideology which worked to conceal the ‘structures and processes of power that produce privilege and oppression in relation to gender and sexuality’. She argues that the liberal humanism of traditional psychology has played a part in ‘emphasizing the self over the
social, and depoliticizing many aspects of social life’ (p.202). As a critical psychologist, Kitzinger (1999) is critical of positivism, individualism, and committed to constructionism and the deconstruction of taken for granted knowledge; therefore, she problematizes affirmative LGB psychologies which situate themselves firmly within the paradigm of traditional psychology. Specifically, LGB psychologies have tended to depend on positivist arguments to defend the rights of LGB people. For example, critiquing pathologizing research as simply not 'scientific' enough – rather than questioning the whole paradigm and the search for the cause of homosexuality.

Kitzinger (1999) is also critical of the individualism of LGB psychologies, for example, how homophobia and internalized homophobia are constructed as individual problems, which fails to consider the societal context of heteronormativity. This ‘depoliticises’ the oppression of LGB people, reinforcing psychology’s ‘power to label people as “sick”’ and takes the onus off society to make radical change to changing individuals (p.58). LGB psychologies have also often tended to understand sexual orientation as a stable, essentialist part of human experience which has been useful to agitate for LGB rights. However, Kitzinger is concerned with how these theories continue to naturalise heterosexuality, and describes social constructionist theories of sexual orientation and sexuality as creating opportunities to destabilise the homosexual – heterosexual ‘binary’ (p.61).

One could also question traditional and reformist black psychological approaches for their engagement in positivistic research tools as a form of ‘respectability’ politics - which may argue that using the master's tools will enamour mainstream psychology to the outcomes of black psychological research. However, a more radical approach would argue that one cannot use the master's tools to dismantle the master's house - that black psychology must contest the very epistemological and ontological assumptions of traditional psychology, the foundations of which lay in the (post) colonial order, to challenge this ‘knowledge-power matrix’ (Lorde, 1984).
Critical engagements in this area therefore encourage a challenge to the positivism of traditional psychology and a change in paradigm to address the lived experience of those marginalised through race, gender, and sexuality and their intersections. A critical approach must emphasise an attention to the historical and social construction of knowledge and how this is bound up in power.

Feminist, queer/LGBTQ and post-colonial critical theory have provided a way for critical psychology to develop forms of analysing the subject as formed within wider heteronormative, patriarchal, racist and post-colonial structures. Feminist psychology developed a robust critique of traditional psychology’s positivism, objectivity and empiricism. Feminist academics, such as Donna Haraway (1988) troubled the idea of objectivity by illuminating the ‘radical historical specificity’ and ‘contestability’ of scientific claims (p.578). She used the metaphor of vision to critique the limits of objectivity, by insisting on ‘the embodied nature of all vision and so reclaim the sensory system that has been used to signify a leap out of the marked body and into the conquering gaze from nowhere’ (p.581). She highlights the power of the gaze of the ‘un-marked positions of Man and White’, working to mark them as specific, embodied, and subjective (p.581).

Rejecting the dynamic of the un-marked position marking the bodies of the colonised, gendered, sexualized, she called for a ‘doctrine of embodied objectivity’ or ‘simply situated knowledges’ (p.581). She argued for a feminist science centring the ‘politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating’ and which recognises the ‘partiality’ of knowledge, resisting claims to universal knowledge (p.589).

Haraway’s ‘situated knowledges’ was an attempt to attend to lived experience and knowledge creating a ‘feminist critical empiricism’ (p.581). Haraway (1988) struggled with and against the radical constructivism of poststructuralist critiques of science, which in their extreme pointed towards relativism, potentially undermining aims for social change. Similarly, to the history of critical psychology I charted earlier, Haraway (1988) and other feminist academics have engaged with deconstructionism but have also sought to understand embodied and material experience beyond text – the
so-called ‘extra-discursive’ (Burr, 1999, p.196). Feminist psychology challenges the ways psychology defines the normative revealing what is defined as objectivity in psychology as a transparent, oft-disembodied male, white subjectivity. It questions how traditional psychological epistemologies ‘(re)produce hierarchies and sexism in psychological knowledge and practices’ (Matto, 2015, p.335). As highlighted in the introduction feminist psychology has had a significant impact in the development of critical psychology.

Within the field of sexuality, Johnson (2015, p.1/2) suggests a third critical possibility to the current ‘polarization’ between the psychic and the social; in which the psychic focuses on the internal, individual processes of sexuality such as psychodynamics and biology, and the social points ‘to the social field as the defining force that shapes the meanings given to sexuality and sexual experience’. She suggests a turn to the psychosocial, and seeks to ‘stitch and mend the polarization’ bringing together historical and social situatedness with affect, neuroscience, and psychoanalysis to rethink sexual subjectivity (p.2). This is a potential path out of the problems associated with the binary of essentialism vs social constructionism and the question of what is beyond the text. 

Johnson (2015) troubles the critical turn towards text and discourse alone calling for a critical re-engagement with the embodied-ness of sex, sexual orientation and sexuality. Johnson draws on Sedgwick’s (2003) queer ‘reparative ethic’ in which there is a turn toward feeling which critiques the ‘long historical privileging of epistemology over ontology’ (Johnson, 2015, p.157). This is a turn toward intersubjectivity, feeling, ‘community and experience rather than language, culture and knowing’ (p.157). Johnson champions a psychosocial approach to sexualities which also seeks to ‘reimagine the psychological’ through transdisciplinary work; drawing on psychology, sociology, and queer theory among others to go beyond the polarization between psychological and ‘socio-historical’ understandings of sexuality (p.176).
Radical Black psychology also provides a rich alternative to traditional approaches to race and racism. Fanon (1986, p.14) undertook a psycho-analytic, phenomenological study of his own and others’ experiences of colonialism; how the ‘juxtaposition of the white and black races has created a massive psycho-existential complex’. He forcefully described the ‘inferiority complex’ created by the ‘death and burial’ of pre-colonial cultures by European colonizers, and the crisis in self-identity he found in himself when he met the ‘white man’s eyes’ (p.111). It is through contact with the white world that Fanon (1986) comes to the realisation that he does not have access to the universality of ‘liberté, égalité, fraternité’ of his French colonial ‘brothers’; that he was not a man in the same sense, but was a black man, a nigger – and that the associated stereotypes preceded him. He comes to the crushing realisation that it ‘is not I who make a meaning for myself, but it is the meaning that was already there, pre-existing, waiting for me’ (p.134). Fanon (1986) experiences this at the level of the body, the skin – these ideas about blackness form a ‘definitive structuring of the self’ (p.111). Fanon’s (1986) work emphasises the phenomenological experience of being racially oppressed, at the affective and bodily level; painting a picture of the colonised’s experience of ‘being-in-the-world’. He argues that there is a Manichean dynamic between coloniser and colonised, white and black in which the base, bodily and fecund are projected onto the racialized other. Whiteness becomes associated with rationality, thinking, logic while blackness is associated with sensuality, nature, sin, and evil and the black person desires after whiteness. This symbolism is not simply ‘imposed’ on the colonised, Fanon (1986, p.111) argues, but is a ‘definitive structuring of the self and the world – definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world’.

Hook (2008) is critical of the lack of research into embodiment and race and the ‘neglect’ of the work of the South African psychologist of Chabani Manganyi (1973, 1977, 1981 cited in Hook, 2008) by social psychology (p.2). Manganyi explored the ‘psycho-existential crisis of embodiment’ (p.3). For Manganyi, from a psychoanalytic perspective, the body was not just a problem of ‘ego-denial (as in the disavowal of the crass physicality of its
wastes and wants), nor only is it a problem of ‘alienating depersonalization’, but that embodiment creates the ‘existential dilemma of the disharmonious body-to-ego relationship’ (p.3/4). According to Manganyi this existential dilemma ‘arises’ from the contradiction between our own mortality and limitations as bodies and the never-ending possibilities of human consciousness (p.4). Manganyi suggests that ‘ideological symbolization...provides some relief from this pressing existential anxiety of the body’ (p.5). Similar to Fanon, Manganyi ‘insists’ that the ‘most persistent and categorical of the available symbolic equations in Western culture...is that which equates whiteness with mind and blackness with the bodily’ (p.7). Manganyi argues that it is through this dynamic that the colonised and coloniser, the white and the black find identification with whiteness as a ‘narcissistic self-valorization...symbolic idealization’ and blackness as ‘devalued, deserving of denial and repression’ (p.7).

Manganyi understands the process of racialization as having a ‘phenomenological dimension’, supporting Fanon’s (1986) attention to the ‘sensuality’ of race and racism experienced at the ‘embodied, affective and experiential level’ (Hook, 2008, p.15, p). Hook (2008, p.13) notes the emphasis on the physical – psychological experience of being ‘surrounded by the presence, the metaphysics of whiteness’ in Fanon (1986) and Manganyi’s work. Similar to other debates in critical psychology, Hook (2008, p.15) illuminates the discursive and what he describes as the ‘pre-discursive forms of racism. He makes a distinction between two ways of understanding the racialized body, as the body that can ‘both be over-determined by symbolic and ideological means (via various structural impositions) and yet also function, in its capacity as “surface of experience” (affectivity, visceral reactions)’ (p.16). These two ways of understanding the racialized body are troubled by their ‘constitutive irresolvability’, the tension between the two and the impossibility of knitting the two together (p.16). However, both must be considered together in work on embodiment and race, as well as subjectivity and the phenomenological experience of ‘being-in-the-world’.
This rich critical work into race, gender and sexuality provides valuable theoretical background in taking a critical psychological approach to queer and trans people of colour’s lived, embodied experience. However, the possibility of knitting together the discursive and embodied, material subjectivity is frustrated by understanding race, gender and sexuality as separate. For the participants of this research these vectors of oppression and subjective experience intersect.

Academics such as Mama (1995), Lewis (2000), Phoenix (2013, p.102) and Nayak (2015) have explored ‘(post) colonial legacies’, and the intersections of race and gender and the formation of subjectivity. Phoenix (2013, p.103) illustrates in her work with black women in education in the UK that they do not passively take on specific social identities but ‘continually develop new consciousness through personal struggles with the contradictions and subjugation they face. Their subjectivities are, therefore, part of a continuous, creative and dynamic process’. Phoenix (2013) illustrates how her participants struggle with and against colonised representations and racist discourses about themselves. Mama (1995, p.111) encourages us to consider racism as ‘texturing subjectivity’ but cautions against over-determining racism in black life. She illuminates the processes through which black British women involved in the black feminist movement of the 1980s and 1990s ‘collectively’ and individually negotiated racist discourses (p.112). Her participants had to come to terms with being black in a ‘white-dominated milieu’, while often being denied their Britishness (p.116). Similarly, to other work discussed in this chapter, Mama (1995) conceptualizes ‘subjective processes’ as ‘being at once socio-historical and intra-psychic’ (p.164). Nayak (2015, p.51) draws black feminist theory and the work of Audre Lorde into critical psychology to explore how ‘racist social structures create racist psychic structures’ and how this ‘operates differently for Black and white people’. She argues that Black and white people are ‘interpellated differently’ within racist social structures and that power forms our subjectivity (p.63). Following Butler, Nayak (2015) blurs the distinction between the internal and external arguing that it is the process of internalization of inferiority which creates the distinction in the first place. It
is the emphasis on social context which is important to draw from critical psychology, however Nayak (2015, p.21) utilises black feminist theory to help us to understand the ‘intersecting social and psychic manoeuvres in the process of subject formation’ and the ‘psychological impact of racism and sexism’.

The theory of intersectionality troubles the fragmentary impulses of psychology and critical psychology, as it ‘challenges mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis’ calling attention to the intersections of race, gender and sexuality (p.16). This rejects the traditional subject of psychology as rational and unitary with a ‘fixed, stable, totalized identity’ (p.90). Black feminist theory is borne out of the ‘interaction of theory with lived experience’, a praxis-orientated critical theory which contrasts with traditional psychological methods of objectivity and positivism (p.32). Nayak (2015, p.91) considers the potential of Lorde’s work on difference compared to psychology’s emphasis on the universal; Lorde’s work focused on ‘the tribulations of relating across difference and transgressing externally imposed ideological, structural, emotional and psychic borders used to separate, distort, and fragment’. This is of key importance to critical psychology – to address fragmentation of the subject, and address intersectionality.

In the next section I consider intersectionality alongside Fanon’s anti-colonial theory in making sense of the links between race, gender and sexuality as forms of classification suggesting how critical psychology and the current research into queer and trans people of colour will be enriched by this, particularly within the UK context.
Intersectionality: Threading race, gender and sexuality together in critical psychology

Intersectionality is a way in which to further complicate people of colour identities and address the social construction of people of colour lives. ‘Intersectionality’ was borne out of the theorisation of black women’s lived experience by black feminist activists and academics within a long continuum of black feminist work in the US and the UK. Intersectionality put simply challenges the idea of universal, fixed categories of identity and experience and calls attention to the ways in which race and gender and sexuality (among other vectors) intersect with one another. Black feminists have critiqued the universal category of ‘woman’ and a feminism that treated ‘race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis’, arguing that single axis analyses of gender or race or sexuality leave groups such as black women, and more recently queer and trans people of colour, ‘theoretically erased’ (Crenshaw, 1989, p.40).

Working from a critical legal studies framework, Kimberle Crenshaw critiqued the single axis analysis found in anti-discrimination law as it misrepresented the complexity of black women’s experiences by occluding gendered racialisation. In her analysis of discrimination lawsuits black women were failed by a legal system which defined discrimination along a single axis – as either gender or racial discrimination. In a case study, Crenshaw found that black women who sued for gender discrimination in employment opportunities at General Motors lost their case as it was found that the company had employed women – however these were white women. The courts refused to believe that black women required an understanding of discrimination specific to their experiences as women racialized as black. In another case, black women won a racial discrimination case however the specificity of their experiences were seen as too different to the experiences of black men within the company, and therefore the black men did not receive the compensation the women received. Crenshaw (1989, p.63) describes these cases as contradictory, however this stems from the ‘conceptual limitations of the single issue analyses that intersectionality challenges’; black women may experience
similar and different discrimination to that experienced by black men and white women. They also experience the ‘double discrimination’ of sexism and racism, as well as discrimination based on the qualitatively different experience of being a black woman (p.63). For queer and trans people of colour they may experience similar and differing discrimination experienced by white queer and trans people and heterosexual people of colour.

Crenshaw (1989) named this concept 'intersectionality', using the metaphor of the 'intersections' at which roads meet to illustrate how black women can be located at the intersections of race and gender (and sexuality, class etc). The metaphor of intersections is useful to highlight how a single-axis analysis of gender has privileged and centred the experiences of women racialized as white, and a single-axis analysis of race has privileged and centred the experiences of black people gendered as male. The single-axis analysis occludes how systems of oppression and privilege intersect, erasing black women and their qualitatively different lived experiences. Crenshaw (2016) describes this as an ‘intersectional failure’ in which black women fall through the intersectional gap. As Lugones (2010, p.742) suggests, ‘if woman and black are terms for homogenous, atomic, separable categories, then their intersection shows us the absence of black women rather than their presence’; therefore, black women ‘exceed “categorical” logic’. Lugones (2010, p.742) locates this intersectional failure within the ‘categorical, dichotomous, hierarchical logic’ which she argues is central to ‘modern, colonial, capitalist thinking about race, gender, and sexuality’. Drawing on Maldonado-Torres (2007) theory of the coloniality of being, Lugones (2010, p.743) considers the gendered and sexed dimensions of the ‘hierarchical, dichotomous distinction between human and non-human’ forced onto the colonized in which ‘hermaphrodites, sodomites, viragos, and the colonized were all understood to be aberrations of male perfection’. Lugones (2010, p.751) describes coloniality as the ‘powerful reduction of human beings to animals, to inferiors by nature, in a schizoid understanding of reality that dichotomizes the human from nature, the human from the non-human, and thus imposes an ontology and cosmology that, in its power and constitution, disallows all humanity, all
possibility of understanding, all possibility of human communication, to dehumanized beings’.

The classification of the human within the colonial period distinguished the human colonizer from the non-human colonised; colonised women were positioned as ‘viragos’ while colonised men were both feminized and hypersexualised (p.744). However, Lugones (2010, p.745) argues that categorically and semantically speaking the “colonized woman” is an empty category: no woman are colonized; no colonized female are women’. Tracing these histories, Lugones (2010) interrogation of the colonially of gender and decolonial feminism enrich intersectionality and understanding intersectional failure through attending to the historical and social construction of gender within the colonial period. She supports an intersectional analysis through calling for an ‘understanding [of] the oppression of women who have been subalternized through the combined processes of racialization, colonization, capitalist exploitation, and heterosexuality’ (p.747). In reading race, gender and sexuality through the lens of coloniality we see the interlocking nature of patriarchy, heteronormativity and racist and colonial structures understanding the subjugation of the colonised, women, queer and trans people as interlinked.

Echoing the work of Fanon (1986) and DuBois (2016), Lugones’ (2010, p.749, 751) describes coloniality as a ‘fracture’ in which the colonised must manage their own ‘degradation’ having been ‘assigned to inferior positions and being found polluting and dirty’. This ‘double’ or ‘third person consciousness’ is troubling, in which one has a sense of self and a world of ones’ own meaning which is contradicted by a world that already has a meaning to impose on the colonized (Fanon, 1986, p.111). Here black women, women of colour and queer and trans people of colour must negotiate how their racialisation shapes their gendering and de-gendering, sexualising and de-sexualising in which they may be hypervisible and invisible due to categorical logics of coloniality.
Intersectionality then, is a framework which makes ‘visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it’ (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006, p.187). It draws our attention to the workings of power within historical contexts and the concomitant processes which shape our subjectivities and identities and that they are always intersecting, never isolated (Brah and Phoenix, 2004; Dhamoon, 2011). The subject is a ‘figure of multiplicity, representing consciousness as a ‘site of multiple voicings’ seen not as necessarily originating with the subject but as discourses that traverse consciousness and which the subject must struggle with constantly’ (Brah and Phoenix, 2004, p.78).

Intersectionality rejects the essentialism and universalism of categories of identity attending to interlocking power relations and how they shape and affect our material and subjective lives. Subjectivity is marked by the violence of these power relations, and as Nayak (2015, p.53) notes, ‘racist, homophobic, patriarchal, subordinating power structures that appear as external get under the skin, into the psyche and go on to constitute Black women’s self-identity in a way that is different than for white women, white men and Black men.’

Intersectionality also attends to the specificities of Black women’s experience in which the intersections of racism, sexism, and homophobia ‘isolate Black women from others within their communities, resulting in deep trauma, lack of support and alienation’ (p.54). I propose that a similar analysis is needed in understanding how queer and trans people of colour subjectivities are shaped within the violence of these power relations, and how this constitutes their own understanding of self and identity. Likewise, the experiences and consequences of being confronted with the intersections of racism, sexism, queerphobia and transphobia need to be addressed.

I concur with Nayak (2015, p.91) when she implores critical psychology to attend to the particularity of life at the intersections and the ‘emotional difficulty of embodied intersectionality’. Intersectionality highlights the existentialist dilemma experienced by queer and trans people of colour; the ‘tribulations of relating across difference and transgressing externally
imposed ideological, structural, emotional and psychic borders used to separate, distort, and fragment’ (p.91). The subaltern may be disorientated by navigating Western cosmology, resistance to this and assimilation to this (through colonisation). Lugones (2010, p.753) suggests that through inhabiting the fractures and contradictions, through living in the borders with other inhabitants there is a possibility for the subaltern to go ‘toward a newness of be-ing’ taking part in ‘border thinking’ to create new possibilities for resistance. This draws on the work of Gloria Anzaldua (1987) and Audre Lorde (1984) to emphasise the importance of embracing difference, and ‘multiplicity and of coalition at the point of difference’ as a form of resistance to fragmentary, dichotomous categorical colonial hegemony (p.755).

Intersectionality is a key theoretical tool for understanding queer and trans people of colour’s lived experience. Placing race, gender and sexuality within the lens of coloniality provides an understanding of the ways in which people of colour are gendered and degendered, sexualised and desexualised at times both hypervisible and invisible; understanding race, gender and sexuality as intersecting, colonial classifications. Framing the racialized queer, and/or trans body within the coloniality of being highlights the intersection of wider power structures; the multiplicity of oppression and degradation and the difficulties of ‘embodied intersectionality’ (Nayak, 2015, p.91).

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have charted the development of critical psychology and the different turns in the discipline which have worked to complicate research on subjectivity. For the current research a turn to embodiment, materiality and affect are integral to explore the lived experience of being-in-the-world for those who live at the intersections of minoritized race, gender and sexuality as well as those who are of the ‘majority’. Discursive psychology also remains of importance; however, psychoanalysis and phenomenology provide critical psychology with an explication of the messy, sensual life of the body.
Work from the psychology of gender, race and sexuality have been critical in the development of critical psychology; however, having considered this work I have argued that for understanding queer and trans people of colour’s lived experience there needs to be a pulling together of these threads of research. I put forward an argument for the use of intersectionality in critical psychology to pull these threads of research together using the critical lens of the coloniality of being and the work of Fanon (2007), Maldonado-Torres (2007) and Lugones (2010). I suggest that this lens is needed to address the questions of coloniality of being in the British context, and to encourage wider engagement with ideas of racialisation as foundational to subjectivity and the place of gender and sexuality. The psychology of sexualities and gender have made a considerable impact on the development of critical psychology; however, although there has been critical psychological work on race and racism one may critique a lack of wider engagement with racialisation as foundational to subjectivity.

In the next chapter I consider intersectionality further, bringing together the research discussed in this chapter on gender, sexuality and race, coloniality and subjectivity to develop a theoretical background for critical psychological research into queer and trans people of colour’s lived experience.
Chapter Three: Developing a theoretical framework for understanding the lived experience of being-in-the-world for queer and trans people of colour

Introduction
In the previous chapter I explored the turns in the discipline of critical psychology from the deconstructive work of discursive psychology to a move to representation, embodiment and affect. I argued that although critical psychology has engaged with critical work on the topic of race, it has not thoroughly considered coloniality and the intersections of race, gender and sexuality. Post-colonial, critical race and black feminist theory are rich with potential for psychology to understand processes of racialisation; its intersections with gender and sexuality; and subject formation. In this chapter I engage these theories to propose a theoretical background to understanding the lived experience of being-in-the-world for queer and trans people of colour.

Emphasising coloniality and the intersections of gender, race, and sexuality

Queer and trans people of colour are situated within specific British histories of colonialism, imperialism and post-colonial immigration. However, Gilroy (2004) argues that these histories are contested; they have been ‘mystified’ and turned away from within accepted British historical narratives (p.3). There has been a refusal to face colonial history and how this past continues to shape the present. There is a ‘disindication to address these dynamics’, and denial of how these legacies structure British society (p.12). Gilroy (2004) points to this failure to face history as bound up in the failure of the British to understand current phenomena such as immigration and multiculturalism. To slightly misquote James Baldwin (1963, p.16), the British are ‘in effect, still trapped in a history which they do not understand’. Stemming from this there are anxieties around the invasion of Britain by postcolonial immigrants, a changing culture as well as being under attack from ‘Americanization’ and ‘Europeanization’ (Gilroy, 2004, p.13). There is a concern over what it means to be ‘British’ and politicians utilise rhetoric
which calls for a claiming back of British sovereignty from what are deemed nefarious external forces.

Gilroy (2004, p.8) argues that racial difference and racial ideology has been ‘foundational’ to British society and how the British have come to understood their ‘national hierarchy…on which a host of other supplementary social and political conflicts have come to rely’. Racism and ‘ethnic absolutism’ have shaped our institutions and academic knowledge (p.8). This is echoed by Maldonado-Torres' (2007, p.240) concept of ‘coloniality’, in which colonialism and imperialism are understood to have shaped modern societies and the values, beliefs and epistemology have been embedded in our social and institutional structures. The coloniality of being speaks to the ways in which we continue to be subjected to colonial forms of knowledge – of being classified and racialized, gendered and sexualised.

Quijano (2007, p.169) points to how these systems of domination continue within the global ‘distribution of resources and work’ as well as in the ‘colonization of the imagination of the dominated’ in which European culture, production of knowledge and forms of being continue to be defined as the norm and as superior .The formerly colonized continue to exist within the dominant idea of European ‘modernity/rationality’ as a ‘universal paradigm of knowledge’; in which the European continues to be understood as the objective subject who can classify, conquer, and study the irrational objects in the world, including the Other (p.172).

Echoing this and Gilroy (2004), Hesse (2004, p.22) notes that racism and racial ideology ‘co-exists with its condemnation in the West’. Racism has been ‘consigned to pathology, a profound moral deviation from the western liberal and democratic ethos and ethnos’ (p.9). Hesse (2004, p.15) describes this as the ‘imperially accredited discourse of westernese’, in which there are constraints on what can be said and by whom, with knowledge ‘shaped and defined Eurocentrically within a culture of power/knowledge relations that determine their intelligibility, believability and acceptability’. Therefore, hegemonic discourses of race and racism
often dispute, undermine and ridicule the definitions and experiences of racism as experienced by the subaltern.

Hesse (2004, p.15) uses the example of black academics in the 1930s who were working on issues of racism related to lynchings, Jim Crow and segregation, however ‘within the terms of westernese, subaltern black concerns about the technologies of racism were not conceivable, even within liberalism, as part of the hegemonic national priorities’. At the same time as there were lynchings of black people in the United States in the 1930s, the Jewish experience of the Holocaust became the ‘paradigmatic experience of racism in the West’ (p.15). This Eurocentric definition of racism supports the liberal critique of fascism while glossing over the ‘colonial excess’ of European colonial and post-colonial racism, rendering anti-, post-colonial definitions of racism unintelligible (p.20). Therefore, people of colour must navigate the disorientating experience of both systemic and structural racism and the denial of its existence by hegemonic understandings of race and racism.

Lewis (2000, p.6) has traced the ways in which black people have been constructed as a ‘problem’ for the UK from the time of the Windrush through to the 1980s. Ideologically, immigration has been constructed as a ‘crisis’ and people of colour’s sexuality, relationships and family structures are positioned as pathological and a threat to ‘traditional values and authority relations’ (p.6). Lewis’ (2000, p.21) research into social work explores how these ideological concerns shaped government social policies and the strategies of local authorities through the Foucauldian concept of governmentality to illuminate the ways in which the welfare state was utilised to work in ‘resistance to, the re-formation of Britain as a multi-racial/multi-ethnic society’. She identifies social work, ‘immigration policy, policing and education’ as areas which made ‘significant contributions to the discursive and social constitution of new black subjects’ (p.35). She identifies welfare as a site of struggle over ‘national belonging’ for people of colour, in which they were constructed as perennially ‘other’ to Britain – of being a ‘citizen/subject whilst simultaneously being constituted as an essentialized “other” who is now a permanent figure in Britain’ (p.35, 203).
Gilroy (2004, p.6, p.2) notes that in the current context there is a deepening and reifying of ‘national and ethnic difference’ as a ‘defensive’ move against multiculturalism and the politics of ‘plurality’. The sounding of the death knell for multiculturalism has been led by the political positioning of culture as an essentially ‘unbridgeable division’ (p.6). The focus on cultural difference has been picked up within mainstream media and dominant hegemonic discourses, which allows for the repurposing of racist ideology repackaged as ‘cultural’ difference. British cultural ‘values’ continue to be contrasted as separate, definable and now more progressive than those in ethnic minority communities. Women and queer and trans people of colour are placed at the centre of real and imagined ‘cultural wars’ in which the treatment of these minorities within ethnic minority communities are marked as potentially stable, essential differences in ‘culture’. This is provided as further proof of the problem with those racially and culturally different, the failure of multiculturalism and the need to protect British values from the Other. People of colour, immigrants and refugees sit in tension with these questions of nationhood, citizenship, culture and race; with some welcomed more easily into the fold of ‘Britishness’ than others.

This research is interested in the question of how queer and trans people of colour negotiate these tensions as post-immigrants navigating intersecting discourses of racialized, gendered, sexualized Otherness within the post-colonial British context. I am interested in how QTPOC negotiate these contradictory positionings of belonging and not-belonging, assimilation and resistance, British and non-British and how these are contingent on categorical logics of race, gender and sexuality. Inspired by the work of critical psychologists the research will work to keep alive these historical and social contexts while seeking to understand how QTPOC navigate power and subjectification. It will also work to extend an understanding of the intersections within the context of coloniality.

While balancing the macro-analysis, following the turn to embodiment in critical psychology I will centre phenomenological analyses of QTPOC lived experience drawing on some psychoanalytic theory for further interpretation. Following Johnson (2015), Fanon (2007), Phoenix (2013), and Nayak
I will explore how subjectivity is shaped and experienced through a knitting together of the analysis of the social, political, historical contexts and the intersections of oppression lived and negotiated at the affective and bodily level. I now want to consider specific theoretical work which will ground an exploration of living in the intersectional gap, in the borderlands, in the fracture; the existential dilemma of being-in-the-world for queer and trans people of colour.

Intersectionality, queer and psychodynamic theory and the lived experiences of negotiating the intersections

Subjectivity, intersectionality and psychodynamic theory
Althusserian and Foucauldian-inspired constructivist approaches to the subject suggest that the subject is a function of discourse and language. Althusser's (2001) theory of ‘interpellation’ claimed that ideology 'recruits' or 'transforms' all individuals into subjects so that 'all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects' (p.173, 174). According to Althusser, we are 'always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects' (p.176). This is important in grasping how the subject is always-already formed by and through ideology or discourse. However, cultural theorists such as Stuart Hall critiqued Althusser's theory of the subject as too passive and over-determining (Blackman et al, 2008). They argued that the subject is 'more than the sum total of combined discursive positions' (p.7). Similarly, Papadopoulos (2008, p.148) critiqued critical psychology's constructivist approach for failing 'to recognize that there is more to subjectivity, an excess which pertains to forms of social imagination which are beyond existing representations, which are affective, contentious and not yet realized in nature.'.

A constructivist approach cannot deal with something which is not yet represented in discourse, or how new political subjectivities are formed, for example, political Blackness and ‘QTPOC’. Foucault's changing understanding of power from centralized to decentralized and imbued within processes of self-government have influenced critical psychological work to use governmentality studies to move toward the processes of
subjectification. In this framework, power is something which forms and
constrains the subject, while also something the subject resists and works
upon in relation to other subjects. Papadopoulos (2008, p.146) suggests
that 'governing the self amounts to the insertion of subjective – that is
unique biographical, affective and situational components – into the
meanings of discourse'. Tischner (2013, p.35) argues that this means that
'while the availability of certain discourses produces particular possibilities
of “doing” and “being”, subjectivities are not only imposed and either
accepted or rejected, but produced and reproduced through embodied
experiences within these fields of possibilities'. This conceptualisation of
subjectivities allows us to comprehend 'how subjectivities construct new
materialities...how subjectivities materialize in new cultural relations and
relations of intimacy...how, finally subjectivities contribute to the emergence
of new political engagements and new social movements' (Blackman et al,
to the racialized, sexualised and gendered body through attending to
feelings, experiences and communities. This theoretical work alongside
critical psychology allows for a nuanced understanding of the workings of
power in subject formation, making space for the ways in which subjects are
positioned within discourses and how they respond to, reproduce, resist and
work on power. This moves us away from the fixed, static notion of
essentialist identities, or the subject as over-determined within discourse as
in constructivist accounts to an understanding of subjectivity as always on
the way, partial, not fully knowable and in flux.

This is echoed in Mama’s (1995) research into black (of African descent)
women’s subjectivity, in which she posits subjectivity as a product of
discursive and psychodynamic forces, from which collective and individual
responses create alternative discourses and political subjectivities. This
‘enables us to transcend the dualism which has so far separated the
individual and the social in psychological and social theory’ (p.89). Mama
suggests that if we understand discourses as ‘historically constructed
regimes of knowledge’ then we must locate research participants within
their ‘particular histories and cultures’ (p.98). Mama locates her participants,
in part, within histories of slavery, colonialism and modern race relations in Britain and their participation in UK black feminist movements. She identifies two powerful discourses at work in the women’s talk, a colonialist-integrationist discourse and a black radical discourse.

Mama finds that the black women’s subjectivities in her research are in part about finding the self after being positioned in the colonialist-integrationist discourse which promotes ideas of black inferiority and integration into white-dominated colonial and post-colonial society. The alternative black radical discourse ‘conveys a politics of resistance and subversion, and the assertion of a cultural politic that draws on African, Caribbean and British minority group experience’, emerging from the collective questioning and challenging of the contradictory experiences of being black and British post-colonial subjects (p.100). Mama highlights the possibility of the development of alternative discourses which challenge the hegemony of oppressive discourses – these I would suggest come from moments of individual and collective rupture and resistance.

Mama (1995) interrogates the potential of psychodynamic concepts and theory for theorizing subjectivity; she takes up Kleinian theory utilizing the concepts of splitting and projection to make sense of the continual processes of subjectivity. However, she utilizes feminist critique of psychodynamic theory to move away from the universalism of traditional uses of this theory to the specificity of black women’s subjectivity within a particular location and context. This places subjectivity as ‘not only a dynamic social process emanating from the collective history of the people under consideration but also an intrapsychic process in which positions and changes are constituted out of the personal relational history of the individual’ (p.142). In Mama’s research, psychodynamic theory is put to work to understand contradiction, unease, fluctuating and changing dimensions of subjectivity. Mama conceptualizes subjectivity as ‘being at once socio-historical and intrapsychic’ (p.164). Through this Mama makes sense of the tensions within and between black women who organise together, speaking to the difficulties of subconsciously negotiating parts of the self structured by colonialist-integrationist as well as black radical
discourses and the grasp for authenticity and belonging. This encourages us to consider 'fluidity and multiplicity', however Blackman et al (2008, p.19) also compel researchers to consider how 'they actually co-exist for many, with grinding stability and exploitative continuity'. This is particularly relevant for the present research in considering the possibilities of QTPOC, while simultaneously attending to interlocking oppressions and the continued, ongoing surveillance of black people and people of colour under white heteronormativity.

Importantly for queer and trans people of colour we must consider how subjectivities are shaped and reproduced intersectionally through rupture and in response and resistance. Althusser's (2001) interpellation is still useful here, even as we go beyond this theory to a more active understanding of the subject. Bringing interpellation and intersectionality together, Nayak (2015, p.63) urges us to comprehend how ‘the recruitment is different for different individuals, and the transforming is different for different individuals’. People of colour are 'recruited, transformed...differently than white people, and white people are recruited, transformed' differently to people of colour (p.63). To refer to the original subject of intersectionality, black women are recruited and transformed differently as 'women' compared to white women; these are ‘relational process[es] of racialisation’ between black and white women (Phoenix, 2013, p.101).

As Phoenix (2013) highlights, Althusser's work on subjectification follows Frantz Fanon's work on the production of black subjectivity through the power of colonial subjectification. Fanon's (1986) work is foundational to an analysis of embodied subjectification for black people and people of colour. He examined the ways in which the 'coloniser/colonised relationship is normalised in the psyche'; he argued that subjectification to universalised white norms form black subjectivities that aspire to whiteness as a way of being fully human, while also understanding the self as inferior as a racialised other (Phoenix, 2013, p.103). Fanon's work strikes at the claims of a universal subject, critically pointing to racist social structures in the production of the subject. An intersectional approach to subjectivity will highlight the multiple, co-constitutive workings of power which produce the
subject while also tracing how subjects grapple with, reproduce and resist multiple forms of power. This will also spotlight the complexity of struggling with the 'emotional difficulty of embodied intersectionality' (Nayak, 2015, p.91)

Following Fanon, Althusser, Foucault and Mama, Butler's (1997) work on the ‘Psychic Life of Power’ is useful to further conceptualise and complicate the process of subjectification. Butler (1997, p.8) suggests that if through subjectification the subject is formed, then 'subordination provides the subject’s continuing condition of possibility'. This implies that to some degree there is a ‘passionate attachment' to and a dependency on the structures of power through which one becomes a subject and comes into being (p.7). Power produces the subject, creating the conditions for subjectivity, and Butler argues, the 'internalization of the norm contribute[s] to the production of internality' (p.19). The norm becomes part of an interiorized psyche, with Butler suggesting that 'this process of internalization fabricates the distinction between exterior and interior' (p.19).

So, that, for example, racist sexist social structures create racist sexist psychic structures (Nayak, 2015).

Referring to Foucault then it is clear that 'power acts not only on the body but also in the body'; in Butler's (1997, p.89, 92) reading of this she understands the body not as 'a site on which a construction takes place' but a 'destruction' at the site of the body through which the subject is produced and formed. This is reminiscent of Fanon's (1986) description of being 'amputated' through the colonial gaze. The subject is produced through subordination, however Butler (1997, p.12) argues that 'the power that initiates the subject fails to remain continuous with the power that is the subject's agency'; that the power of subordination can be appropriated by the subject. There is ambivalence in 'which the subject emerges both as the effect of a prior power and as the condition of possibility for a radically conditioned form of agency' (p.15). Power then 'produces modes of reflexivity at the same time as it limits forms of sociality' (p.21). Butler understands the subject as interpellated within ideology but with room for the potential for agency to work on, reproduce and resist ideology.
Alongside Mama (1995), Lewis (2013) and Phoenix (2013, p.102) emphasize the importance of ‘(post) colonial legacies’ in shaping the subjectification of people of colour. Phoenix (2013, p.102) considers how processes of ‘normalisation and representation…interpellate people as subjects into gendered and racialized relations of power that include state technologies’ (p.102). Under colonialism norms and representations of norms constructed the human subject in the image of the colonizer, and as illuminated by Fanon this has been embedded in the colonized psyche. An ‘historically informed’ analysis as well as an attention to postcolonial contexts is important to understand the pervasiveness of racialized, gendered and sexualized relations of power; Mama, Phoenix and Lewis argue that ‘postcolonial relations continue to be relevant in contexts where the postcolonial encounter are so ubiquitous, that they are rarely recognised as such’ (Phoenix, 2013, p.106). This echoes Hesse’s (2004) work on the discourse of westernese; Lewis (2013, p.874) notes how race and racialisation is a ‘key organising principle in Europe’ while it is simultaneously denied as such. Highlighting contemporary British and European political and media discourse, Lewis (2013, p.877) argues that ‘racialization is a compound process that gathers into itself and is inseparable from discourses of gender and sexuality’. Therefore, these post-colonial legacies must be attended to in understanding subjectification; however, subjectivity, as previously discussed, must be understood as a process and one which is not passively taken on but actively engaged and struggled with. Mama and Phoenix describe how black women use ‘collective histories within oppressive social orders to counteract the racism and sexism they experience’ (Phoenix 2013, p.103). Phoenix suggests black women ‘continually develop new consciousness through personal struggles with the contradictions and subjugation they face. Their subjectivities are, therefore, part of a continuous, creative and dynamic process’ (p.103).
Navigating intersectional lived experience

Drawing on Munoz's (1999, p.78) work on disidentification, a queer and/or trans person of colour can be understood as a ‘postcolonial hybrid…a subject whose identity practices are structured around an ambivalent relationship to the signs of empire and the signs of the “native”, a subject who occupies a space between the West and the rest’. As previously discussed, for QTPOC in the UK there may be ambivalence of living in the centre of the former ‘Empire’, belonging, but not belonging as both people of colour and queers; of belonging, but not belonging in their ‘native’ countries as strangers to those countries and as queers; of belonging, but not belonging within their communities of colour as sexual and gendered others.

QTPOC must struggle with questions of ‘authenticity’ in regards to their racial communities, managing the need for their community of colour and the LGBTQ community (Wright, 2013, p.4). QTPOC are often viewed through the competing lenses of ‘white queer racism’ and ‘black compulsory heterosexism’ (Hill, 2013, p.210). Queerphobia and transphobia within people of colour communities must be understood within the complex histories of coloniality and the coloniality of gender, in which for example black people must navigate the intersecting process of racialisation-gendering-sexualisation in which they are positioned as non-human animalistic non-men and non-women simultaneously hypervisible and invisible (Lugones, 2010).

Ward’s (2005, p.495) research into black churches in the US suggest that homophobia and hypermasculinity may be fostered through traditional forms of resistance to coloniality – from seeking ‘refuge’ in the literal interpretations of the Bible, to silencing discussions of sexuality as a form of protection from racist narratives and embracing Black Nationalist ideology as a tool for survival. These forms of resistance centre heteronormativity as key to the survival and liberation of black people, endorsing forms of hypermasculinity and the use of homophobia as a ‘strategy of domination’ (p.497). There are of course differences between black and people of colour communities, and between the US and the UK, however it is useful to
consider issues of visibility and queerphobia and transphobia within UK communities of colour, especially within wider activist movements. The desire for LGBTQ community is also frustrated for QTPOC by what Ward (2008, p.564) has noted is the ‘white normativity’ of many LGBTQ organisations, this is similar to the theory of coloniality, in which even in diverse organisations those racialized as white were privileged, and ways of ‘thinking, knowing, and doing, that naturalize whiteness’ were embedded within the institution.

A number of studies have illustrated how QTPOC are expected to fragment their subjectivities, leaving their race or queerness or transness ‘at the door’ when they enter specific community spaces as well as the lack of support they may feel from both people of colour and LGBTQ communities (Yuen-Thompson, 2012, p.420; Meyer, 2012; Clemon et al, 2012; Millet et al, 2012). Munoz (1999, p.6) suggests that we must explore how subjectivity is ‘enacted by minority subjects who must work with/resist the conditions of (im)possibility that dominant culture generates’. These conditions of (im)possibility present QTPOC with contradictory and disorientating potentialities for subjectivity, in which they must negotiate the antagonism between the different minority communities they belong to and navigate oppressive, hegemonic racialized, gendered and sexualised discourse. Munoz (1999, p.12) argues that minority subjects do not simply assimilate or resist these positionings, that a third alternative emerges – that the disidentificatory subject ‘tactically and simultaneously works on, with and against a cultural form’. This may help explain how QTPOC may ‘identify with ethnos or queerness despite the phobic charges in both fields’ (p.11). For Munoz (1999, p.4) disidentification is then ‘meant to be descriptive of the survival strategies the minority subject practices in order to negotiate a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform’ to white- hetero-normativity. Munoz’s (1999) work is powerful in considering how minority subjects like QTPOC survive and carve out space for themselves. He draws heavily on the work of Gloria Anzaldua (1987) and her idea of the borderlands, as does Lugones (2010) who speaks of dwelling in the fracture which is produced by
coloniality. Lugones (2010, p.753) suggests the subaltern takes part in ‘border thinking’ to go ‘toward a newness of be-ing’; this is not undertaken in isolation from others but through the creativity of the collective.

Following Johnson (2015, p.157), I want to draw on Sedgwick’s (2003) ‘reparative ethic’ to explore feeling, experiences of being-in-the-world and the possibilities of the collective for QTPOC in making sense across difference. I want to consider the disidentificatory strategies QTPOC utilise individually and collectively, as well as the feeling that brings QTPOC together.

Fanon (2007), Munoz (2006), Ahmed (2006) and Eng and Han (2000) re-examine psychodynamic and phenomenological theory, critiquing I would argue its coloniality, heteronormativity, and universalising of European experience. However, they do not seek to do away with the theoretical frameworks in themselves but consider how they may be used to understand the experiences of racialisation, as well as sexualisation and gendering. I suggest these critical theoretical interventions will provide a useful framework for understanding the intersectional embodied experience and the possibilities of collectivity for QTPOC.

Starting with Munoz (2006, p.676), he formulates a working of the Kleinian depressive position to ‘attend to the vicissitudes of racialisation and ethnic particularity’, specifically in relation to a ‘brown feeling’ – of the experience of feeling not ‘quite right within the protocols of normative affect and comportment’. This for Munoz (2006, p.677) is about more than identity, but a feeling, of how subalterns may feel, and feel towards each other – it is ‘supposed to be descriptive of the receptors we use to hear each other and the frequencies on which certain subalterns speak and are heard or, more importantly, felt’. This is a question of how queer and trans people of colour may feel together. He considers how minority affect may be ‘partially illegible to the normative affect performed by normative citizen subjects’; I would suggest that the ‘antinormative’ feelings of the minoritized are not understood within the discourse of westernese and coloniality (p.679).

According to Munoz (2007, p.445) brownness is an acknowledgement of not
being white, and is a commonality of feeling among a minority; these ‘feelings are the glue that coheres group identifications’. These are feelings of being negated, and of not belonging. I would argue that for QTPOC this depressive position is important to consider, examining the possible responses to loss and grief related to racialisation-sexualisation-gendering.

Reading Klein, and attempting to stitch together the split that Mama utilises in her analysis, Sedgwick (2003) traced how paranoia has become more widely the customary form of critique and critical thinking, that this response to external threat has become routinized, limiting the possibilities for relating to others, community and social change.

For Klein, the depressive position can lead to the reparative as well as ‘paranoid and schizoid feelings’; Munoz (2006, p.681) suggests the depressive position can be a place of attending to others in alterity and a focus on this relationality and that this would be a form of reparation. ‘Paranoid and schizoid feelings’ may emerge from a focus on external threats alone, which Munoz suggests might lead to a clinical depression (p.682). Munoz (2006, p.683), also following Sedgwick (2003) therefore uses Klein as a ‘theorist of relationality’, arguing that the depressive feeling of ‘feeling brown’ creates possibilities for community and motivation for change; that the question is of the reparative possibility that those who experience the violence of structural inequalities may ‘in the wake of the negative…reconstruct a relational field’ out of love. That is the possibility that out of the experience of being minoritized and not belonging, queer and trans people of colour may be able to exist in the depressive position through a form of relationality that is ‘feeling brown’.

The depressive position may therefore hold the potential for reparation and community for QTPOC in a similar way to Munoz’s (2006) ‘feeling brown’. The intimacy and closeness Munoz (2006) evokes with the feeling of ‘feeling brown’, of the collectivised experience of the affective reminds me of the possibilities raised in Lorde’s (1984) writing on the uses of the erotic. The term ‘erotic’ is used by Lorde to describe a way of living authentically and the deep feelings at the ‘interstices of intimate and affective connection’
which ‘animate our human/spiritual beingness’ (Moore, 2012, para, 8). For Lorde, the erotic functioned in several ways. The first was in ‘providing the power which comes from sharing deeply any pursuit with another person. The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference’ (1984, p. 56). The erotic may be a potentiality that emerges from forms of relationality between QTPOC, creating the possibility of community across difference.

Having considered disidentification and the depressive position, I turn now to delineating Freud’s concept of melancholia and how we may also use this to make sense of the loss and grief QTPOC may experience. Eng and Han (2000, p.667) suggest melancholia as a framework for conceptualizing ‘registers of loss and depression attendant to both psychic and material processes of…immigration, assimilation and racialization’; I would add for QTPOC this is augmented by the intersection of losses between race, gender and sexuality particularly within the coloniality of gender. Eng and Han (2000, p.667) re-work the melancholia of the depressive position, specifically looking to Asian American experience, suggesting racial melancholia as a ‘depathologized structure of everyday group experience’. This could be understood as a ‘culturally instituted’ form of melancholia (Bell, 1999, p.166). I would argue that although their focus is on Asian American experience, this concept can be utilised to explore the problem of belonging for queer and trans people of colour in the UK. They aim to move melancholia from the study of pathological unresolved grief of the individual to a racial melancholia which seeks to understand the feelings of loss stemming from the social and collective experiences of immigration, assimilation and racialization. This work follows Fanon’s (2007) critique of psychoanalysis, troubling ideas of a universal psychoanalytic subject by emphasising the use of psychoanalysis in exploring subjectification attuned to how the social world structures the psyche.
As discussed previously there have been ongoing anxieties about ‘Britishness’ and what mass immigration may mean for the UK. Immigrants are urged to integrate and assimilate into British life, with panics and tensions arising over so-called ‘ghettos’, ‘self-segregating’ communities and unease around the success/failure of multi-culturalism. Immigrants and people of colour in the UK are therefore orientated toward and around assimilation to white hetero-normativity; in order to gain access to mainstream culture people of colour must embrace ‘a set of dominant norms and ideals – whiteness, heterosexuality, middle class family values’ while paradoxically these are ‘often foreclosed’ to them (Eng and Han, 2000, p.670).

Within coloniality white heteronormativity is equated with ‘being’ against non-white queerness and transness. Eng and Han (2000, p.670) suggest that it is the loss of the ideals, of the inability to attain whiteness or assimilation, that provides the ‘melancholic framework for delineating assimilation and racialization processes…precisely as a series of failed and unresolved integrations’. Assimilation is not fully possible for people of colour in the UK, assimilation is ‘unresolved’ engendering feelings of loss and I would suggest feelings of non-belonging and troubling one’s sense of being (p.671). Following Freud’s conceptual work on melancholia, Eng and Han (2000, p.671) argue that in losing whiteness as something we can attain we preserve it as a lost ideal by ‘incorporating it into the ego and establishing an ambivalent relationship with it’. Keeping the lost object alive in our psyche is painful to maintain; however, in the case of the person of colour and the lost object of whiteness this is not a pathological mourning for whiteness but one which is affirmed and re-affirmed by white heteronormative hegemony. The subject is then ‘haunted’ by this identification with whiteness. Eng and Han (2000, p.672) describe this as a dangerous identification with an empty and lost object which has consequences of ‘psychical erasure’ of one’s own subjectivity. This echoes Fanon’s (2007) interpretation of the desire for whiteness in the dreams and phantasies of the colonized.
These re-workings of psychodynamic theories emphasise the social, historical and cultural contexts of the subject, providing possibilities for examining how the structural forms the subject, illuminating the complexity of embodied intersectionality. They draw our attention to the processes of racialisation-sexualisation-gendering that are experienced at the level of the body as well as the promise for collectivism and relationality.

I now want to turn to phenomenology and building a phenomenological interpretative framework.

**Queer Race and Phenomenological Analysis**

Fanon’s analytic approach encourages a turn to the meaning of lived experience and how it is understood and tied to social, economic, historic and political structures (Desai, 2014). His work emphasises ‘an exploration of experience, meaning, embodiment, temporality’ in the lives of those experiencing oppression (p.65). Desai (2014, p.69) highlights that a Fanonian approach to research encourages ‘the adoption of a phenomenological psychopolitical attitude towards the lifeworld’, and I would add to this that it must take an *intersectional* approach, taking in the criticisms of Fanon’s lack of attention to gender and sexuality. I now want to briefly explore hermeneutic phenomenology before considering the possibilities this may provide for empirical research and developing my own phenomenological interpretative framework.

**What is hermeneutic phenomenology?**

Hermeneutic phenomenology was first developed by the philosopher Heidegger as a radical departure from Husserlian phenomenology which had aimed to get at human ‘pure consciousness’. Husserl believed that through traditional phenomenological reduction philosophers could return to the ‘things themselves’ – to human experience unadulterated by language, prejudices or assumptions. This epistemological position imagines that there are essential structures to human experiences, and is therefore a thoroughly foundationalist and modernist project (Moran, 2000).
Foundationalism follows positivistic and Enlightenment claims that ‘there is a way to anchor knowledge statements by referring to ahistorical, non-social, non-contextual criteria’ (Allen, 1995, p.175). The scientific, positivist view of the world suggests that as human beings we are separate from the world around us, and that with the right methods can objectively find universal truths about the laws of nature and behaviour. This can be understood as a philosophical approach that attempts to get at pure cognition and thought before it is influenced by language, cultural, historical and social contexts. This view of the world has been criticised by many, including critical psychologists, as ahistorical, ‘excessively detached and rationalistic, too individualistic, too emotionally isolating’ (Richard and Fowers, 1997, p.268). This critique argues against objectivity acknowledging that ‘all social theory and research findings are inescapably interpretative and evaluative’ (p.271).

Critical psychologists consider how the modernist scientific episteme ‘tends to collapse the cultural and moral dimensions of life into merely technical and instrumental considerations’ emphasising ‘means-ends relationships’ performing ‘cost-benefit analyses’ and the belief that human beings are able and desire to ‘maximize our control or mastery over events’ (p.272). There is little room here for the messy, complex, emotional and social aspects of the self-in-the-world. The subject of traditional psychology is what Cushman (1999) calls a ‘decontextualized “bounded, masterful self”’ (Richard and Flowers, 1997, p.276). This suggests there is one way of being, a ‘universal or transhistorical self’ which is modelled on a white, western, androcentric subject as the default human subject (p.277). Brown and Stenner (2009) critique traditional social psychological attempts to ‘fix and provide once-and-for-all explanations’ of social phenomena, because, they argue

’such explanations drag the phenomenon kicking and screaming from its rightful place in the complex weave of human affairs and make it stand on its own, as something to be characterised, dissected and classified outside of the places and times where it has any meaning’ (p.2)
Brown and Stenner (2009, p.4) suggest that this stance towards understanding the psychological can function to kill or simplify the ‘phenomena of which it desires to speak’. They therefore suggest a ‘reflexive foundationalism’ and a merging of academic psychology within other disciplines, ‘practices’ and ‘realms’ which address the psychological, such as art, history, politics and literature (p.4,5).

Coming back to hermeneutic phenomenology, anticipating post-modernism Heidegger attempted to move ‘beyond scientism’ and rejected the Cartesian dualism of the mind-body split (p.281). Heidegger radicalised phenomenology by introducing hermeneutics which is the ‘theoretical attitude toward the practice of interpretation’ as a ‘postmodern philosophy’ exploring existentialist issues (Annells, 1996, p.706, 705). Heidegger was focused on ontology, of understanding our being-in-the-world emphasising the experience of being a human-in-the-world. Heidegger argued that we make sense and meaning of our lived experiences through our situatedness in the world. Hermeneutics ‘does not consider understanding as a way of knowing’ but a way of being; that we are always ‘becoming’, moving and understanding ourselves through our bodily, social, cultural and historical practices and being-in-the-world (p.708). We understand ourselves through dialogue and interpretation which is ‘always on the way’ – and can never be definitive (p.707).

Heidegger disagreed with Husserl, arguing that we cannot ‘bracket off’ our pre-judgements and beliefs, in fact understanding and becoming involves the ‘continuous’ ‘fusion of horizons’ (p.707). Hermeneutic phenomenology aims to focus on our ‘embeddedness in the world of language and social relationships, and the inescapable historicity of all understanding’ (Finlay, 2009, p.11). In comparison to the rational, decontextualized subject of traditional psychology hermeneutic phenomenology supports a critical psychological ‘embrace [of] ambiguity, paradox, descriptive nuance, and a more relational unfolding of meanings…they recognize the relative, intersubjective, fluid nature of knowledge’ (p.15).
In extending Heidegger's work, Gadamer's writings expanded on the importance of historical context in how we interpret the world around us. Gadamer calls attention to the hegemony of tradition which dominates our interpretations of the world, which he called our “effective-history” (Sherman, 2011, p.390). Sherman (2011, p.390) notes that for Gadamer, history has power over our ‘finite human consciousness, that it prevails even where one denies one’s own historicality’. Following Gadamer, then the intersecting effective histories of queer and trans people of colour in the UK must be situated within the discourses of westernese and coloniality. To enhance this, via Phoenix (2013), I would also argue that all social interactions have postcolonial dynamics even if they often go unnoticed. According to Gadamer we are ‘historically conditioned’ and through a dialogical and dynamic relationship we develop an understanding and interpretation of our world that is ever changing, moving from the parts to the whole developing what he called, a ‘fusion of horizons’ (Sherman, 2011, p.390/391). He argued that all understanding is ‘historically conditioned, is partial, and always comes from a point of view…within the finite boundaries of essentially limited and historically conditioned human living’ (Moran, 2000, p.251). Moran (2000, p.275) interprets our historical understanding as ‘a mediation between our sense of ourselves and our sense of this past’ (p.275). Therefore, the ‘correct exercise of hermeneutics recognises both historical distance and the relation of meaning between ourselves and the past’ (p.276). Gadamer’s work makes an important intervention into hermeneutic phenomenology by explicitly considering how effective-history shapes our arrival in the world and conditions our interpretation of our being-in-the-world.

Queer and trans people of colour are shaped by and situated within histories of colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, sexology, scientific racism, and neoliberalism among others. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach, including the work of Gadamer will attend to these effective-histories which will be crucial to avoid replicating a more traditional psychological approach which is ahistorical, challenging the universal self, emphasising QTPOC situatedness in the world.
Supporting Heidegger’s rejection of the Cartesian body-mind dualism, Merleau-Ponty further stressed the embodied nature of our situatedness in the world. Merleau-Ponty argued that we live an ‘embodied dialectic’ and that ‘consciousness is lived in the body in a more complex and intimate way than previous philosophy…had understood’ (Moran, 2000, p.415). He argued that behaviourist and cognitivist understandings of the body are too dominated by the ‘pure facts’ of biology and behaviour and ‘do not capture the full truth of the way in which someone takes up and lives through’ their body (p.416). In rejecting these forms of reductionism, Merleau-Ponty drew on Gestalt psychology considering how we experience things ‘against a background structure’ (p.393). Merleau-Ponty was not advocating a structuralist argument, but was emphasising how ‘stimuli are always perceived and interpreted in a rich and complex environment’ (p.393). He stressed the importance of our corporeality, temporality, historicality, intersubjectivity and the dialectical relationship between self and the world in understanding our existence. In considering this, Merleau-Ponty emphasised the ‘particularities of the relations to the world’ for different people and ‘specific kinds of embodiment’ (p.417). The embodied situatedness of queer and trans people of colour will need to be attended to in the analysis.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is then a very appropriate methodology for critical psychological research (Richardson and Fowers, 1997; Martin and Sugarman, 2001). Martin and Sugarman (2001) argue that hermeneutic phenomenology is an alternative to psychology’s emphases on positivism versus constructionism. Similar to others they critique social constructionism’s failure to address psychological agency ‘even one originated in, and always limited and constrained by, historical, sociocultural practices’ (Martin and Sugarman, 2001, p.195).

Hermeneutic phenomenology posits humans as ‘self-interpreting beings’ who are shaped by wider contexts, thus a hermeneutic phenomenological psychology would ‘hold that, once emergent within historical and sociocultural context, the subjectivity of individual psychological persons is not reducible to these sociocultural origins, even as it continues to be
That the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach addresses the processes of embodied subjectification as highlighted by Fanon, Mama and Butler, challenging the ‘extreme detachment’ and disengagement with the world that both positivists and postmodernists have been critiqued for, bringing our focus back to our embodied, being-in-the-world (Richardson and Fowers, 1997, p.283). Heidegger draws our attention to ‘historicity…temporality [and] interpretation’ in human lived experience (Moran, 2000, p.17), while Gadamer and Merleau-Ponty’s work further emphasise effective-histories and how we are embodied in flesh, incarnated in specific ways via gender, sexuality and race.

Hermeneutic phenomenology fits the current research well as an interpretative framework as it supports the emphasis on how queer and trans people of colour interpret their own embodied, lived experiences and their being-in-the-world. This draws attention to self-interpretation, meaning making, historicality, corporeality, temporality and intersubjectivity. Hermeneutic phenomenology stresses the importance of the dialogical encounter with others for QTPOC in their interpretations of their own selves and the world around them. This also situates QTPOC in the world within historical, social and political contexts, which aids us in challenging the idea of a universal self. However, it must be noted that Heidegger and other philosophers can be critiqued for continuing the universalism of the self, which will be explored in the next section. Using this methodology also commits us to understanding participants in the never-ending process of ‘becoming’.
Queer and critical race phenomenological interventions

A hermeneutic phenomenological methodology is important in analysing how participants interpret their embodied lived experiences and how their being-in-the-world is shaped by wider contexts and dialogical encounters. However, this methodology needs to be considered within an intersectional and Fanonian framework, as discussed earlier. What can hermeneutic phenomenology tell us about queer and trans people of colour subjectivity? This section briefly considers critical race and queer phenomenological work and what its interventions can bring to the current research.

Despite being critical of Husserl’s attempt to get at universal, essentialist structures of human experience, Heidegger and Gadamer have been critiqued for continuing to view the subject of hermeneutic phenomenology in white, middle class, Eurocentric, and androcentric terms (Ahmed, 2006). Coloniality and eurocentrism assumes that European civilization ‘is not only better than all others but also that it is civilization’ itself (Gordon, 2011, p.6). This has led to a rather blinkered and arrogant underlying principle in philosophy to ignore those outside of the west, or to see them as inferior.

Fanon was a major critic of the phenomenologists in that their philosophy failed to consider the lived experiences of black people (2007). In Fanon’s ground-breaking work he challenged phenomenology by asserting the issue of what he called the ‘historico-racial schema’. He argued that black people and people of colour’s very sense of self and experience is shaped by colonial fantasies of the Other and that this shatters one’s own ‘corporeal schema’, the dialectic between the body and the world (Macey, 1999, p.11). The dialectic between self and the world is complicated by the development of a ‘third person consciousness’ – in which one becomes object, not subject and experiences the white colonial gaze which fragments and distorts the perception of self. Through the development of an ‘epidermal-racial schema’, according to Fanon, our bodies are taken over by racist stereotypes through which one experiences ‘alienation…obliteration and even incineration’ of the self (Macey, 1999, p.11). The question then, is how do we experience ourselves through the lens of racialization, a lens which colours all aspects of our lives? (Alcoff, 1999).
Ahmed’s (2006) Queer Phenomenology is helpful here to consider how ‘deviant’ bodies (e.g. queer, black) are orientated in the world and a queering of phenomenology may be useful in addressing these lived experiences. In Ahmed’s reading of phenomenology, she argues that the spaces we inhabit are not ‘exterior to our bodies; instead, spaces are like a second skin’, the social has a skin, a ‘border that feels and that is shaped by the “impressions” left by others’ (p.9). Some spaces extend the reach of some bodies, while not leaving space for others. Through repetition there are also certain ways in which the body is orientated over others. Ahmed describes this as being directed to certain lines to follow and in which by following the ‘line disappears from view’ (p.15). There is a specific politic to our orientations and directions – Ahmed suggests that these are not casual but actually socially organised, and points to how as a collective, as a nation there are certain lines or directions one must follow or take. Drawing on the work of Althusser and Butler, we are interpellated and called into our ‘subject formation’ (p.15). Through the repetition of being orientated in a certain direction, over time our ‘bodies acquire the very shape of such a direction’ (p.15). There is social pressure to invest in and commit to following certain lines, and reproduce them. Ahmed notes how we inherit certain lines, ways of orientating in the world and how this may fit with processes of subjectification.

Ahmed notes that action is about how we inhabit space (and are able to), bodies are ‘submerged’ in space and moving through space is how ‘the surfaces of spaces as well as bodies takes shape’ (p.53). Expounding on Heidegger and Gadamer’s work, she argues that phenomenology helps us to ‘explore how bodies are shaped by histories, which they perform in their comportment, their posture, and their gestures’ (p.56). Reflecting on Butler, Ahmed notes the “sedimentation” of history in the repetition of bodily action…what bodies “tend to do” are effects of histories rather than being originary’ (p.56). This draws from the work of Merleau-Ponty who describes ‘bodily horizons as “sedimented histories”’ (p.56). The repetition of actions orientates us in certain ways – toward certain objects as well as certain ‘objects of thought, feeling and judgement…aims, aspirations, and
objectives’ (p.56). Orientations shape bodies, and bodies are shaped by orientations they already have; these are shaped by the directions we ‘tend to’, leading us to inhabit certain spaces more than others and in which certain spaces come to ‘extend the shape of the bodies that “tend” to inhabit them’ (p.58).

Ahmed’s work is helpful here in explicating Heidegger, Gadamer and Merleau-Ponty’s work, imagining the ways in which our embeddedness in the world is experienced spatially and in the body as an effect of the sedimentation of history. Her work is useful in reflecting on how we are directed towards some orientations over others, particularly in regards to sexuality, race and gender and how this shapes our embodied subjectification. A queer phenomenology then presents us with an opportunity to critically engage hermeneutic phenomenology, challenging us to utilise it to explore how the social skin impresses on our bodies, extending the reach of some and not others. Ahmed proposes a phenomenology of race and sexuality to show how our ‘bodies become racialized and sexualized in how they “extend” into space: differences are shaped in how we take up space, or how we orient ourselves toward objects and others’ (p.99).

Reflecting on a phenomenology of sexuality, Ahmed paraphrases de Beauvoir by saying ‘one is not born, but becomes straight’, which challenges us to consider straightness or heterosexuality as something one becomes rather than something one essentially ‘is’ (p.79). In reflecting on the sedimentation of the history of heterosexuality, through invoking the work of Adrienne Rich (1980) on compulsory heterosexuality and the notion of heteronormativity, Ahmed suggests we can read heterosexuality as a line we are orientated around and also directed to. She notes that we must see the labour and intergenerational work that goes into the arrival of the heterosexual couple – that this is something worked for through the repetition of turning towards the line of heterosexuality. We are kept in line through the inheritance of this line from our families, and the social pressure to reproduce this line. Those who are queer, or non-heterosexual fail to stay on line, and crucially are no longer orientated and may find themselves
disorientated. Similarly, gender can also be understood as a ‘bodily orientation’ (p.59).

I would suggest that through the gender binary we are orientated towards lines of cisgender masculinity and cisgender femininity and that this is a form of inheritance. However, those who are trans or gender-variant become disorientated as they fail to orientate towards the line, and go off line. Ahmed reflects here on what it is like to ‘inhabit the intensity’ of the disorientation of the queer moment, and suggests a queer phenomenology is a phenomenology which inhabits this disorientation. For Ahmed, disorientation may provide moments of rupture and alternative possibilities for discourse and agency while also being a source of oppression.

Turning to race, as discussed earlier, Fanon’s work is central in developing a phenomenology of race. Fanon troubled Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology arguing that the black body is determined by an underlying historic-racial schema, therefore only ‘attending to the corporeal schema’ was insufficient in understanding the lived experience of black people (Ahmed, 2006, p.110). In a white supremacist world Ahmed suggests that we can understand that whiteness is something we are repeatedly orientated around and a line we are directed towards, and much like Eurocentrism whiteness is the unmarked centre ‘against which others appear only as deviants or as lines of deviation’ (p.121). This orientation shapes bodies, and shapes the spaces bodies inhabit allowing certain bodies to extend their reach while not leaving space for others.

Ahmed conceptualises whiteness as a ‘bad habit: as a series of actions that are repeated, forgotten, and that allow some bodies to take up space by restricting the mobility of others’ (p.129). Through the repetition of orientation towards and around whiteness, whiteness becomes a habit that becomes ‘second nature’ and unmarked as an orientation (p.130). Whiteness is ‘in line’ and therefore white bodies move more easily in space, and this habit can be understood as a form of ‘bodily and spatial inheritance’ (p.129). Black bodies and other non-white bodies then experience ‘disorientation’ as they find themselves ‘out of place’ (p.135).
Black bodies and bodies of colour do not follow the line of whiteness, and Ahmed notes that they give a ‘queer effect’ in spaces orientated around and towards whiteness (p.135). Ferguson (2004, p.26) notes that the ‘presence of minorities and racialized others has an “eccentric” effect, given that such bodies are placed outside the logic of normative whiteness’.

Fanon’s work speaks to the experience of disorientation, third person consciousness, and the ‘nausea’ of ‘negation’ (Ahmed, 2006, p.139). The black body and body of colour shifts from a body that can extend itself in space to ‘one that is negated or “stopped” in its tracks’ (p.110). Where some bodies feel at home in spaces orientated around whiteness, the black body experiences these as ‘“points” of stress’ (p.138). Ahmed argues that ‘to feel negated is to feel pressure upon one’s bodily surface, where the body feels the pressure point as a restriction in what it can do’ (p.139). The black body and the body of colour are restricted, amputated and diminished (Fanon, 1986). For such ‘bodies that are not extended by the skin of the social, bodily movement is not so easy’ (Ahmed, 1999, p.139). Merleau-Ponty’s work was focused on the experience of the body successfully extending itself in the world, however Fanon reveals this success ‘not as a measure of competence but as the bodily form of privilege: the ability to move through the world without losing one’s way’ (p.139). A phenomenology of race then allows for an understanding of what it feels like to be disorientated, to be stopped wherein ‘being stopped is not only stressful, but also makes the “body” itself the “site” of social stress’ (p.140). To paraphrase W.E.DuBois, it asks how does it feel to be a problem?

Ahmed (2006) argues that a queer phenomenology is one which pays attention to moments of disorientation and what they may tell us. She uses ‘queer’ here to describe the moments in which we do not follow lines that we are orientated and directed towards, in which we ‘disturb the order of things’ and fail to reproduce what we have inherited (p.161). What happens if ‘disorientation itself becomes worldly or becomes what is given?’ (p.159). A queer phenomenology ‘would function as a disorientation device; it would not overcome “disalignment” [or disorientation] …allowing the oblique to open up another angle of the world’ (p.172). Ahmed suggests that we must
take up how bodies that are out of place and disorientated gather together, and refuse to follow the lines they are directed towards. Ahmed draws our attention to this as a condition for collective work by queer (as in LGBT) and black communities on being disorientated and stopped, reflecting particularly on black activism and how ‘collective anger about the orientation of the world around whiteness might reorientate our relation to whiteness’ (p.155). What possibilities become open to us when we inhabit disorientation, and through the ‘repetition of the collective refusal to follow the line of whiteness’, straightness and cisgenderism? (p.156).

Queer and trans people of colour live at the intersections of failure to follow the lines of whiteness, straightness and cisgenderism. Ahmed (2006, p.19) argues that heterosexuality as ‘a compulsory orientation reproduces more than “itself”: it is a mechanism for the reproduction of culture, or even of the “attributes” that are assumed to pass along a family line, such as whiteness’. For QTPOC, a queer phenomenology is crucial to understanding the experience of inhabiting of intersecting disorientations, the intersecting stress points and the possibilities that may be opened up in a collective refusal to follow these lines. Fanon (2007) and Ahmed’s (2006) interventions into phenomenology provide possibilities for grasping the intersections of race, gender and sexuality and how they are experienced at the level of the body, within the wider context of coloniality.

**Conclusion: Drawing together psychodynamic theory and a queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis**

I am proposing a ‘stitching’ together of phenomenology, psychodynamic, post-colonial and queer theory to develop a form of analysis which can attend to the nuances, multiplicity, embodied, affective dimensions of lived experience for queer and trans people of colour (Munoz, 2006, p.682).

Following Sedgwick (2003), Munoz (2006, p.682), and Johnson (2015) I want to consider this stitching together as proposing a possibility for getting to the existentialist dilemmas of embodied intersectionality – not as a strong theory which Sedgwick problematized as ‘prescriptive and totalizing’ but as a weak theory. In the pulling together of the different theoretical disciplines
within this work I move toward the possibilities of border thinking – ‘the stitching together of disciplinary polarizations between psychology and socio-historical accounts’ (Johnson, 2015, p.176).

I have drawn together critical psychology, phenomenology, queer, black feminist and post-colonial theory to develop an analysis to explore what it might mean to be ‘queerly raced’ – to explore the dimensions of experience and feeling of the intersections of race, gender and sexuality for queer and trans people of colour. From this I have developed an interpretative framework, a queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis. In the following chapter I discuss what it might mean to undertake a queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis with an additional focus on psycho-dynamic elements. I then describe the methods undertaken in the focus groups and interviews in the research and reflect on my own role as a scholar-activist in the research.
Chapter Four: Developing a methodology

This research situates the subject within a postcolonial context, problematizing traditional and critical psychological research which most often ignores this condition and how it shapes subject formation. The legacies of the colonial development of ‘race’ as a form of categorisation and racism as a ‘political technology of Empire’ place ‘race’ as a key site of social division in a post-Enlightenment, white supremacist global structure (Hesse, 2004, p.13).

While contemporaneously we can dismiss the idea of ‘race’ as a ‘natural kind’ and point to its social construction, it remains a ‘compelling social reality that race, or racialized identities, have as much political, sociological and economic salience as they ever have’ (Alcoff, 1999, p.16). Therefore, processes of racialisation and their intersections with gender and sexuality among other vectors of lived experience are integral to all research on subjectivities. This undermines the ‘naturalized imperial claims’ of ‘Westernese – the language of Western supremacy’, as it contradicts ideas of Western subjectivity as rational, pure and universal and Western values of liberalism, freedom and democracy (Hesse and Sayyid, 2002, p.150).

Westernese has been challenged by a number of social movements over the last century ‘motivated by anti-colonialism, civil rights, black power, feminism, anti-racism, anti-apartheid, environmentalism, Islamism’ (p.150). These movements have disputed the figure of the Western white male subject as a universal and pointed out his objectivity, purity, rationality as simply one form of (‘transparent’) multiplicity and subjectivity positioned as superior (Lugones, 1994, p.466). Alcoff (1999) notes how ‘liberal Western societies today maintain a paradoxical position whereby “Race is irrelevant, but all is race”’ (p.16). She calls for the development of a phenomenology of racial embodiment, and in the previous chapter I considered the work of Fanon (2007) and Ahmed (2006) to develop a queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis alongside psychoanalytic theory to explore queer and trans people of colour’s lived experience explicitly within the British postcolonial context. In this chapter I set out this methodological innovation and how it was operationalised.
**Methodology: A queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis**

Developing an analytic framework from a philosophical school of thought is not without its difficulties. However, as I have argued, hermeneutic phenomenology provides an appropriate approach to the research with the inclusion of the queer and critical race interventions into phenomenology by Fanon (2007) and Ahmed (2006). This form of analysis foregrounds the meanings attributed to lived experience by queer and trans people of colour and spotlights the ways in which QTPOC negotiate processes of subjectification and the never-ending process of becoming and being-in-the-world.

In putting this form of analysis into practice, I have been guided by similar attempts to develop method from phenomenology within psychology – drawing inspiration from Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and building from what I would suggest are its limitations. I considered Smith’s (1996) development of IPA a useful form of guidance in the complex task of creating a methodology to be used in empirical research developed from philosophical and critical theory.

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p.12) were informed by Husserlian phenomenology. Husserl wanted to go ‘back to the things themselves’, arguing that phenomenologists must attend to our experiences of the world, of pure ‘consciousness’ and perception – of phenomena that pre-exists before our categorisation and interpretation of it. However, Smith et al (2009, p.17) have also taken on the critiques of Husserl, drawing on Heidegger’s work on hermeneutics in which he emphasised the human experience of being-in-the-world; that one is “always already” thrown into this pre-existing world of people and objects, language and culture, and cannot be meaningfully detached from it and therefore our understanding of phenomena is always mediated by our own interpretation.

IPA is therefore interested in the lived experience, and in getting at this experience in a way which ‘enables that experience to be expressed in its own terms, rather than according to predefined category systems’ (p.32).
Smith et al (2009) suggest that in getting to the lived experience of being human one can attempt to bracket off our prior knowledge to understand the feeling and embodied dimensions of being-in-the-world. However, drawing on Fanon (2007) and Ahmed (2006) I question the ability to attend to what Fanon understood as the ‘corporeal schema’, and argue that this is mediated by processes of racialisation-sexualisation-gendering. I would argue that it would not be possible to ‘bracket off’ how these historical, social, political contexts form our subjectivities and our experience in the world alongside our own interpretations and meaning making.

IPA may be critiqued for reducing its focus onto the individual in isolation, despite having an emphasis on the intersubjective – it does not consider the embodied experiences that are shaped by wider contextual factors. Smith (2010) does acknowledge this limitation and agrees that future work will need to address these issues, but he does warn against decentering individual experience. IPA may also be considered to be too concerned with cognition. Willig (2008, p.65) notes that Smith (1996) presents IPA as ‘compatible with a social cognition paradigm’ which doesn’t match up to a phenomenological focus on the experiential. I therefore decided on developing a form of phenomenological analysis which is hermeneutic – emphasizing the place of interpretation in understanding QTPOC’s lived experience, and as Smith et al (2009, p.35) suggest that within a phenomenological analysis there is the ‘double hermeneutic’ of interpretation by both the participant and the researcher.

In Smith et al’s (2009) rationale for IPA they chart the development of phenomenology from Husserl to Heidegger to Gadamer, and emphasise that a phenomenological analysis must attend to temporality, spatiality and intersubjectivity. This is inspired in particular by Heidegger’s work emphasising the experience of being-in-the-world – that we understand ourselves within a ‘temporal existential location’ in which we have finite time in the world and that our ‘relatedness-to-the-world is a fundamental part of our constitution’ (p.17).
In emphasising intersubjectivity, hermeneutic phenomenology challenges the researcher to reflect on the researcher–participant relationship as an ‘embodied dialogical encounter’ (Finlay, 2009, p.13). In making sense of the participant’s interpretation of their own lived experience the researcher must also reflect on their own embodied lived experience and how their interpretation of the interpretation (the double hermeneutics of social sciences) reflects this. I am in agreement with the need to attend to these dimensions of experience, however in being inspired by the work of Fanon (2007) and Ahmed (2006) I have added these additional dimensions to provide a queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis of queer and trans people of colour’s lived experience and subjectivities:

- The orientation of ‘disorientation’
  - The inhabitation of disorientation, when participants fail to follow the lines they are orientated around and towards drawn from Ahmed’s (2006) queer phenomenology

- Historicity
  - Consideration of how participants are situated, and how through the sedimentation of history they come to arrive.
  - Considering ‘effective-histories’ drawing explicitly from the theory of coloniality, Fanon (2007) and post-colonial theory.

- Corporeality and embodiment
  - Experience of the body in space, history, and how it is shaped by orientation/disorientation.
  - Drawing from both Fanon (2007) and Ahmed (2006)

Through seeking a critical engagement with hermeneutic phenomenology, I have developed a framework of analysis that fits a critical psychological approach to the research and the aims of the research.

A queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis emphasises the embodied, lived experience of queer and trans people of colour and moves away from more traditional psychological engagements with phenomenology. I utilise psychodynamic theory in addition to consider the formation of subjectivity and the relationships between queer and trans
people of colour within these networks. However, the writing up of research can tend to sanitise what is often a messy and non-linear process. What can now be written up at the end of the three years of the PhD process may occlude the difficulties, the back and forth between analysis, data and theory that is engendered in the development of an interpretive methodological framework. Therefore, I want to briefly consider how this framework emerged as a part of the research process, developing from an engagement with the data from participants, analysis and theory. I will then turn to the methods undertaken, and discuss more explicitly how the data was analysed.

In the original research plan the three research questions mapped on to two separate phases of research. In ‘phase one’ of the research focus groups were undertaken to explore the first research question – ‘what does QTPOC activism mean in the UK context, how does it operate and for what purpose?’. Focus groups were carried out with three separate QTPOC groups to understand how members gave meaning to the group and originally a thematic analysis was used for the data. The thematic analysis was inductive, foregrounding participants’ own understandings of the groups, the functions of the groups and their collective experiences.

Alongside this analysis, the study and the development of a phenomenological framework was beginning to take shape in preparation for ‘phase two’ of the research. Phase two was meant to take a different, phenomenological focus of the individual experience of queer and trans people of colour participants – utilising photo elicitation interviews to capture the experience of being-in-the-world for the individual. This aimed to address the second and third research questions - in what ways do QTPOC activisms support the negotiation of minoritized sexual, gender and racial identities and/or help to navigate racism, queer phobia and transphobia; and in what ways does personal involvement with QTPOC activisms impact on subjectivity.

However, as the thematic analysis was carried out in phase one alongside preparation for phase two, it became clear that the focus groups and the
approach to the data – grounded in the group experiential perspective – was phenomenological in focus. The focus group data spoke to the experiential group perspective of being queerly raced, the method captured the participants’ intersubjective interpretations of this experience and the thematic analysis could be therefore understood as an early form of the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analytic framework. The participants’ experiences in the focus group shaped the development of the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis – emphasising the importance of Fanon (2007) and Ahmed’s (2006) interventions in phenomenology to highlight racialized embodiment and the disorientation of queerness.

Therefore, the development of this interpretative framework is not clear cut, it has emerged from the dialogue between data-method-theory that is a part of qualitative research rather than a linear step by step process. This follows Nayak’s (2015, p.31) work on the activism of black feminist theory in which she argues that ‘the intersection of method, analysis and content is a consistent structure that constitutes all scholarship, research and practice’. For Nayak (2015, p.32) it is the ‘interaction of theory with lived experience that creates the methodology of Black feminist criticism’. Drawing on Lorde (1984), Nayak (2015, p.33) describes this black feminist methodology as ‘an erotic process of feeling’ and a ‘dialogical relationship between experience, practice and scholarship’.

A queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological framework is grounded in the issues of experiential importance to the research participants and the contexts they have raised as important while also encouraging myself as a researcher to understand the research process as an embodied dialogical encounter. I could not simply bracket off my own lived experiences and previous involvement with QTPOC activist groups – nor the shared collective feeling and emotion Munoz described as feeling brown that I describe as queerly raced. Lorde’s (1984) work on the uses of the erotic challenge us not to turn away from feeling towards vain attempts at objectivity – following Sedgwick (2003) and Johnson (2015) there is reparative value in turning toward ontology and feeling. The focus groups
and interviews were no longer grouped as ‘phase one’ and ‘phase two’ as both were considered to have been analysed within this same framework, however at different stages of its development. The focus groups emphasised the intersubjective processes of meaning making within the QTPOC groups while the interviews looked more closely at the specific experiences and meaning making of the individual queer and/or trans person of colour within and in relation to the group. This novel interpretative framework was therefore developed within the rich inter-weaving and dialectic of experience, theory, analysis and feeling.

Method

Recruitment

Before I began the research, I had previously been actively involved in two QTPOC groups I had co-founded with others, as well as having contact through the wider UK network with similar groups and friendships with other QTPOC activists. Therefore, I had a good knowledge of these UK networks and could easily identify possible routes for participant recruitment.

As I began the research I identified three QTPOC groups that had active and large memberships across three major cities in the UK that I also had working relationships and/or friendships with their key organisers. These were QTPOC groups in London, Brighton and the North West; these came to be known in the research respectively as ‘Brighton/London group’ because the London group had had earlier iterations as a group based in Brighton; ‘Brighton Group Two’ as this was a recent QTPOC group that had separately developed in Brighton a couple of years after the first group; and ‘Group X’ who were in the North West but did not want their specific location shared in the research.

Brighton Group Two and Group X had regular offline meet-ups with corresponding online Facebook groups, while Brighton/London group’s offline meetings had come to a stop and the group was mainly facilitated through the Facebook group at the time of the research. Before the research started I had been involved with each of these groups at different times with varying levels of participation. Therefore before the formal
research started I wrote a short statement on Brighton/London group’s Facebook groups to tell them I was withdrawing from the group because of my research (Appendix 1). I discussed this at an offline meeting of Brighton Group 2. I explicitly stated that this was to be transparent about the research and that while the data collection happened I would not be privy to online discussions or offline meet-ups of these groups. I removed my online presence from Group X without a statement as their online forum was much quieter, and offline I had not been involved with the group for over a year due to geographical location. However, I did discuss this with the key organiser of Group X.

I then made appointments to discuss the research and the possibility of recruitment with a key organiser from each of the groups. Before the appointments, I sent key organisers an information and consent form which detailed the research and my request for access to their group to advertise the research (Appendix 2). I met with the key organiser of Brighton Group 2 in Brighton, and made telephone calls with the organisers from the other two groups. In these discussions, I shared my aims of my research and asked if I could advertise in the online groups to recruit for focus group and interview participants. All of the organisers were interested in the research and happy to facilitate recruitment. I wrote a short statement to advertise the research and recruit participants, I gave this to the key organisers to publish within their Facebook groups and mailing lists (Appendix 3).

Recruitment for the focus groups ran from October 2014 to February 2015. Recruitment for the focus groups for Brighton Group 2 and Brighton/London Group proved difficult, and the adverts were repeated a number of times to improve participant numbers (Appendix 3). However, the key organiser from Group X was very pro-active in encouraging participation in the research and recruitment was much less arduous. This may have also been because Group X had regular meetings at which they may have been able to discuss the research and the possibility of participating with other members. However, at this point in the research Brighton Group 2 had faced a number of difficulties that summer with offline meetings coming to a stop, and Brighton/London Group had not had offline meetings in a long time. The
Brighton/London Group also had a particularly large membership, therefore there tended to be regular posts of interesting events, discussions or resources being shared within the Facebook group which may not have been conducive to people taking notice of my research advertisement. The size of the group also meant less people may have known of me before I removed myself and therefore less likely to make contact.

For both Brighton Group 2 and Brighton/London Group it was very difficult to find a low-cost central meeting room space to hold the focus groups in Brighton and London. It was difficult to find a space that was accessible for disabled participants, centrally located in both cities, that was open at a time suited to participants and gave sufficient privacy. I felt that holding a focus group at the University of Brighton may have felt uncomfortable for potential participants, particularly those who were students themselves or those who would not normally come onto its campus. Therefore, in Brighton and London the recruitment adverts could not specify a time, date or place for the focus groups and it was left that it would be organised once the participants had signed up to the research. It could be suggested that this impacted recruitment negatively, whereas in the city where Group X was based the key organiser facilitated the booking of a central, accessible meeting room within an LGBT third sector organisation which may have made it much easier for participants to decide to come along to the focus group.

As potential participants contacted me via email I provided them with an information and consent form to read (Appendix 4). If they had any further questions I answered them. For Brighton Group Two and Brighton/London Group I then organised with participants the best times and dates for the focus group. Focus groups were held in Brighton at a friend’s empty flat. In London, a friend was able to book a meeting room at SOAS, University of London on a Saturday which was suitable for its centrality, accessibility and privacy. The key organiser from Group X sent out the information and consent form to potential participants and contacted me to let me know the estimated numbers of participants for the focus group. Recruitment for the interviews was much easier. The research process was discussed with
participants who had signed up for the focus groups or those who were unable to participate in the focus groups and this generated a great deal of interest in the interviews. The majority of participants who were interviewed had volunteered directly after the focus group. One participant who could not attend the focus group in Brighton was more interested in being interviewed and signed up for this second part of the research. All participants who were interested in the research were given an information and consent form for the photo elicitation interview (Appendix 5, 6).

**Participants**

Participants were members of the three QTPOC groups I identified at the start of the research. For each QTPOC group there was a corresponding focus group, so that each focus group was made up of members of the same group. All participants had been a part of a QTPOC group and self-defined under the umbrella term queer and/or trans person of colour and were aged 18 and above. Each participant chose their own pseudonym.

‘Group X’ was a QTPOC group based in the North West of England in a large town which is well known for its Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) population and also has a historically large population of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities which continues to grow. Group X was diverse in its membership, and compared to the other two groups in the research had a much more visible presence of members who were seeking asylum. Group X had been running since 2013. Participants in the focus group were Annabelle Fox, Dorian, Alex, Aziza, Lee, Janelle, Jay, Sasha, Blessed, and Aflia.

‘Brighton Group 2’ was a QTPOC group based in Brighton, a coastal town in the South East of England known for its large LGBT population and positioned as a LGBT weekend or holiday destination. It has a very small BME community which is not very visible. Brighton Group 2 were a majority of young people under the age of 25, some were students and others worked in the town. This group had been running since 2014, however as of December 2016, it is unclear if the group continues to meet. Due to the
difficulties of organising the focus group there were only two participants, Zayn and James.

‘Brighton/London’ group, who had previously been members of a previous QTPOC group in Brighton (that no longer existed and had come previous to Brighton Group 2). Participants were now involved in a London based QTPOC group which had been running since 2011. Again, due to the difficulties discussed in organising a focus group in London there were only two participants, these were Aruncati and Ashok.

Participants for the interviews were drawn from the same QTPOC groups, and the majority had participated in the focus groups. I asked each interviewee to provide a brief self-description. The participants were:

Sasha - ‘Sasha is a LGBT youth and community work coordinator and organiser and worker living and working in the North West, though born in Birmingham. Sasha is a 25 years old cis woman, who identifies as gay/queer. She is of black Caribbean and white British descent.’

Janelle – ‘Janelle is a 25-year-old cis queer femme, of Arab origin, British-born, grown up and still identifies as Muslim. She works as a dentist full time but is involved in queer activism, and co-founded a social group for queer, trans and intersex people of colour in her current city of residence.’

Aruncati – ‘Aruncati is a mixed race non-binary trans person in their 30s. They grew up poor but got to Uni and through it by working full time for much of it. They have organised as an environmental and social justice activist in different parts of the country but most of their activism is focused on people of colour community organising, these days specifically QTIPOC organising.’

Ashok – description was not provided.

Stanley - ‘Stanley is a mixed race trans man, academic and artist. He is of Black Caribbean and white Welsh and Irish working class heritage. Stanley came of age in the 1980s and 90s and has been involved with trans and gender projects, giving many academic papers on childhood gender nonconformity both locally and in Europe, as well as contributing to
transgender and queer publications, anthologies and art exhibitions within the UK.’

Data collection

Focus groups were used to address the first research question - what does QTPOC activism mean in the UK context, how does it operate and for what purpose? This method was used to capture the intersubjective meaning making of QTPOC as a group, to understand how participants made sense of the group collectively. Phenomenological analyses tend to focus on individual experience, however Palmer et al (2010, p.100) have argued that they can also be used to explore a group ‘experiential perspective’ and that this can be undertaken with the use of focus groups. The focus group was thus utilised to address the intersubjective dimensions of being-in-the-world and meaning-making between queer and trans people of colour.

For the first focus group with Brighton Group 2 I developed a focus group schedule (Appendix 7). However, for the other two focus groups I simply used the schedule as a guide of topics to cover as the participants were more talkative and I felt that sticking to the schedule may become repetitive, and I was interested in what might be raised by the participants themselves.

The research was interested in the group experiential perspective, however also sought to explore the more personal trajectories and embodied lived experiences of QTPOC activists and group participants. Therefore, interviews were chosen to collect the rich lived experiences of five members across the three QTPOC groups. This part of the research explored research questions two and three – in what ways does QTPOC activism support the negotiation of marginal sexual, gender and racial identities and/or help to navigate racism, queer phobia and transphobia; and in what ways does personal involvement with QTPOC activism impact on subjectivity.

Participants chose the date for their interview and interviews were undertaken in the participants’ homes or at a space I had booked which was accessible and provided privacy.
Two weeks before the interview participants were asked to use a digital camera or mobile phone to take photos in relation to the topic of 'My experience of being a queer and/or trans person of colour; my experience of QTPOC activism'. Participants were asked to make their own interpretation of this, although I said to them in an email that they could be as ‘creative or as abstract’ as they wished. At interview participants were asked if they would like to share their photographs in the research. All participants apart from Stanley took photos and shared these during the interview as a way to talk about and illustrate their experiences. The use of the digital camera allowed the participant control over what photos they chose to share, and required less ability than a traditional or disposable camera.

A multi-modal approach to collecting data gave the opportunity for the exploration of lived experience beyond the spoken word. This aimed to address the embodied experiences of queer and trans people of colour ‘beyond the body inscribed by discourse’ (Del Busso, 2011, p.43). Photo elicitation gave the participants some room to shape the research and the interview, challenging my centrality as the researcher and my own partial perspectives. The use of the visual gave the participant the opportunity to illustrate and position their own embodied experiences and was used ‘to disrupt well-rehearsed present narratives on a topic’ (Reavey, 2011, p.6). The use of visual methods aimed to capture experiences of embodiment that could not be captured through talk alone (Gilles et al, 2005).

As discussed above, photography can help to explore experiences that are not easily described in ‘formal language… [also] formal language can often produce stereotypical and normative representation of feelings, because clients will try to fit their experiences into readily available (and dominant) categories’” (Gilles et al, 2005, p. 201). As a marginalised group QTPOC may not have the language to describe certain embodied experiences, as marginalised groups have illustrated in the past it may take time to name and theorise your own experiences of oppression. The use of photography attempted to aid this process in the research and explore QTPOC subjectivity and embodied experience.
I was impressed and intrigued by the different ways participants interpreted the task given to them and the way in which the use of photography elicited nuanced and often poignant reflections.

The first interview I undertook with Sasha was guided by a semi-structured guide (Appendix 8) to areas I hoped to cover in the interview. However, on reflection it felt as if the interview was too stifled by my questions and that I should leave the pace and rhythm of the interview to the participant. In the rest of the interviews I only started with one question - how participants identified with the term QTPOC - and then asked them to share their photos as they wished. Participants had more control over the direction and content of the interview and I asked questions for elaboration or to draw out more reflection.

Consent to the interview and the use of photography in the research was required. Interview data was anonymised and participants were asked to choose their own pseudonym alongside a brief self-description. The data was not confidential as the transcripts were shared with my supervisors and data extracts will be used in my thesis, future publications and presentations. Participants were asked not to photo others without their consent and consider what they included in their photos in regards to their own privacy.

None of the participants decided to share their photographs in the final research. At each interview, it became clear that participants had not understood the role of the photographs in the research – three assumed that the photos were only going to be shown to me during the interview. They did not seem aware of the possibility of including the photos in the final piece of research. One participant admitted that he did not understand the photograph part of the interview request and therefore did not take any. The final participant was happy with one of their photographs being included. This uncertainty and misunderstanding may have been due to the volume of reading two separate consent forms for the interview and for the photos (Appendix 5 and 6). In the photos that participants did share some had included other people within their photos, used photos that had been
taken previous to the research and did not provide the photos in a way that could easily be shared – most shared them via their mobile phone with me during the interview.

All focus groups and interviews were recorded on a Dictaphone and iPhone and transcribed by myself or a professional service. All signed consent forms were kept locked in my personal file box in my home. Audio data was kept on my iPhone and laptop under password. All transcripts have been kept under a password on my Cloud service and my personal University of Brighton network area.

Data analysis

As previously discussed the focus groups were first analysed from what I originally considered a thematic analysis; however, the analysis of this data alongside the development of the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis for the interviews led me to a re-reading of the analyses of the focus groups as an early stage in the developmental process of this novel interpretative framework.

Each focus group was analysed separately. I concentrated on a close reading of the transcript, making note of the smallest units of experience and the participants’ own interpretation of them line by line. Each small unit of experience and interpretation was coded, with some coded in multiple different ways. I painstakingly worked through each transcript, creating a separate Word document which methodically presented each small code in a table with all the quotes from the transcript that had been coded in that specific way (Appendix 9, Appendix 10).

Analysis was driven by a focus on the lived experiences of the participants and their interpretations of their own experience. Having been involved in these groups in the past I developed a dialogue between myself and the data, interpreting participants own interpretations of their lived experience. I reflected on my own experiences as I undertook the analysis to acknowledge my own position and my own meaning making; accepting my own subjectivity and reflecting on the process of analysis. This could sometimes be confusing and I would feel overwhelmed with the data,
however I regularly reflected on how I was coding and interpreting the data keeping open to my participants experiences in conversation with my own, ensuring that I was centring their experiences. This was a difficult, but rewarding process. As previously discussed, the participants’ emphasis on their racialized-gendered-sexualised embodied experiences shaped the analysis, becoming an early step in the development of the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis.

Each focus group was transcribed, read, re-read and coded in isolation. The codes were then collated to develop the first initial themes within each focus group (Appendix 11). These initial themes were developed within each focus group in order to manage the huge number of codes and amount of data across all of the focus groups. These initial themes were then compared across the focus groups and the main themes across focus groups began to be developed (Appendix 12). Five themes were developed across the focus groups, and these are analysed and presented in Chapter Five.

The process of analysing the focus group data shaped the development of the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analytic framework, shaping the analysis of the focus group and developing a richer form of analysis for the interviews. Reflecting on the focus groups and interviews one can see that the analysis of the focus groups is much more descriptive of the participants lived experiences as a group; whereas the analysis of the interviews is much deeper, richer and interpretative, centring the individual trajectories and subjectivities.

Guided by Smith’s (1996) principles of IPA, I analysed the interviews one at a time in isolation from one another before bringing them together later in the analysis to develop themes across participants. I began by reading and re-reading the individual transcript, making notes in the margins attending to the participants’ line-by-line description and interpretation of lived experience as a queer and/or trans person of colour.

The focus of the QTPOC groups and the research were on the intersections of race, gender and sexuality and the lived embodied experience of this
therefore, as previously discussed the analysis was guided by a focus on these aspects of experience among others – a queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis. Following similar attempts to operationalise phenomenology for empirical psychological research in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, I attended to issues of temporality, spatiality and intersubjectivity in reading the transcript – noting each small unit of data that may have related to these concepts and what they could tell me about QTPOC lived experience.

Acknowledging the limits of IPA, to further this analysis, the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis attended to any references related to the orientation of 'disorientation', historicity and corporeality and embodiment in the participants' accounts which opened the analysis further to an interrogation of the experiences of racialisation-gendering-sexualisation; the social and historical contexts; the body and feeling. Following Fanon (2007) and Ahmed (2006) this worked as a phenomenological intervention to emphasise the experience of being-in-the-world and the process of becoming for queer and trans people of colour.

During the second reading of the transcript the smallest unit of experience was coded, often in multiple ways. Codes were then summarised in a table, and where there was similarity between codes they were subsumed into one another (Appendix 13).

The codes were then developed into themes. This was undertaken individually with each participant’s transcript, and each participants’ themes were collated within a table (Appendix 14). From these individual participant themes four super-themes were created across the participants (Chapter Six and Seven). The super-themes were developed in this way to ensure that individual experiences and differences were not lost when looking at lived experience across participants. This form of analysis allowed an attention to the rich queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis of lived experience, while also providing room for the double hermeneutic of interpretation and theoretical reflection. Psychoanalytic theory on race was drawn on, guided by Fanon (2007), Munoz (2006) and Mama’s (1995)
critical re-interpretations. The provided further theoretical tools to address the intersections of race, gender and sexuality and the formation of individual subjectivity and intersubjective relations between QTPOC. The one-to-one photo-elicitation interviews provided the possibility for an exploration of QTPOC activist subjectivities, and the role of QTPOC groups in the negotiation of subjectivity and racism, queerphobia and transphobia.

Ethics
Ethical approval for this research was given by the Faculty of Health and Social Science Research Ethics and Governance Committee at the University of Brighton (Appendix 15). Having previously been involved in QTPOC activism and community development work I was aware of the legitimate concerns minoritized communities have over involvement in research. There are questions over who benefits from research; how researchers respond to their participants; the problems of racist or pathologizing interpretations; and the ‘loss of intellectual and cultural knowledges’ (Smith, 1999, p.3).

As a QTPOC activist I have noted that the groups I am a part of are often inundated with requests for access for research, however many QTPOC members are wary of them.

Before my own involvement in QTPOC groups I was invited to an event for BME LGBT people by a third sector organisation with a few of my friends. The event was presented as an opportunity to meet other BME LGBT people and to discuss the issues facing our community. However, at the actual event it became clear that it was in fact a research consultation, and that what we talked about was going to form part of a piece of research for the organisation. Full information on the study was not given, there was no opportunity to discuss consent or any form of debriefing. The group facilitators shared that this would help improve services, however after the session, my friends and I received no further contact about the research or any developments in the organisation.

This was quite an upsetting experience, as other attendees and myself shared and discussed our lived experiences – particularly the issues of
queerphobia, racism and others discussed their experiences of seeking asylum. I did feel taken advantage of, and that perhaps more cynically that it had been a box-ticking exercise. However, the positive that did emerge from this was the setting up of the first QTPOC group I was involved with – those of us in attendance at the event shared contact details and decided to set something up for ourselves. This experience stayed with me, and in starting my own research made me centre ethical considerations and the importance of treating my participants with dignity and respect. I have been deeply grateful and appreciative of those who have taken part in the research and what they have shared with me.

I now want to turn to the ethical issues that have been raised in the research and how I have addressed these.

*Participants and Recruitment*

Considering my own involvement with QTPOC activist networks I assumed it might be easier to recruit participants for my research compared to someone outside of the community, however I was conscious of the ethical issues raised by researching with some participants I considered friends and activist colleagues. I was concerned that our relationships would mean that some would feel pressured to take part, therefore I took the decision to formally leave each of the groups – as previously discussed - from face-to-face meetings and online Facebook forums until data collection had been completed. This meant that there was a clearer distinction between my involvement in the group as an activist and as a researcher, and I hoped that no longer being present in the groups for this short time would alleviate potential pressure to take part in the research (Appendix 1).

Further to this, other than the key organisers whom I asked for access to the groups to recruit, I did not ask anyone personally to be involved – I waited for all participants to contact me via the adverts (Appendix 2). Due to being acutely aware and concerned about this potential dynamic, I was quite cautious about recruitment and this potentially led to particularly small numbers for the focus groups in Brighton and London.
All potential participants in Brighton and London who contacted me were sent an information and consent form to read, and I asked them to return them if they would still like to be involved after considering this (Appendix 4). The key organiser for Group X, in the North West, however took it on themselves to organise participants for the focus groups however I did emphasise not to pressure anyone into this. It was stressed in the information and consent form that there would be no repercussions for not being involved in the research and not to put pressure on others to be involved (Appendix 4). The recruitment for the photo-elicitation interviews was much less difficult, with most participants coming forward from the focus groups to be involved. One participant was unable to be involved in the focus group but took specific interest in the interview.

From my own experience working with QTPOC groups, as well as having been a participant in research into BME LGBT communities, I was well-prepared to facilitate the focus group discussions and photo-elicitation interviews sensitively and with respect.

In all the participant information and consent forms it was acknowledged that some distress could arise from the discussion of sensitive topics around identity, racism, queerphobia, and transphobia and that they did not have to all questions and had the right to withdraw (Appendix 2, 4, 5, 6). I originally planned to give out resource lists to participants to signpost further services, however I decided that directing them to the key organiser would be more suitable if any support was needed. The key organisers were best equipped to signpost onto the most appropriate services for QTPOC in their different geographical areas.

I was also aware that some participants, experiencing being multiply minoritized may make them particularly vulnerable especially in relation to mental health. This was something I kept in mind during the research process. I ensured particularly in the one-to-one photo elicitation interviews that participants could take regular breaks and I checked in with participants who shared difficult experiences if they were happy to continue discussing them. I also checked that participants were happy to have all the transcript
included in the research. Before the research started I was concerned that if any participants were seeking asylum that they may ask for a reference from the university of their participation in LGBTQ research. After discussing this with my supervisors I put into the information and consent forms that a statement of participation in the research could be given, but further references could only be given by group organisers (Appendix 2, 4, 5, 6). In the end, this issue did not arise in the research after all.

Data Storage

All focus groups and photo-elicitation interviews were recorded with a Dictaphone and an iPhone for back up. The recordings were then saved onto my Cloud service under a password and deleted from the recording devices. I transcribed the first two focus groups, however because of time limitations I used a professional service for the third focus group – I checked this with the participants before doing so. All the interviews were transcribed by a professional service. Data and transcripts were sent between myself and the professional service through secure data transfer service. Transcripts are saved with the audio on my Cloud service under a password. Signed information and consent forms have been kept in a locked personal file in my home.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Participants were provided with full information before the research began on the issues of anonymity and confidentiality in the information and consent forms (Appendix 2, 4, 5, 6). Participants were asked to choose a pseudonym which would provide them anonymity in the published research. I advised that personal information would be removed from transcripts and kept confidential; however, if I had any concern about participants or others coming to harm because of a disclosure during the research I would help them to identify the most appropriate support or services to inform.

Informed Consent and Deception

All participants therefore read and signed a consent form to ensure full informed consent to the research as well as a clear understanding of the
right to withdraw, confidentiality, anonymity and data storage. There was no deception, I was open about the aims of the research and at the end of each focus group and interview I undertook a full debrief to make time for questions and share the next steps in the research.

**Researcher Reflexivity**

In this section I want to share some reflections on undertaking this research and my position as the researcher. However, as I begin to write I notice that I am grappling with how much to share or tell, nervous that I will be told I am being self-indulgent or making the work ‘too personal’ or ‘too subjective’ even for a qualitative piece.

However, my role in the research as a ‘scholar-activist’ requires that I reflect how I am embedded in these QTPOC networks and how this has shaped the research. The QTPOC groups and participants in the research are those who I have worked alongside previously, some are friends and others acquaintances or fellow activists. Although I have taken time out as part of the research from QTPOC activism, I have still been involved in community, discussion, debate, and protests that link me to other queer and trans people of colour and I still identify myself as someone under the banner of ‘QTPOC’.

As a mixed race, black, bisexual woman, I have come to QTPOC activism for similar and differing reasons to my participants. Therefore, at times I have closely identified with some of the themes of the research and this research has impacted on my own parallel journey within a counselling context to make sense of my own place in the world. My participants’ feelings of not belonging connected with my own deep sense of not belonging anywhere in particular, and being in-between worlds as a function of my mixed-raceness and bisexuality. The politics of intersectionality and disorientation have therefore ‘struck’ me in a personal, academic and activist capacity; I have wrestled with the role of *feeling* in my work fearing over-identifying with participants, or of being accused of being too inward looking. However, I recognise that my personal insight intersected with practice and critical academic thought are of great benefit to this research.
Nayak (2015, p.33) argues that this is a form of black feminist methodology – the use of the erotic, of being open to others and my own experience, that ‘feeling one’s way’ is part of the ‘dialogical relationship between experience, practice and scholarship [that] produces the methodology of the activism of Black feminist theory, where the *how to do*, and the *doing*, of the project intersect’. A queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analytic framework has helped to attend to embodied inter-subjectivity and the dialogical relationship between the person and the world, the researcher and the researched.

Feelings of uncertainty have been exacerbated by doing research on race as a black woman. The everyday imperative to ignore race and to not talk about it weighs heavily on people of colour and this feels no different within academia. Race is a difficult topic to bring up, especially when you are seen to embody ‘race’ as a person of colour. The marginalisation and rejection of people of colour’s lived experiences contribute to my own experience of a ‘third person consciousness’; when I begin to view my work through this consciousness I am bewildered – am I overstating the importance of race? Am I misrepresenting the experience of disorientation because of my own experiences? Why is it always about race? These questions reflect a conflict between what is understood as westernese, or hegemonic discourse on race in the UK and subaltern subjective knowledge. My own subjectivity has been shaped by growing up and being socialised and orientated around and towards whiteness, however the contradictions I experienced as a mixed race Black child and my later involvement in black feminist and QTPOC communities have created ruptures in this orientation producing alternative discourses and understandings of self. However early orientation around and towards whiteness and it’s continued hegemonic status in my life may mean that alternative discourses and subjectivity remain precarious.

As Nayak (2015) argues, black women often experience feeling crazy in a world which denies the existence of racism and sexism while they continue to experience these forms of oppression. To be told one is equal when one experiences inequality; when assaulted, and murdered black (trans, queer,
heterosexual, cis, disabled) bodies are an historical and everyday ‘mundane’ reality it is easy to feel like one is mad. This space of uncertainty and insecurity is a place of knowledge. The disabling effects of being othered, considered excessive and as a problem also feed into and intersect with the traditional imposter syndrome which plague many postgraduates.

The PhD process has involved a struggle with a third person consciousness and imposter syndrome, watching the self from the outside and going back and forth on my own analysis and reading, requiring the need for further evidence and affirmation of my own arguments than perhaps others would deem necessary. This has been disorientating and troubling at times, prolonging the amount of time it takes to read, analyse and write. However, my motivation and commitment to this research has made me determined to work through these perturbing experiences. The work particularly of other Black academics/activists and academics/activists of colour such as Munoz, Lorde, Nayak, Mama, Fanon and Crenshaw have illuminated the way to speaking to and theorising on multiplicity and marginalised experiences.

As previously discussed, I have also been concerned about my role as a researcher in relation to communities I have been a part of and wanting to ensure I do no harm to them. At first I found it particularly hard to write critiques of QTPOC groups – a critique felt like it could only be read as a negative. As Sedgwick (2003) points out, this is a paranoid reading. Following Sedgwick (2003) and Johnson (2015) I have moved to hoping that the work I present here, when critical of QTPOC groups, comes from a place of reparation and of love - for communities that are of great importance for myself and my participants.

I have also had similar concerns about writing about queerphobia and transphobia within Black communities and communities of colour – it has taken me some time to acknowledge my discomfort at discussing these issues within an academic setting. It must be noted that my participants also tended to avoid much discussion on these topics, with a few exceptions. There is some anxiety perhaps about airing dirty laundry, as well as wanting
to protect your communities from the racist narratives that position them as inherently more queerphobic and transphobic than others.

However, several incidents happened in the final year of my PhD which encouraged me to begin to discuss these issues more openly and within my work. One was at a conference on Black Lives Matter in which I presented a paper on my work and the need for an intersectional black liberation movement. I was publicly challenged by a black male academic on whether there should be a separate Black Lives Matter movement for women and queer and trans folks. Later, a black male activist angrily rejected my use of the term ‘cisgender’ in his closing speech – he had seemed to take the term as an insult. The experience at the conference unsettled me, reminding me of the work to do within our Black communities and our communities of colour. This challenged me on my anxieties around discussing this topic in the research, however my participants did not tend to focus on these issues as much within their communities of colour in either the focus groups or interviews.

Acknowledging and reflecting on my position as a scholar-activist and my relationships to QTPOC networks and research participants is important to understand the dialectic between the personal, activist, political and academic. Instead of distancing myself from these networks and trying to claim an objective position, the research is enriched through attending to these relationships and the place of the intersubjective in exploring the dynamics of embodied subjectivity and the meaning of lived experiences.
Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented how the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis was operationalised, to explore the function of QTPOC activism and the individual trajectories of queer and trans people of colour. This challenges more traditional hermeneutic phenomenological approaches which fail to situate subjects within their wider contexts and specific experiences of embodiment. I have detailed the processes of the focus groups and the interviews, and reflected on my position as a scholar-activist and my embeddedness within QTPOC communities.
Chapter Five: Understanding the QTPOC group experiential perspective

Introduction

This chapter presents a queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis of data from the three focus groups. The focus groups aimed to explore the first research question of the project - what does QTPOC activism mean in the UK context, how does it operate and for what purpose? As noted in the previous chapter, the focus groups were analyzed in the earlier stages of the development of the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis, and analysis was initially conducted as a thematic analysis. The emphasis of the analysis was on the participants’ own understandings and meanings attributed to QTPOC groups. Five themes emerged from the whole data set – naming and defining the self and collective as ‘QTPOC’, being excluded, QTPOC groups provide social support, negotiating and developing QTPOC identities and QTPOC mental and physical wellbeing.

Theme 1: Naming and Defining the Self and Collective ‘QTPOC’

The acronym ‘QTPOC’ has been developed in various ways among queer and trans people of colour communities across Europe and the United States illustrating the changing ways in which language is used (Haritaworn, 2015). These include QPOC (queer people of colour), to QTPOC, to QTIP0C (queer, trans and intersex people of colour) to more recent QT.BPOC (queer and trans black people/people of colour). However, in the research it was the use of the term ‘people of colour’ which proved a site of contention for all three groups, in different and similar ways.

The term ‘people of colour’ was positioned as a more ‘current’ and inclusive term by Group X and Brighton/London Group in comparison to the historical British political use of ‘Black’. Both groups spoke at length to their indebtedness to the project of political Blackness of the 80s and 90s,
however in the current context of the early 21st Century ‘Black’ was viewed by most as too exclusionary.

As discussed in Chapter 1, historically political Blackness was a project of ‘diasporic consciousness’, political solidarity and unity between communities of African, Caribbean and South Asian descent in the UK (Swaby, 2014, p.14). This emphasized their similar and overlapping histories under the British Empire and contemporaneous struggles with British ‘colour-based racisms’ which encouraged collective action (Brah, 1996). Black with a capital ‘B’ challenged essentialist notions of race, recognizing the different but similar processes of racialization for African, Caribbean and South Asian people historically and specifically in the UK in the 80s and 90s (Brah, 1996). However, focus group participants noted that for them this usage did not address changing populations in Britain such as South American communities which would not feel included or connected in this conception of a politically Black identity. For many participants, the project of political Blackness made it unclear who was welcome in Black-defined spaces as Black is still also often used interchangeably with ‘black’ with a small b – as ‘derivative of African descent’ only (Aflia, Group X, p.48).

‘People of colour’ then is a term deemed as more well known, more applicable to young people and the changing racialized populations in Britain. ‘People of Colour’ is used as an umbrella term, somewhat like politically Black as a term of solidarity without denying the differences in experiences between and within racialized groups of people. Yuen (1997, p.99) traces the genealogy of the term ‘people of colour’ within the American political terrain with a similar construction to the British politically Black, emphasizing the construction of identity based in ‘political rather than biological similarities’. The term ‘people of colour’ is a ‘statement of pluralism and political community at a fairly high level of abstraction’ (Yuen, 1997, p.106).
Ashok’s quote above notes how the terms ‘queer’ and ‘people of colour’ give the most ‘space’ for potential inclusion in QTPOC groups, which is echoed by most participants in Group X and Brighton/London Group. People of colour is then utilized to expand the number of different ethnic minority groups under a politicized identity category, ensuring even those who are unsure if they belong, feel welcome. The concerns over the use of politically Black mirror the limitations found historically with groups such as the Organization of Women of Asian and African Descent (OWAAD) (Swaby, 2014). Black as a political term emphasized unity, however practically there was difficulty in coming to a consensus for action whilst also acknowledging the ‘plurality of voices’ and a range of internal differences (p.20).

However, for some participants, particularly in Group X, ‘people of colour’ was a problematic term. Dorian (Group X, p.46) described it as ‘weak’ and was concerned about other possible reasons that ‘Black’ had been dropped from the lexicon, implicating the insidious nature of anti-blackness among ethnic minority communities.

People of colour was also described as an American import - a ‘cop out’ within the British context and also as too dangerously reminiscent of the British usage of ‘coloured’ (Aflia, Group X, p.49). This was a particularly tense discussion as participants detailed their very real concerns with the connotations of ‘people of colour’ being used over ‘Black’, while one of the key organizer’s was at pains to express an understanding of these difficulties while also defending the choice of ‘people of colour’.
In the focus group, despite Group X using the term ‘people of colour’ the group often referred to ‘black queers’ and the majority of the participants were of African or Caribbean descent. However, for two of the mixed-race participants there was an anxiety over who could fit into categories of B/blackness. Sasha (Group X, p.47) expressed concern as a ‘mixed race’ and ‘lighter skinned black person’ over whether she could take on the term of black. Aziza, was unhappy with both Black and people of colour, feeling that both glossed over the specificities of her experiences as a mixed race person.

The often interchangeable use of (politically) Black and black (of African descent) as categories of identity slip dangerously close to homogenising the experiences of diverse people, creating a sense of monolithic ‘blackness’ which one must fit into. This is a trap that OWAAD had fallen into, in which despite using politically Black as a term of unity and solidarity the group was troubled by intense debates on what ‘Blackness’ was and who was and was not ‘Black’ (Swaby, 2014). Mixed race women, black women with white partners and Asian women felt the brunt of these arguments, where they had to defend their blackness. Members of OWAAD fell into reinscribing ‘blackness’ according to race and skin colour, usurping the original subversion of the Black political project (Swaby, 2014).

Similarly, across Group X and Brighton/London group there were concerns about being ‘black’ enough for claiming political Blackness. In contextualising this history, Aziza’s experience as a mixed-race person may be more clearly understood. Aziza (Group X, p.52) noted how discussion in Group X about ‘black culture’ perpetuated certain constricting ideas of ‘blackness’, which she felt positioned her as a ‘coconut’ with her interest in ‘indie’ music and so – called ‘culturally white’ interests. ‘Coconut’ is a derogatory term for a black person which is used to taunt those who are seen as acting in ways which may be coded as white, or have interests in ‘white’ cultural activities. This suggests the person is black on the outside

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but white on the inside and it is used to discipline or shame black people whose self-expression is deemed illegitimate or inauthentic.

Aziza felt that this was further compounded by identifying as queer or trans, which may be seen as contradictory to ideas of monolithic or ‘authentic’ blackness. The troubling of Aziza’s ethno-racial identity because of her cultural interests and her sexual orientation or gender identity emphasize the static constructions of blackness. Aziza’s experience echoes Fanon’s concerns with ‘authentic’ black identity, and how radical projects such as politically Black which subverted essentialist notions of racialized others could be co-opted. As Wright (2013) has noted the heteronormativity of what is claimed to be an ‘authentic’ blackness within Black nationalist and Pan-African discourses isolate queer and trans black people and is co-opted into racist, static ideas of what blackness can and cannot be.

Brah (1996) adds another level of analysis in understanding the unpinning of the project of political Blackness by looking to the response of the state. While Black was a project of political solidarity its appropriation into ‘state discourse’ made it a ‘site of dissent and conflict as members of these groups competed for jobs in the state sector, and for grants, services and other resources’ (p.100). What began as a radical project in challenging the British state, was co-opted and divided by the state’s response – the offer of resources based on a ‘common cultural need’ for racialized others which worked on the assumption that ‘culturally different’ groups are ‘internally homogenous’ (p.100). We can see how Black has been brought back to static, homogenous, constraining and essentialist ideas of blackness. Aziza points out how even those who are particularly harmed by discourses of homogenous or authentic blackness which fragment their identities, such as QTPOC, still need to be vigilant to being co-opted by it.
Across Group X and Brighton/London group there was concern over who could attend ‘Black’ events, and a concern about authenticity. Sasha and Aziza’s mixed-race subjectivity can be situated in what Nguyen and Koontz Anthony (2014, p.770) describe as ‘black authenticity…a cultural resource, which can be drawn from, but also constrain, individuals’ identity construction’. The commodification and globalization of typically African American working class black culture can limit and constrain black and mixed race subjectivities, and this commodification is driven in part by hegemonic white ideals and stereotypes of blackness. Alongside this, the subject must also negotiate their ‘legitimate group membership’ to local black communities (p.774). This can contribute to questions of being ‘black enough’ (p.775). Individuals racialized as black and mixed race must manage ‘community membership and maintenance of black authenticity [which] can entail a “complex identity dilemma” in balancing pressures from cultural ideologies, community norms and the need to create a cohesive sense of self’ (p.775). Sasha’s concern over the appropriateness of claiming a black identity as a mixed-race woman, along with Aziza’s experience of being positioned as a ‘coconut’ – of not having a real or legitimate blackness illustrate the problems of black authenticity and the complexity of developing subjectivity for black and mixed race queer and trans people.

QTPOC must be situated within historical, social and cultural discourses of race to understand the complex processes of grappling with racial categorization and the development of racial, sexual and gendered subjectivity and identity. The historical struggles over naming and identifying the self as well as political solidarity projects for racialized minorities continue to cause frictions and tensions for projects of political solidarity among queer and trans people of colour. Compared to political Blackness, people of colour provides room for wide ranging diversity in racial identities and experiences addressing the uncertainty of who can and cannot fit into Black. QTPOC must grapple with their ‘denied presence’, as British and European residents and citizens within wider society as well as queer
and/or trans people of colour within their communities of origin (Mama, 1995, p.94)

On the other hand, Brighton Group 2 did not discuss the use of ‘Black’ and deemed the term ‘queer and trans people of colour’ as a ‘provocative’ statement, as something which ‘stands up for itself’ compared to more bureaucratic, euphemistic and ‘passive’ terms such as Black Minority Ethnic (BME) (Zayn, Brighton Group 2, p.1,2).

For Brighton Group 2 the use of the terms ‘queer’ and ‘of colour’ are used, in part, to provoke a reaction or evoke feelings of being challenged; this group was much more invested in the use of the term as a political statement. The terms ‘queer’ and ‘of colour’ were welcomed as terms that were once seen as derogatory or as an insult and now potentially controversial – noting the closeness of ‘of colour’ to ‘coloured’. This provocativeness may be specific to a Brighton context, where the previous QTPOC group based in Brighton suffered an intense racist backlash to its existence and its interventions within the wider queer community and therefore is positioned in part in defiance to this.

All the groups emphasised that their organisations were spaces away from whiteness, and that white people were not able to be members. However, defining who a ‘person of colour’ is was a particularly complex task that both Brighton/London Group and Brighton Group 2 focus groups spoke at length about.

The original Brighton group had developed the definition of ‘people of colour’ that all groups in the research had then adopted over the years, however they had adapted this from the definition of ‘Black’ from the Black Lesbian and Gay Centre that had existed in Peckham, London in the 1980s (the information was found online). The use and definition of the term ‘People of Colour’ had then been developed explicitly by the original Brighton group from the British use of ‘Black’.
As discussed in Chapter One QTPOC must be situated within the effective history of ‘black radical discourse’ and Black British solidarity movements (Mama, 1995, p105). This is drawn on in their adaptation of who political Blackness was for, transforming it into ‘of colourness’ and movement between ‘black radical discourse’ and their own emergent, developing alternatives.

However, in defining the term PoC, both the Brighton/London Group and Brighton Group 2 were both struck by the difficulty of knowing who could definitely fit this category and claim membership to the group and who could not. Here participants struggled with the social construction of the categories of race and its material realities. The categories of race are shaped in historically and culturally specific contexts and therefore it was not clear for participants who could claim whiteness, who could not and who could re/claim or was ‘othered’ in ‘of colourness’. Both groups used the example of Jewish people in being unsure of inclusion in ‘white’ or ‘person of colour’ categorisation. This illustrates the historical development of categories of racialized subjectivity in which certain groups ‘become white’ dependent on social, political and cultural contexts and the ‘undecidability’ that has ‘surrounded the whiteness and Europeaness of the Jews in racialized discourse’ (Hesse, 2004, p.16).

For both groups defining ‘PoC’ and basing membership on this was troubling to navigate, however the Brighton/London Group were especially cognizant of these difficulties. Asking potential members of the London QTPOC group about their racial identity was a contentious issue – participants were cautious of being seen as ‘policing identity’ and noted that asking about racial identity can be entangled in painful experiences of rejection and not belonging (Aruncati, Brighton/London group, p.3). However, the emphasis on being a space away from whiteness meant this questioning was required in accepting people into the group, all groups
remedied this by asking potential members to simply answer yes or no to the question of whether they defined under the umbrella terms of ‘queer and/or trans person of colour’. This was done in adding members to the online forums of the groups however they did not discuss how this would potentially be handled at face to face meet ups. Inclusion in the group then was based on each member self-identifying as a QTPOC.

Participants in Brighton/London Group and Brighton Group 2 noted however that theoretically using self-definition as the basis for membership may run the risk of including people who are ‘not’ people of colour but have decided to self-define in that way. Aruncati (Brighton/London Group) highlighted the transracial movement in the US as an example with the limitations of self-definition, and similar issues have been raised in the recent case of Rachel Dolezal. This highlights the difficulties of navigating the social constructed dimensions of ‘race’, the limits of the Left and feminist traditions of self-definition and the investment in reclaiming racialized categories as identities as sites of political solidarity and empowerment.

The process of ‘naming and defining’ who the groups include was fraught with tensions and uncertainties around racialized categorizations. QTPOC struggle with the social construction of the categories of race and its material realities, and the use of the term ‘people of colour’, although recognized as a term of solidarity, its specific definition was difficult to pin down. Despite a recent resurgence in the use of the term ‘politically Black’, as discussed by Swaby (2014), the majority of participants preferred the use of the term ‘people of colour’ as an umbrella term although they recognised the important history of political Blackness in Britain. However, one older participant was concerned that anti-blackness in people of colour communities was to blame for the drop in the usage of ‘Black’, and following Swaby (2014) this seems a plausible concern as young South Asian feminists have recently taken up political Blackness as a way of addressing anti-blackness in their own communities of origin.
The experiences of two of the mixed-race participants must also be a reminder to be vigilant against ‘authentic’ and homogenising concepts of racial subjectivity or identity whether political or ethno-racial, highlighting the continued marginalization of queer and trans people of colour within communities of colour and groups for collective political action. The diverse intersections of experiences of those racialized as other must be attended to. The term ‘QTPOC’ and QTPOC groups aim to unite people of colour from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds to work to create spaces of solidarity exclusively for queer and trans people of colour as opposed to those racialized as white. Participants highlight the processes of managing and negotiating individual and collective racial identities making sense of being racialized as a minority in the UK. They show the tensions of understanding self and other within the context of political solidarity. Participants illustrate the disorientation in trying to make sense of the constructions of ‘race’ and how the constraints of racial ideology and the commodification of minority ethnic cultures create dilemmas for subject formation.

Theme 2: Being Excluded

All groups spoke of the ‘whiteness’ of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans (LGBT) and queer communities; that these spaces are predominantly made up of white people who dominate the space, that ‘queerness’ and ‘transness’ are coded in ‘white’ ways which exclude people of colour and that there is resistance to including QTPOC and speaking about race. Participants named these spaces as ‘white’ and clearly feel the ways in which their racialized bodies cause disruption and are resisted in these spaces.

The ‘white normativity’ of LGBTQ and queer communities privilege individuals racialized as white, or passing as white, and embed ‘ways of thinking, knowing, and doing that naturalize whiteness’ (Ward, 2008, p.564). Ward (2008) notes that even in racially diverse LGBTQ organisations, through whiteness white norms can continue to dominate and shape space
and racial dynamics. Bodies racialized as Other are positioned as inferior, lacking and pathological which marks them ‘socially and spatially’ (Haritaworn, 2015, p.25). Skeggs (2004, cited in Haritaworn, 2015, p.293) argues that dependent on the ways in which our bodies are racialized we either ‘move in social space with ease and a sense of value, or…become fixed in positions and ascribed symptoms of pathology’.

Quite clearly, QTPOC experienced being fixed from without, and in occupying space in LGBTQ and queer communities were objects of concern and surveillance; moving through LGBTQ space with great unease. A number of participants in Group X spoke at length about the isolation and exclusion they had experienced in ‘mainstream' LGBT and queer spaces, and across all groups participants noted that their ‘of colourness' was seen as contradictory to ‘queerness’ or ‘transness’.

Janelle encapsulates this by noting that in being racialized as other it was seen to be an ‘extra queer thing to be queer’ (Group X, p.40). Being viewed as one minority at a time, people of colour are constrained by the historical legacies of the white colonial gaze (Stonewall, 2012). Participants struggle with being overdetermined from without, where they are racially gendered/degendered and sexualized/desexualized in ways which rob them of the richness and complexities of their gender and sexual subjectivities and identities. When QTPOC attempt to enter white LGBT spaces they experience a challenge to their identities – if they are to enter queer spaces it is demanded that they decide which part of their identity they will align themselves to (Yuen Thompson, 2012). As Zayn illustrates, he has been asked ‘are you Asian? Or are you, are you trans?’ and he notes the impulse his white friends have to white wash his identity - it is when he speaks of race his friends claim that they had ‘forgotten' that he wasn’t white (Zayn, Brighton Group 2, p.14). This might also be heard as being asked to be quiet about that part of his identity. To be included in LGBTQ and queer communities QTPOC must manage the discomfort their ‘of colourness’ brings to a white normative space.
‘Brighton is this very weird mix where if you’re queer or trans, yaaaay! But don’t be black or brown about it. Like you can be black and brown and be in a picture to be diverse, but if you are black or brown in a way that’s conscious, you know…’
(Ashok, Brighton/London group, p.18)

Haritaworn (2015, p.25) considers how ‘racism and colonialism work by creating degenerate bodies whose main value lies in what can be extracted from them’. In LGBTQ and queer communities QTPOC experience being excluded in ways which silence their lived experiences while as Ashok notes their silenced presence is welcomed for ‘diversity’s’ sake.

This use of QTPOC bodies fits with Western liberal hegemony, while simultaneously the discourses of westernese deem QTPOC voices illegible. Haritaworn (2015) advances this idea in a critique of the now globalized Trans Day of Remembrance (TDoR). Trans people of colour, and particularly trans women of colour are ‘unwanted and unintelligible as living breathing subjects’ in wider society as well as LGBTQ and queer communities (p.25). However, their extreme marginalisation and higher rates of experiencing violence and murder are utilised and extracted for the political projects of white trans communities. In death, trans women of colour, the majority of whom are from the global South are memorialised on TDoR by white trans communities of the North to emphasise their own vulnerability as a population. Brighton queer and trans communities have been dogged by controversies around racism and inclusion of trans people of colour; however, despite this marginalisation TDoR is a staple event in the trans community’s calendar.

Across all groups, QTPOC were outspoken about the white normativity of LGBTQ and queer communities, and were resistant to continuing to enable this. All groups discussed at length the problems of racism, talking about race and anti-racist activism in LGBT/queer communities. Due to their emphases on gender and sexual diversity, LGBT and queer communities and movements position themselves as progressive while excluding
QTPOC, which can make it difficult for queer and trans people of colour to speak. QTPOC are perceived as potentially disruptive in their interventions in these communities.

‘Zayn: It's just like, I don't know I feel like white people and LGBTQ spaces are just so proud to be just like thinking about diversity, like gender diversity and sexual diversity
Stephanie: Right
Zayn: that they, that you know when you just like 'oh' but what about, what about people of colour? It's like, you just drop a bomb on them. And they are just like 'oh'
Stephanie: Right
Zayn: well this looked really great and now we have to think about that.’
(Brighton Group 2, p.17)

In highlighting the intersections of race, gender and sexuality, QTPOC trouble the white normativity of LGBTQ and queer communities in the UK and challenge the narrative of liberal progressiveness. Participants describe common experiences of exclusion, isolation, being constrained by racist stereotypes, lack of representation, and inconsistency in support where ‘simultaneously people were supportive and then really not’ (Ashok, Brighton/London Group, p.18).

In naming and confronting these issues, Group X emphasized the exhaustion and frustration experienced in attempting to make white people understand racial dynamics. The narrative of progressiveness hindered engagement and only more ‘obvious’ examples of racism were often understood. However, both the Brighton Group 2 and Brighton/London Group (specifically the original Brighton group) had experienced a backlash for openly intervening on issues of race in Brighton’s LGBT and queer communities. The Brighton group 2 had more recently undertaken a small anti-racist intervention in 2014 which triggered ‘overwhelming’ negative response from the wider community (Zayn, Brighton Group 2, p.38). Therefore, at the time of the focus group in November 2014, speaking out or undertaking anti-racist actions was deemed potentially ‘dangerous’ and ‘controversial’ because of how alienated the group had become (Zayn,
Brighton Group 2, p.11). The groups increased visibility left the participants feeling vulnerable and unsafe.

‘We’re just excluded, like in people’s minds and thoughts and when we’re there and like visible in front of someone, it’s, we get these microaggressions’
(Zayn, Brighton Group 2, p.38)

The original Brighton group had also found itself at the centre of a row over racism in Brighton’s queer and anarchist communities a couple of years before. In 2011 a queer weekend event was organized at Brighton’s Cowley Club – a co-operatively run anarchist social centre – by a queer activist group called Queer Mutiny. As part of the weekend it was proposed that the documentary ‘Travel Queeries’ would be shown, however members of the Brighton group highlighted that the film was racist and pointed to a number of critiques of this online. Queer Mutiny members refuted that the film was racist, demanded more evidence and harassed individual members from the Brighton QTPOC group sending personal Facebook messages. The Brighton QTPOC group then made it clear that the weekend event was not going to be welcoming to queer and trans people of colour. The event was cancelled and a workshop on race and racism was run to address the issues raised. However, those involved in the organizing of the queer weekend event failed to attend.

This incident physically limited continued engagement for QTPOC in queer, trans and anarchist communities, and a number of members from the Brighton QTPOC group moved away after this. One participant attributed their breakdown and the onset of a chronic physical illness to this experience. In both incidents queer and trans people of colour experienced a ‘shrinkage of environments’ which they could access (Haritaworn, 2015, p.3). Haritaworn (2015) depicts similar struggles in Berlin’s queer and trans communities in which these scenes became too racist for QTPOC to enter. Both the previous and more recent Brighton incidents were triggered by queer and trans people of colour’s experiences of racism being aggressively refuted, in naming their experiences QTPOC troubled the narrative of liberal
progressiveness of LGBTQ communities and unveiled problematic racial dynamics within these communities.

The exclusion of QTPOC voices illustrate the white normativity and westernese at work in LGBTQ communities, in which QTPOC remain unintelligible and illegitimate. This highlights the unease QTPOC experience in moving through LGBTQ spaces. The QTPOC groups symbolize a refusal to fragment identities or to pick a ‘side’ (queerness/transness vs. ‘of colourness’) and to staying silent on the problems of exclusion/inclusion. Returning to Ashok’s quote near the beginning of this section, QTPOC groups challenge the silencing ways in which they are included in LGBTQ communities and the ways in which their usefulness may be extracted.

For both the Brighton groups, in highlighting the problems of racism and exclusion they were faced with the risk of increased visibility and isolation. Group X members had also experienced exclusion and silencing of their lived experiences as queer and trans people of colour, however the group itself had been welcomed into the local LGBT third sector and community group networks. This may have been due to the recognized need for services and groups for queer and trans people of colour in an ethnically diverse northern city as opposed to the whiteness of Brighton and invisibility of its ethnic minority populations. QTPOC groups then operate as a space which tempers the racism, exclusion and invisibility experienced by queer and trans people of colour in mainstream LGBT spaces. QTPOC groups also challenge the fragmentary impulses and white normativity of LGBT communities.

Theme 3: QTPOC groups provide social support
All groups emphasized the function of QTPOC groups as spaces for social support. In these spaces queer and trans people of colour found themselves in majority spaces often for the first time, providing a forum for sharing similar and differing experiences with the potential for validation.
'It was just like, like it was just really exciting, being like, just being able to meet other people where like, like, most people you meet like you, you have to, like work around like explaining like something or like, I feel like, I always feel like, I have to like tread lightly around certain topics in front of say for example, if I meet a white person like I don't by default feel like I can say anything relating to my views on race, like straight away. Or like, I mean like that's the case with all QTPOC people, but I mean in general like talking about my gender, my sexuality, erm, and like related to ethnicity and race, I, you don't, like the starting point for communicating people is quite different because you kind of don't, there are some things like with most people you have to explain. Erm, so it's just, I don't know, like it's definitely, yeah I definitely feel more comfortable around other QTPOC people than like members of the general population (laughs)'

(James, Brighton Group 2, p.10)

In experiencing majority space away from whiteness and straightness, participants were able to be less wary in expressing themselves and their experiences relating to race, sexuality and gender. James describes how they have had to fragment their experiences, silencing parts of themselves which trouble and are troubled by westernese discourse on race (Hesse, 2004).

Westernese supports western liberal hegemony while defining ‘who can speak legitimately and what can be said with credibility’ (p.15). Across the groups participants were very aware of these strictures and monitored what they said in different spaces, knowing that they may be challenged on the credibility of their account in the company of a white person. The inhibiting effects of the presence of white people on the ability to speak to all facets of the experiences of queer and trans people of colour and the potential white response to these experiences emphasized the need for QTPOC group spaces. Across groups participants noted the dismissal of their experiences in LGBT spaces dominated by white people, in which attempts to challenge this were ignored, were addressed in tokenistic ways or resulted in heavy penalties (as discussed in Theme 2). Being heard, having one’s experience recognized, acknowledged and validated was an important form of support across all groups.
‘Aruncati: Then there was a discussion and one of the members who is more readily contributing started a discussion on gentrification. They had had a bad experience that day in an area of North London that they had grown up in and they were really angry. They used the group – which happens quite a lot, which I think is positive – to come and vent about it and to just get some of that stuff you were talking about, about how like important it is of people saying ‘Yes, I’ve experienced that and that is real’, da, de, da.

Ashok: And it happening at the time. Not like – there is a lot of stuff that happened 10 years ago that now I have space to talk about it. I am simultaneously jealous and pleased of what all of us have managed to create in different ways and spaces where you can actually go. ‘The shitty thing happened to me today’ and I think that getting that at the time is much the best way.

Aruncati: Yes, it’s really true. So what happened is that then a lot of people, mostly who knew this person, the person who posted it, so it was a kind of group of people who knew each other in real life mostly, were going through that process of kind of having a … conversation and what happened then, and I think that I see it tends to happen more and more, is that when you are having that experience of being validated is that you become more and more flippant, because you can be and because it’s accepted to be in that place. And that is a healing process. So they were saying things, like they were talking about white people and the…of white people and things like that and angrily. And I think that that is very valid, but this particular person who had just joined said ‘Hang on a minute, I kind of agree with the general point, but I don’t feel comfortable with the way that we’re talking about white people’…and I think that that is an issue, because I think when you go through that process of being validated it is really empowering to be able to be flippant for the first time in ways that as a homogenous group, if people have been oppressive towards you, and to be able to turn the table on that is incredibly empowering.

Ashok: Yes.

Aruncati: Conversely, it is very un-nuanced. And what you are talking about in that moment, and what you lose when you’re in those conversations is that you are talking about system as a repression, so when you’re talking about whiteness you’re talking about it as a system. And you might be using ‘white people’ as shorthand, generally. You know, some people will be talking about individual white people, and that is what I’m saying, but-

Ashok: Also language, ‘Whiteness’ is an academic term.

Aruncati: Yes, definitely.

Ashok: It’s a middle class term. It is a really useful one because it does basically name the system, but I didn’t grow up hearing people talking about whiteness.
Aruncati: No, exactly.
Ashok: It’s white people.
Aruncati: Yes, exactly. So that is exactly what was happening. And so it was one of those conversations where there was no right or wrong, it was just that the emotion of it was different for different people and that’s upsetting…’
(Brighton/London Group, p.30-32)

This lengthy quote has been included here to illustrate the complexities of validation and support within QTPOC groups. Living under the hegemonic discourse of westernese, naming and defining our experiences as queer and trans people of colour are troublesome and we risk being told that what we have to say is illegitimate and implausible. This potentially disorientating experience is hampered by the validation that Aruncati describes – that in sharing experience within the group space QTPOC can be reassured that their experiences are ‘real’ even as they deviate from what has been prescribed to be ‘real’ under westernese (Aruncati, Brighton/London Group, p.30). This unveiling could be described as a form of critical consciousness raising within a group context, where sharing experiences and noting that these are shared experiences accentuates their wider political ramifications. This group space is important in making sense of the world as queer and trans people of colour together. Aruncati and Ashok illustrate how being validated in the group can lead to a process of venting and being ‘flippant’ about, in particular, white people (Aruncati, Brighton/London Group, p.30). They both frame this as part of a ‘healing’ process in working through troubling incidents and microaggressions (Aruncati, Brighton/London Group, p.30). The group process of being flippant, and potentially being seen to ‘generalise’ and homogenise a specific group (white people) is described as an empowering process in which for once the ‘tables have turned’.

This flippancy is reminiscent of Perez’s (2012) reading of the ‘critical flippancy’ of the artist and blogger, Mark Aguhar aka ‘The Call Out Queen’. Aguhar’s work sought a cultural analysis of a world of white normativity/supremacy, patriarchy and heteronormativity while negotiating survival as a brown, fat, femme ‘exposing the contradictions that survival
requires, in particular the emotional and tactical oscillations between flippancy and heartbreak, boredom and rage’ (para, 9).

Through her work, Aguhar created space in which to refute and deflect the everyday assaults she experienced as a queer and trans person of colour, developing strategies that would ‘flatten patriarchal and racist bullshit without diverting power from the work of brown, queer reflection and affirmation’ (para, 6). These strategies included cutting humour, the ‘confessional, to theoretical, to capricious, to sneering’, a toying with and questioning of power underlined with an ‘antagonism’ to whiteness and commitment to misandry (para, 7).

Perez argues that Aguhar’s work was guided by her embodied experiences as a queer and trans person of colour and feelings of rage, pain, boredom and search for affirmation as well as the use of critical theory, developing a ‘politics that can learn, feel, and change its mind.’ (para, 13). I would suggest that critical flippancy is used as a tool by QTPOC groups in the research, specifically as illustrated in the above quote. Critical flippancy is a way through which queer and trans people of colour can provocatively dis-identify with hegemonic western culture and dispute the discourse of westernese.

Through critical flippancy QTPOC ‘work(s) on, with and against’ white normativity and heteronormativity, developing critical cultural analyses of their place in the west as other and how whiteness structures white subjectivity, identity and culture in relation to them (Munoz, 1999, p.12). To use Munoz’s (1999, p.4) notion of disidentification, queer and trans people of colour may use critical flippancy as one of many ways to survive and negotiate ‘a phobic majoritarian public sphere that continuously elides or punishes the existence of subjects who do not conform’ managing associated feelings of isolation, rage, shame and intelligibility. According to Munoz (1999, p.5) disidentificatory performances (in this case critical flippancy) can help create ‘new social relations…blueprint for minoritarian
counterpublic spheres’. Critical flippancy is conveyed through a humoured affectation of boredom, disparagement, sneering, generalisation of whiteness and white people which works to create distance from white normativity and heteronormativity. Critical flippancy is underlined by a close reading, analysis and critique of the workings of white normativity and heteronormativity – an ability required by the minority subject for survival under an oppressive majority. Critical flippancy works as part of creating a ‘minoritarian counterpublic’ sphere gaining space for reflection and affirmation (p,5).

To be critically flippant troubles the cultural script that places white as superior, privileged, and as the norm while attempting to counter-act being positioned as less than. As Aruncati and Ashok point out, this can be an empowering process however it can also be read as quite un-nuanced where the focus is on ‘white people’ in the general rather than whiteness as a system of oppression for QTPOC (Aruncati, Brighton/London Group, p.30). This strategy may not work for all, but illustrates the creative ways in which those marginalised from mainstream culture talk back to it in order to create space for themselves.

However, critical flippancy along with other modes of expression in QTPOC groups can also run the risk of creating strong group norms. Managing group dynamics across QTPOC groups was an issue in all focus groups – from managing differences in politics; racial, ethnic, sexual and gender differences; to the issues raised by friendships and intimate relationships. An awareness of how some voices and ways of knowing may unwittingly dominate and foreclose potential wider inclusion and room for reflection was considered, particularly by organisers of the groups.

Organising and creating intersectional space for social support was a top priority, however the lack of support QTPOC face in mainstream communities along with a lack of resources or funding created considerable pressure and circumscribed the groups’ ability to do this. The further
development of QTPOC communities and networks at both local and national level were a part of all three groups’ plans for the future. Group X were particularly focused on creating regional and national networks and the Brighton group were keen to build their capacity and improve Brighton for queer and trans people of colour.

The London QTPOC group that the participants were a part of had already seen a proliferation of networks spring from their own group and were keen to continue this work. For participants across groups defining themselves, organising together and creating space for queer and trans people of colour were considered political acts of resistance. This included building community, visibility, as well as spaces for support, affirmation and creativity. Group X and Brighton/London group both considered the importance of eschewing the norms of mainstream LGBT spaces and developing QTPOC culture.

‘Erm, well when I went [to Group X] last time we had this really cool guy from, from the museum and so..there was a load of erm, pictures of different artefacts from the museum that he's erm, sort of putting together to do a project about how their African exhibits sort of, and from Brasil and stuff relate to Carnival and queer and trans identities. And I mean, he was actually a white guy who didn't stay for the whole group, erm, but yeah, I think it’s like a really interesting space to kind of develop new theories and new ideas about culture and identity and it doesn’t just have to be around, you know, (well known gay area with pubs and clubs in city) or whatever, it can be museums and bringing lots of different, different things....erm, and sort of historical, cultural, like queer stuff.’
(Annabelle, Group X, p.8-9)

As Annabelle illustrates, QTPOC group spaces also have creative potential in which members have a forum in which to develop their own ideas about culture and identity, further supporting the affirmation of their identities and lived experiences which are usually minoritised. Here, they are able to trouble the perceived heteronormativity of people of colour communities and the perceived whiteness of queerness and transness. QTPOC groups then have the potential to disidentify with limited and fragmentary understandings.
of identity, decentering white normativity and heteronormativity. This creates space for social support for intersecting identities and experiences of oppression, and cultivating creative developments in QTPOC culture and subjectivities.

Critical flippancy was a tool used in talk across all groups, however this was used more heavily in the Brighton/London group and Brighton Group 2.

**Theme 4: Negotiating and Developing QTPOC Identities**

Queer and trans people of colour across all groups voiced similar experiences of their identities being fragmented in queer spaces. To be queer and/or trans was perceived as incompatible with being ‘of colour’, and participants were often viewed as one minority at a time (Stonewall, 2012). However, the ways in which these experiences played out were different for different participants. In Group X where the majority of participants were black (of African and Caribbean descent), participants spoke at length about experiences of being unwelcome or turned away from queer spaces. Specifically, they experienced being stereotyped as homophobes and potential threats to the safety of queer spaces.

*Sasha: But I think that's scary like, I think (name of gay area in the city) would be scared if we, we started coming……*
*Stephanie: Can you say more about 'scared', what do you mean scared?*
*Sasha: Scar- cos like I think, we're, I think people, have a very kind of, certain image of what black people are gonna be like, so, you know think, gay black people can have an experience on (name of gay area in the city) where they don't look gay enough. Or perhaps people, doorman...are intimidated by their presence at first, so its like, oh you know can we let you in? There's that kind of, you know, an, and again in, in, linking maybe black community with being innately homophobic and whether that's like...*
*Annabelle: mmmm*
*Sasha: gonna threaten the kind of, safe space in the context of the village*
*Annabelle: mmmm*
*Sasha: I mean, it's not safe, but do you know what I mean? For like, perhaps that presence…to some people threatens that...*
*Annabelle: mmmm*
Sasha: you know, because there's all these rubbish stereotypes about black people doing this, this, this and this.
Dorian: Mmmmm
(Group X, p.25)

In queer and LGBT spaces, blackness was perceived as threatening, something to be scared of and synonymous with homophobia. Participants described being over-determined from without, and their presence in LGBT spaces interpreted to fit what others ‘know’ about blackness. Black people are fixed as an identifiable monolithic group with essentialist characteristics. As Sasha highlights black people’s presence in LGBT spaces is perceived as intimidating in part because blackness is associated with an innate homophobia. This means that queer and trans people of colour, specifically those who are black are deemed to threaten the very spaces which claim to be for LGBTQ people. These spaces are coded as white and LGBTQ norms are embedded in this whiteness; black participants experience a failure in recognition and visibility. As Sasha (Group X, p.25) notes ‘they don’t look gay enough’, they don’t or they cannot fulfil the white queer and trans norms of these spaces.

On the other hand, black and non-black QTPOC in Brighton Group 2 and Brighton/London Group had accessed white queer and LGBT communities but had experienced isolation in these, being asked to pick one identity over another and encouraged to leave their ‘of colourness’ behind when they came out. Participants all noted how they had struggled in white queer communities for some time, before coming face to face with what Zayn (Brighton Group 2, p.39) called a ‘whitewashing’ of their experiences. ‘Whitewashing’ referred to the ways in which white LGBT spaces may include QTPOC by emphasising their sexual and gender identities while deprecating their differences in racialization and how these intersected. ‘Whitewashing’ is concomitant with hegemonic discourses of colour-blindness in anti-racism, in which staying neutral to or ignoring issues of race or racialisation are deemed an effective anti-racist strategy. However, ignoring the material effects of race and racialisation is racism in another
form and a denial of the experiences of people of colour. Indeed, the attempt to position QTPOC as the ‘same’ could be seen to be informed by wider forces attempting to discipline people of colour to assimilate.

‘Because like when, I don’t know, what I feel like, when I found a place in the Brighton group, and like er, familiarity as identifying as QTPOC then I had to like, come to, face to face, with all like, the kind of white washing, like... and brainwashing and erm, internalised like racism and Islamophobia for like my whole life, and most of the time, and all the time I’ve been in Brighton.’
(Zayn, Brighton Group 2, p.39)

For participants QTPOC groups are spaces in which, often for the first time, they are able to begin to make sense of their intersecting experiences of race, sexuality and gender. As Zayn illustrates it also is a time to address issues of internalised racism which may have been reinforced and encouraged by the white washing of experience in LGBT communities. Here I am reminded of Bailey, the 16-year-old mixed race trans girl from Jones (2016) research on a majority white LGBT youth group. Bailey was recruited into the youth group’s construction of LGBT identity through ‘Britishness’ and therefore as a legitimate citizen through and against the local Asian population which was positioned as the ‘out-group’. Despite not being white herself, Bailey was able to position herself within the ‘in-group’ as part of the LGBT youth group, as a trans girl who was importantly not Asian.

Jones (2016, p.127) notes a ‘similar occurrence to this is noted by Nayak (2003:160), whereby a British Asian boy in a school of mostly black and white children tended to “overcompensate for his perceived difference through a fierce alignment with whiteness”, achieved through overt racism towards his black peers.’. Jones (2016) explains Bailey’s positioning as a ‘rejection of South Asian people specifically – rather than the production of a particularly white identity’ in order to position herself within the in-group (p.128). However, I would disagree and argue that Bailey is recruited by integrationist and assimilationist discourses and the orientation around and towards whiteness, despite the potentially denigrating effects this may have on her as a mixed-race trans girl. Britishness and legitimate citizen status is
questioned for people of colour, it is through whiteness and through being not-Asian which Bailey can align herself and position herself as part of the in-group. She does not claim a white identity, however it is through this “fierce alignment” with whiteness that she is able to belong in this space (Nayak 2003, p.160, cited in Jones, 2016, p.127).

Zayn (Brighton Group 2, p.39) describes finding a ‘place’ in the Brighton QTPOC group and having to face the ‘whitewashing’ of his experiences within LGBT communities in which he may have had to minimize his difference and turning away from understanding or naming his experiences of racism and Islamophobia and internalizing them instead. He also notes that this is not just within LGBT communities but within the wider general society. This is the imperative for people of colour to minimize their differences and their experiences of alienation and exclusion. Bailey and Zayn’s experiences can perhaps be understood through Bhabha’s (2012) notion of ‘mimicry’ in which the colonized are recruited into mimicking whiteness, however they are always doomed to failure (p.676). This raises questions of what this means for subjectivity, identity and wellbeing. QTPOC groups are deemed to be an alternative to this, and a potential space for a decolonizing process.

‘We created a queer world that was, and I wouldn’t have thought about it this way then, but it was a fucking decolonising queer world. Little bubbles of that, not often, but little bubbles of there’s no need to have any conversations about how we’re all queer or trans, or brown or black. It just is the thing and these spaces are very fucking queer, and very fucking brown, black, and it just is. But for me it was fucking magical, because Brighton is such a hideous racist place and, like I say, at that point the worst of the worst of hadn’t happened to me. When it did I had these people. But I think that for me, I am so glad that there is a group in Brighton again because it is such a racist and classist place and I didn’t really know about black community in Brighton until quite close to the end.’
(Ashok, Brighton/London Group, p.18)
Ashok (Brighton/London Group, p.18) emphasises the creation of a ‘decolonising queer world’ within Brighton/London QTPOC groups. Here queer and trans people of colour were able to exist without contradiction, where there was no question of the incompatibility of their experiences. For Ashok and Aruncati a decolonising queer space also meant room for questioning western LGBT paradigms such as the western individualism of the ‘coming out’ process; resisting the equation of queerness and transness with whiteness; and space to imagine, create and embrace a fully intersectional subjectivity.

Hunt and Holmes (2015, p.156) identify a decolonising queer politic as one which ‘is not only anti-normative, but actively engages with anti-colonial, critical race and Indigenous theories and geopolitical issues such as imperialism, colonialism, globalization, migration, neoliberalism, and nationalism’. This is a politic in which QTPOC queer ‘colonial gender and sexual categories’ and resist the globalizing, homonationalist impulses of modern day LGBT/queer movements (p.156).

Ashok (Brighton/London Group, p.43) notes that their decolonising queer politic is ‘utterly intertwined’ with a growing understanding of their own gender identity, working through their ‘cis programming’. The critical move away from what is explicitly named as western, colonial gender and sexual categories enables Ashok to have a more open dialogue with their parents, in which their gender variant identity can be understood as part of their ethno-racial and cultural background as opposed to something outside of and incompatible with it. However, Aruncati highlights that this decolonising queer politic is not clear cut and for QTPOC situated in the west, particularly in the UK navigating queerness and transness under the western LGBT project can make the decolonising process complex.

‘Aruncati: ….but on decolonising space, I think that I find that really difficult in these groups because I think sometimes that being queer and being of colour – there is a complexity between those when we’re talking about decolonisation because in my anti-imperialist politics I think that Black struggle, for me, it’s only useful if it is connected to
global Black struggle, because I don’t think that fighting for rights here matter if I am not fighting for global, for the value of black and brown bodies everywhere.
Ashok: Hmm.
Aruncati: Because essentially what I am fighting for is scraps from the table that all of my black and brown sisters are actually the servants of and that is the problem, whereas queer community, in resistance to being … are sexual and romantic relationships is often intertwined with a hedonism and an access to the frivolity of the Western culture, and how you marry those two things I think is really difficult. How you claim your right, as you’ve been denied them both as a person of colour and as a queer person, and how you maintain your connectedness to global struggle is really important. And then the intersection of decolonising the other parts of identity. So whether it’s that we’re working class or whether it’s that we’re disabled. You know, where those other identities like, I think that it comes an incredibly difficult task. Especially when you’re trying to even have a community survive …situated in London or Brighton where everything else is against it even existing (laughter) so I just find that, it can be a head-fuck, but I can sit in a room and think for hours about it and still not connect to any …(laughter)
Ashok: Shall we just leave you here?’
(Brighton/London Group, p.37)

Negotiating the intersecting historical legacies of both the oppression of racialized others and pathologisation of sexual and gender minorities can be complex for QTPOC in the UK. QTPOC find themselves in the belly of the beast of former colonial powers, in which the fight for LGBT/queer rights is embedded in imperial, neoliberal, and (homo)nationalist western politics (Puar, 2007).

At the same time Aruncati (Brighton/London Group, p.37) highlights how this does not marry with ‘anti-imperialist politics’ and ‘Black struggle’. The decolonising queer political lens is useful in viewing the work of all three QTPOC groups involved in the research – as spaces which facilitate the moving away from the hegemony of white, western LGBT projects and ease the process of examining the ‘interlocking nature of race, sexuality and gender’ (Hunt and Holmes, 2015, p.157). This also situates QTPOC quite clearly within the continuum of politically Black and of colour struggle in the UK. QTPOC groups are spaces in which queer and trans people of colour,
often for the first time, are able to begin to address the intersection of their racial, sexual and gender identities away from white normativity and heteronormativity. QTPOC groups help facilitate a decolonising process in which western LGBT paradigms and norms can be critiqued.

**Theme 5: QTPOC Mental and Physical Wellbeing**

The fifth theme emerges only from the conversation between Aruncati and Ashok from the Brighton/London Group, however raises issues alluded to in other focus groups and deserves further focus in the next phase of research. Navigating multiple minoritised intersecting identities as a queer and/or trans person of colour as well as negotiating multiple intersecting oppressions was seen to have an effect on physical health, mental health and wellbeing. In particular, the trauma of racism was experienced as having far-reaching effects. Ashok understands their own experiences of racism as contributing to their later development and diagnosis of a chronic illness.

‘Ashok: And that is my story, but it is also a really common one. It is no accident that most of us are sick.
Aruncati: Yeah, totally.
Ashok: It is not an accident that loads of us have fibromyalgia and fatigue or PTSD or depression or anxiety or-
Stephanie: Yes, definitely.
Ashok: And we need- I think, and I am not there yet at all, because my own sense around my disability and disability politics is quite basic, but I really do think, and I have been influenced on this by people I am living with, like as queer and trans people of colour we cannot afford to not have health and disability at the centre of our politics. Even if it wasn’t just because it is a good thing to be.
Aruncati: Absolutely, yes.
Stephanie: Yeah, yeah.’
Ashok: We are talking about a survival fight. We are talking about how to keep alive and that might mean some quite strange interpretations of health. Because it might mean looking after yourself really well, but it also might mean that yeah, it’s alright to go out and get a bit fucked with your safe friend, if that’s what brings you joy. Do you know what I mean? It has to be like that.’

(Brighton/London Group, p.45)
Both Aruncati and Ashok stressed the importance of incorporating disability politics into the intersectional organising and theorising of queer and trans people of colour’s spaces and lives. Ashok’s (Brighton/London Group, p.45) call for ‘strange interpretations of health’ echo the focus of critical health psychology in which social, historical, political contexts must be foregrounded in understanding the ‘survival fight’ for minoritised populations. The overlap of physical health, mental health and wellbeing were described as ‘huge’, and QTPOC groups were defined as integral to supporting the ‘survival’ of queer and trans people of colour through the creation of positive spaces (Ashok, Brighton/London Group, p.40, 45). QTPOC groups and networks were deemed forms of political acts/activism and a form of resistance to the oppressive status quo.

In organising the Brighton/London QTPOC group, issues of accessibility were particular barriers to face to face meet ups. In both London and Brighton fully accessible buildings were few and far between, while the size of London and the money needed to travel in the capital was another barrier to accessible meet ups. In the summer of 2015 a QTPOC festival was held in Berlin. Unfortunately, organisers had not fully considered accessibility which meant that several potential attendees who had travelled internationally could not access the spaces the festival was held in. This further raised the issues of disability and accessibility among QTPOC networks and the need to incorporate this in intersectional organising and theorising.

Participants from Brighton/London Group perceived queer and trans people of colour as experiencing higher rates of physical and mental illness and disability stemming from the intersections of multiple oppressions, particularly the trauma of racism. QTPOC groups were identified as key spaces of support, survival and resistance; however, in organising these spaces it was stressed that disability must be included in intersectional organising and theorising.
Conclusion

The queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis of the three QTPOC focus groups provides insight into the group experiential perspective of the participants own understanding of being-in-the-world and the function of QTPOC groups. The QTPOC groups situate themselves within the effective histories of post-colonial Britain and politically Black liberation movements, grappling with the social construction of race and its material realities alongside the possibilities for subjectivity and the collective.

Within these effective histories participants name and understand whiteness as the unmarked centre, challenging westernese through voicing the ‘eccentric’ effect of their queerly raced embodied experience. The collective and intersubjective context of naming these experiences works to resist co-option into colourblind ideology as QTPOC respond to their subjugation through processes of critical flippancy and dis-identification from white normativity and heteronormativity. Participants elucidate a developing understanding of being in the world as being susceptible to fragmentation and colonization of complex subjectivities, and the place of QTPOC groups to provide support to negotiate and resist this. They describe a process of decolonization which aims to challenge and reject white heteronormativity, aiming to centre the complexity of lived experience as queer and trans people of colour.
Chapter Six: Belonging

Introduction
This chapter presents the theme of belonging developed from the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis of one to one interviews. The interviews focused on individual trajectories of QTPOC, before proceeding to draw these experiences together across the data. The interviews explored the ways in which QTPOC activism supports the negotiation of marginal sexual, gender and racial identities and/or helps to navigate racism, queerphobia, and transphobia. They also sought to consider in what ways personal involvement with QTPOC activisms impacts on subjectivity. After individual analysis of each interview, themes were developed across interviews to explore the similar and differing trajectories of queer and trans people of colour participants. This chapter focuses solely on the largest theme, on belonging.

Disconnection
A major theme across all participants’ interviews was the experience of not belonging in wider society and white LGBT communities, of being on the ‘outside’ and a sense of yearning to belong in community with others (Stanley, p.11). This was particularly focused on mainstream LGBT and queer spaces and the desire for belonging in a place which could hold the complex nuances of life at the intersections. Aruncati (p.5), a QTPOC organiser, described this as the ‘trauma’ experienced by queer and trans people of colour who are ‘navigating different communities, trying to find a place to fit in and not finding it’. This theme explores these affective experiences of participants located at the intersections of multiple marginalisation’s and the consequences for their understanding of self and being-in-the-world.

Being a QTPOC activist for Sasha (p.16) was about ‘providing space for people to connect and meet’ which she explains was motivated by her own experiences as a young person in which she ‘felt a disconnect’. This ‘disconnect’ made her feel ‘unworthy, it made me question who I was, I didn’t really understand why I didn’t fit in, felt lonely’ (Sasha, p.16). Sasha
describes an embodied experience of disconnection, in which she experienced herself as a problem. Through an ‘embodied dialectic’ with the world, Sasha interpreted herself as disconnected from her local, social and cultural world which made her feel ‘unworthy…lonely’ (Moran, 2000, p.415; Sasha, p.16). Sasha emphasises a feeling of disconnection as a young person which she couldn’t make sense of at the time. She experienced feeling out of place, disconnected and unable to ‘fit in’ (Sasha, p.16).

However, in the present moment she interprets those feelings as related to her positioning in the world at the intersections of minoritized race, sexuality and gender. Sasha’s understanding of being-in-the-world is ‘always on the way’, as she illustrates how she has begun to understand the specificity of her own embodiment as a ‘queer brown woman’ situated within a particular social, cultural, and historical context (Annells, 1996, p.207, Sasha, p.4).

In turning to the literature of Audre Lorde and other QTPOC, Sasha has recourse to alternative understandings of being-in-the-world as a queer person of colour. She reflects on how she knows ‘lots about white people’ but little that relates to her own location in the world as a queer person of colour (Sasha, p.9). White hegemony constructs knowledge and ways of being in the world through whiteness, so that Sasha must seek out narratives which speak to this marginality to make sense of her feelings of disconnection. This is reminiscent of what Pastrana (2010, p.56) called the ‘intersectional imagination’; it is through connection with others in QTPOC and through literature that Sasha affirms and develops her understanding of her own intersectional lived experience.

Sasha’s account emphasises the temporal dimension of being in the world, that her understanding and meaning-making has developed over time and is situated within specific intersubjective relations and effective histories of black lesbian and QTPOC struggle. Drawing on Ahmed’s (2006) queer phenomenology, we can understand Sasha’s (p.4) understanding of disconnection as the disorientation of not fitting in, of failing to follow the lines of white heteronormativity as a ‘queer brown woman’. In her location in the world as a young woman Sasha describes being alone, without friends with a similar embodied experience. In an embodied dialectic with the world,
Sasha experiences the stress and pressure of failing to orientate around and towards white hetero- and homo-normativity. This can be understood in reference to what Fanon (1986) called the ‘nausea’ of ‘negation’ and what DuBois described as the experience of being a problem (Ahmed, 2006, p.139). To be negated, and to feel as if one is a problem is a feeling of being ‘apart, feeling separate’ experienced at the affective and passionate level of the body, as illustrated by Sasha's embodied feelings of disconnect and unworthiness which made her question her location in the world (Munoz, 2007, p.441; Renault, 2011). However, it is through being a QTPOC group organiser and finding similarities in struggle with other QTPOC that she experiences a form of connection through which she can make sense of herself.

All other participants spoke to their position at the intersections of race, gender and sexuality as well as faith and class in understanding ongoing feelings of not belonging or of being on the 'outside' (Stanley, p.11). Even before coming to name her sexual orientation Janelle’s race, gender and faith intersect so that she has already come to understand herself as an outsider in the UK. As a Muslim, Arab woman who had previously worn the hijab, Janelle describes being already queerly positioned in society. The queer experience of wearing a headscarf as a Muslim, Arab woman in the UK is one in which Janelle was aware of the assumptions others made of her. The headscarf was a visible signifier of Janelle’s difference and is invested with a number of different meanings and assumptions which colour the ways in which others approached her.

This queer experience could be understood as the queerness of disorientation, in which Janelle failed to orientate around and toward western white hetero-normativity (Ahmed, 2006). The wearing of the headscarf is imbued, by the white gaze, with questions around Muslim and Arabic sexuality. Puar (2007, p.14) notes the two discourses at work here are ‘the colloquial deployment of Islamic sexual repression that plagues human rights, liberal queer, and feminist discourses, and the Orientalist wet dreams of lascivious excesses of pedophilia, sodomy and perverse sexuality’. When Janelle (p.3) removes the headscarf, she describes being
presumed to be the ‘liberated Arab girl’ – liberated by the secular West from the sexual and gender repression which is deemed synonymous with Islam and Arabic culture. Before even coming to ‘queer’ in terms of sexuality, Janelle’s embodied experiences in the world as a Muslim, Arab woman engender what she describes as feelings of queerness.

In an embodied dialectic with the world, Janelle is resolutely aware of the discourses related to Muslims and Arabic cultures in the UK understanding how this shapes her being-in-the-world. She describes the difficulties of being around and coming out as queer to white LGBT and straight people. She explains that

‘with a lot of white people I always feel like it’s jump time when I mention sexuality, it’s always jump time, like, you know, or even assumption that I’ve left my religion, so sometimes that’s their way, you know, “oh so I guess you don’t identify as Muslim anymore”’. (Janelle, p.3)

Janelle describes the weight of the expectation that she must explain herself as a queer Muslim woman, and in which her sexual expression and her later decision to no longer wear the headscarf means the role of ‘liberated Arab girl’ is enforced onto her by others (Janelle, p.3).

The ‘jump’ or being jumped on by others about her identity invokes ideas of being under a watchful gaze, or under surveillance, that Janelle’s subjectivity is reduced down to one of two options – oppressed Muslim woman or ‘liberated Arab girl’ (Janelle, p.3). The ‘secularity’ of the western queer project sees religious practice as ‘marks of subjugated and repressed sexuality void of agency’ and therefore the ‘agency of all queer Muslims is invariably evaluated through the regulatory apparatus of queer liberal secularity’ (Puar, 2007, p.13). Hence Janelle is assumed, on coming out, to no longer be a Muslim – because of the supposed contradiction between Islam, Arabic culture and queer sexualities.

Further to the work of Puar (2007), El-Tayeb (2012, p.80/81) notes that the European conceptualization of Islam is one in which Muslims are perceived to be in ‘opposition’ to European values of ‘humanism, tolerance and equality’. In debates about the Europeaness or non-Europeaness of
Muslims, there is a focus on positioning Islam within the ‘Orientalist tradition’, as regressive in values particularly in regard to gender and sexuality (p.83).

The ‘jump’ that others make to suggest that Janelle (p.3) has left her faith and that she is a ‘liberated Arab girl’ is one which we can understand as illustrating what Puar (2007, p.22) described as the ‘emancipatory, missionary pulses’ of western, secular LGBT movements. These movements are critiqued for their intertwinements with western imperialism which position the racialized other as traditional, backwards, inherently queerphobic and transphobic, positioning the west and its (white) citizens as the champions of progressive values.

Western LGBT movements are rooted in these imperialist values, therefore, as Fanon cautioned with western feminism, we must question the impulse to separate and ‘save’ queer Muslims from their faith and culture, and understand anti-Muslim sentiment in the effective histories of those in western European LGBT projects (Rabaka, 2010, El-Tayeb, 2012).

Janelle however finds relief in QTPOC spaces in which those expectations are not placed on her and there is an understanding that one

‘can still be in touch with your culture, you can still be in touch with your faith and that doesn’t take away from being, or your sexuality or how you identify.’
(Janelle, p.3)

QTPOC provides a space in which people of colour can resist western LGBT movement’s tendency to fracture and colonise multiple, intersectional identities and subjectivities. Outside of QTPOC space however, the intensity in which Janelle experiences the questioning of her embodied experience is such that she feels more comfortable in mainstream white spaces than queer white spaces.

‘if you do speak to, or even if you don’t, you know that if you did speak to them they’ll have that reaction of “oh, it must be really difficult being a Muslim” and things like that, and so I, I was speaking to my partner a few days ago and I said to her “I honestly feel more comfortable in mainstream white spaces than in queer white spaces” because at least then you can kind of hide, you’re already queer in being a person
of colour or a Muslim or, you know, wearing a headscarf, when I did, you’re already queer so you can just hide in that queerness already, whereas in a LGBT space you would hope, or you would expect, to feel more welcome and feel less like you’re standing out but you actually feel a bit more, I think, because of that expectation and then realising that “oh actually I’m not welcome here” or “I’m not understood here”, so that’s it.’

(Janelle, p.7,8)

The level of discomfort Janelle experiences in white LGBT or queer spaces is such that she prefers ‘mainstream white spaces’ in which she is only visibly Muslim, when wearing the headscarf, and Arab (Janelle, p.7). Janelle understands her formerly visible Muslim-ness (in wearing the hijab) as already queer or ‘eccentric’ in white straight space (Ferguson, 2004, p.26). Therefore, being in white straight space she is able to hide within her queerness as a Muslim, Arab woman, as opposed to managing the white queer gaze and its objectifying interest in the intersecting complexities of being queer as a Muslim and as an Arab woman. Janelle finds comfort and respite in hiding from the white queer gaze by being in mainstream (straight) white spaces in which her sexual orientation is less visible.

This challenges what Puar (2007, p.15) describes as the ‘powerful conviction that religious and racial communities are more homophobic than white mainstream queer communities are racist’. Janelle (p.1) describes the initial shock of realising she was not welcome in mainstream LGBT space as like a ‘slap in the face’. Like Fanon, she is amputated, her intricate and intersectional understandings of her subjectivity as a queer, Muslim, Arab woman are fractured and colonised. Janelle's own 'frame of reference is transgressed' as she is objectified by white queer fantasies of the Muslim (Fanon, 1986, p.xxii). She stands out in LGBT and queer space, experiencing the weight of the white queer gaze, understanding that she does not belong. As a queerly racialized subject she is an eccentricity which does not fit into hegemonic western understandings of the queer citizen subject which orientates around white hetero- or at least homo-normativity (Puar, 2007).
Janelle understands and positions herself at interview as one who clearly does not belong in many spaces, as a queer Muslim, Arab woman, she has what Fanon (1986, p.1111, 109) called a 'third person consciousness' in which she experiences her being 'through others'. She stems this disorientating experience through accessing QTPOC groups, protecting herself through avoiding the white queer gaze and through claiming the queerness of her experiences.

Saying the unsayable

All interviewees drew on their effective histories as racialized people in the UK. They all spoke to ongoing experiences of non-belonging or partial belonging as racialized, multiply minoritized people. A 'third person consciousness' was described by all participants, who experienced the negation of being the racialised other and the consequences this had on a sense of self, belonging and bodily schema (Fanon, 1986, p.111). This understanding of self however is in direct challenge to westernese, in which the West positions race and racism as ‘aberrant ideological affront(s) to the enduring ideals of Enlightenment’ which works to continue ‘the sense of an exemplary and regulatory western civilisation’ (Hesse, 2004, p.22). Participants spoke to the everydayness of processes of racialisation and racism, and how it structures their lives in a society which denies race ‘as socially, politically and indeed morally relevant’ (Goldberg, 2009, p.162). Goldberg (2009, p.93) describes this as the European commitment to ‘racelessness’ in which European histories of colonialism and slavery are erased and silenced while those racialized as Other are haunted by them and the ways in which they shape and restrict their being-in-the-world.

El-Tayeb’s (2011, p.xx) work on the place of people of colour in Europe points to the way in which ‘the current construction of a European identity and history, [and] the haunting of Europe’s silent racializations and ethnicizations continues to place people of colour outside the limits’ of an accepted European community. This is particularly highlighted in Janelle’s experience of being queerly positioned in relation to white queer and straight communities in the UK and in Stanley’s interview in which he
describes growing up mixed race in a majority white, Welsh community, and the difficulties of talking about race and talking about difference. However, the majority of participants spoke to the process of learning about race – that their current understandings of their location as racialized minorities in the UK had taken time to develop. For the three mixed race participants (Sasha, Aruncati and Stanley) they had noticed their difference and experiences of not belonging but had been unable to clearly name or make sense of these experiences for some time.

The commitment to 'racelessness' made it difficult for participants to speak to and name processes of racialisation. Ashok, who was not mixed race, also spoke to a turning away from race – that in coming out and in being an artist they moved in white middle class circles and actively avoided spaces of cultural origin, that even being a part of QTPOC was a way of not quite addressing their own specific racialisation. This is echoed somewhat in the focus group data, in which Zayn (Brighton Group 2, p.39) describes coming to the realisation of the 'whitewashing' of his experience as a queer and trans person of colour within white LGBT and queer communities and the process of coming to make sense of internalised racism and Islamophobia from being within white LGBT communities.

In the interview data, all participants, apart from Janelle, share the slow process of realising that they are the racialized other, making sense of their experiences of being 'different' and the dilemmas this presents (Sasha, p.9). This could be understood as the slow unveiling of inequality, race and racialisation in participants who were brought up within the European context of 'silent racializations'; in which as children of immigrants the promise of belonging, being fully recognised British citizens and 'home' is slowly unveiled as an unreality (El-Tayeb’s, 2011, p.xx).

These dilemmas are compounded by the processes of coming out and into white LGBT and queer communities, in which those feelings of not belonging have been extended. The hegemony of whiteness confuses the process of making sense of feelings of difference, the lack of alternatives in understanding ones' location may lead to laying the problem within the self,
as Sasha (p.16) notes her internal feelings of being ‘unworthy’. Aruncati describes this as a traumatic process, in which queer and trans people of colour navigate different spaces unable to find a place to fit.

Janelle’s experience is slightly different in that she expresses that she understood her queerness and difference clearly as a function of being a Muslim, Arab woman and does not express confusion in making sense of this as the other participants had done. This may be because of the particularities of being a Muslim woman in the UK with its intensifying Islamophobia over the last 30 years, and the wearing of the hijab which marked her more visually as different.

Ashok, Aruncati (p.14) and Stanley (p.3) all shared experiences of having a parent they described as having ‘assimilationist’ values or who were ‘naïve’ or unable to speak of difference and race. It may be that as non-Muslims participants may have experienced more tolerance and acceptance into British culture than Janelle; however assimilative processes left them less able to address processes of ‘silent racialisation’ (El-Tayeb’s, 2011, p.xx). Being instituted within assimilationist discourses may have left participants without the language to make sense of their lived experience, which may have been exacerbated by attempts to be in community with majority white LGBT and queer communities (Mama, 1995). It is in finding queer and trans people of colour community that the majority of participants note a process of learning and finding language for their own intersectional lived experience.

‘You know, and I’m not ashamed to, you know, it's the reality, very much, though, we didn't talk about race, but obviously, you still had feelings about race, you know, you knew you weren't white, of course, you know, you were almost continually made aware of that in the wider community, you know, the wider culture, I should say, as well. So, even if something isn't spoken about, you're still feeling that, you know, but at the same time there's a lot of shame and stigma about talking about difference in a way as well, you know, from people in general. So, if in school you suddenly mentioned race, even if race was an issue, there would be a kind of shutting down of, you know, “This isn't an issue, we don't see you like that”, etc, etc, so not having access, really, all round, you know, to be able to talk about it.’
(Stanley, p.2)
Stanley (p.2) describes the naiveté of his white family’s experience with race, and the attempt to shut down uncomfortable discussions of race through ‘colour blind mentality’. Stanley (p.2) experienced the pressure of being continually made aware through the ‘wider community…the wider culture’ that he was not white, that he was different, however his feelings could only be shared with his siblings.

The topic of race is a site of ‘shame and stigma’, discomfort and embarrassment for those around him (Stanley, p.2). His embodied experience is shaped by his disorientation away from the line of white normativity, however this is papered over by those around him who wish to ignore this difference – so that he is left ‘not having access’ to speak to this disorientation (Stanley, p.2). He is told “we don’t see you like that” which can be heard as a demand to no longer raise the topic of his difference (Stanley, p.2).

Stanley (p.3) describes the resistance to talking about race by white people as due to the topic being felt to be ‘heavy’ – the weight of turning to the problem of race and the racialized Other is too much to bear. Stanley (p.9) describes a sense of becoming invested in not talking about race, and in becoming protective of his white family around issues of race so that he was ‘oblivious’ or ‘tolerant’ to micro-aggressions and racism until more recently. All participants highlight the particular problems of being understood and belonging due to what Stanley describes as the nuances of life at the intersections in which they are restrained by the commitment to racelessness and constructions of people of colour’s sexualities, genders, faiths and class.

**Belonging and racial melancholia**

The yearning for belonging pervades participants’ interviews, and with this I want to turn to Eng and Han’s (2000, p.669, 667) work on racial melancholia. They take Freud’s concept of melancholia, the theory of ‘unresolved grief’ and suggest it as a framework for conceptualizing ‘registers of loss and depression attendant to both psychic and material processes of…immigration, assimilation and racialization’.
Eng and Han (2000, p.667) re-work the concept of melancholia specifically looking to Asian American experience, suggesting racial melancholia as a ‘depathologized structure of everyday group experience’. This could be understood as a ‘culturally instituted’ form of melancholia (Bell, 1999, p.166). I would argue that although their focus is on Asian American experience, this concept can be utilised to explore the problem of belonging for queer and trans people of colour in the UK.

They aim to move melancholia from the study of pathological unresolved grief of the individual to a racial melancholia which seeks to understand the feelings of loss stemming from the social and collective experiences of immigration, assimilation and racialization. This work follows Fanon’s critique of psychoanalysis, troubling ideas of a universal psychoanalytic subject by emphasising the use of psychoanalysis in exploring embodied subjectification attuned to how the social world structures the psyche.

As discussed in Chapter Two, in the UK following immigration from the colonies and the Commonwealth since the 1950s there have been ongoing anxieties about ‘Britishness’ and what mass immigration may mean for the UK. Immigrants are urged to integrate and assimilate into British life, with panics and tensions arising over so-called ‘ghettos’, ‘self-segregating’ communities and unease around the success/failure of multi-culturalism. Increasing controls on immigration have become key policy within the two main political parties, and immigration has become the central topic on debates surrounding ‘Brexit’, the referendum on Britain’s membership of the European Union. Immigrants and people of colour in the UK are therefore orientated toward and around assimilation to white hetero-normativity; in order to gain access to mainstream culture people of colour must embrace ‘a set of dominant norms and ideals – whiteness, heterosexuality, middle class family values’ while paradoxically these are ‘often foreclosed’ to them (p.670).

In the West, post-Enlightenment I would argue that whiteness is equated with ‘being’ against non-whiteness and non-being. Eng and Han (2000, p.670) suggest that it is the loss of the ideals, of the inability to attain
whiteness or assimilation, that provides the 'melancholic framework for
delineating assimilation and racialization processes...precisely as a series
of failed and unresolved integrations'. Assimilation is not fully possible for
people of colour in the UK. Assimilation is 'unresolved', engendering
feelings of loss and I would suggest feelings of non-belonging and troubling
one's sense of being (p.671).

Following Freud’s conceptual work on melancholia, Eng and Han (2000,
p.671) argue that in losing whiteness as something we can attain we
preserve it as a lost ideal by 'incorporating it into the ego and establishing
an ambivalent relationship with it'. Keeping the lost object alive in our
psyche is painful to maintain; however, in the case of the person of colour
and the lost object of whiteness this is not a pathological mourning for
whiteness but one which is affirmed and re-affirmed by white
heteronormative hegemony. The subject is then ‘haunted’ by this
identification with whiteness. Eng and Han (2000) describe this as a
dangerous identification with an empty and lost object which has
consequences of ‘psychical erasure’ of one’s own subjectivity.

The issues around belonging raised by the interview participants suggests
that the imperative and orientation around and towards white
heteronormativity in the UK alongside the commitment to racelessness may
engender racial melancholia. As participants begin to understand the
meaning of belonging and their own partial failures to assimilate they
develop an ambivalent relationship to whiteness, experiencing feelings of
loss. As they begin to understand themselves as racialized minorities they
must also manage concomitant feelings of loss and confusion towards their
communities of origin. As first, second and third generation of immigrants
they also may carry the intergenerational loss associated with immigration.
Judith Butler argues that

‘the extent that the history of race is linked to a history of diasporic
displacement it seems to me that melancholia is there, that there is,
as it were, inscribed in ‘race’ a lost and ungrievable origin, one might
say, an impossibility of return, but also an impossibility of an
essence.’

(Bell, 1999, p.166)
The ‘impossibility of return’ for immigrants and people of colour and the impossibility of belonging or assimilating is a melancholic experience (p.166). I would contend that this is further complicated for queer and trans people of colour, that these loses are further augmented by their multiple marginalisation. All participants described accessing or attempting to access mainstream LGBT and queer communities and found themselves further perturbed by continuing feelings of non-belonging.

Research highlights the importance of LGBT communities for social support, coming to embody and accept one’s sexual or gender alterity, however participants describe these communities as failing to stem their feelings of non-belonging. QTPOC like other people of colour find themselves negated within mainstream society in the UK, however this may be intensified for queer and trans people of colour as they grapple with their multiplicity and attempt to access offshoots of this society – in LGBT and queer communities – where they continue to experience exclusion.

Participants described their hopes in finding LGBT and queer communities, however these were disturbed by feelings of discomfort in these spaces and participants came to name the problem as the hegemony of whiteness. Sexual and gender variance was constructed in whiteness, and participants were unable to fit into this.

There is then a simultaneous secondary loss, at the intersection of race, gender and sexuality. This is the loss of an assimilative (white) LGBT/queer subjectivity, as well as the loss of models of sexual and gender variance from communities, cultures and countries of origin through the erasing processes of colonisation, immigration and assimilation. QTPOC may be haunted by the loss and disjunction of dislocation, and the ‘traces of a traumatic or troubled past’ (Venn, 2009, p.10). QTPOC must manage and negotiate this dislocation and ‘psychic trauma’ developing possibilities of new forms of subjectivity (p.12).

Making sense of one’s difference and non-belonging is described by participants as a process which is frustrated by white heteronormativity and hegemony. It is through the often painful and arduous processes of seeking
a place of belonging or home that QTPOC come to begin to understand their place in the world. This is potentially further frustrated by black and of colour claims to a heteronormative ‘authenticity’ (Wright, 2013; Nguyyen and Koontz, 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2008). This is in part what Nayak (2015) describes as the ‘torturous ambiguities’ of embodied intersectionality. Aruncati (p.21) poignantly describes a picture they have taken of an industrial warehouse near to their home which ‘disturbs’ them and invokes feelings of their own ‘dislocation’ and lack of a ‘sense of belonging’.

‘Aruncati: This I walk home past most nights, it’s round the corner from my house and what it actually is is less relevant than the picture which is like it’s an industrial warehouse where they just store lots of stuff basically but it kind of... Even though it’s a really unhospitable, not very nice thing to look at, it kind of feels, there’s something about it that disturbs me in that it feels really like home, like in that like it’s really... There’s no way into it, like I don’t, like I feel like there’s dislocation of home, like I don’t ever have this sense of belonging and so it, I don’t know, like I look at that and I feel like myself was reflected back and I know that that sounds really emo and ridiculous but like there’s something about the being on the outside and also the looking in at the vacuousness, is that a word?... Yeah, of it that makes me feel like I’m looking in the mirror…Um, like the nothing, I don’t know, like the... Like there’s something there and there’s nothing here, like you look at it and you see something and you see nothing and I think, like I think on a cultural level being from London and everything then there’s something really... There’s something that really speaks to me aesthetically in the kind of like griminess and dankness of it and I think that there’s something really emotional in the sense of loss and the sense of nothingness and the sense of... Like there’s kind of really two things that are actually quite contradictory, like the sense of that in me but also the sense of like actually in those spaces what is is really vacuousness and I don’t want anyway when I’m in them, so like whether that’s queer space and like spending so many years trying to belong and then being like, fuck you, I didn’t want to belong anyway [laughs] because actually when I realised what you are it’s you and it’s not me, even though I thought it was me….Um, so yeah, there’s something about that and then like... But yeah, like the private property, no parking is like the gate might be open one day and I might have to go in for a short while but then I have to leave, it’s not mine like and it just makes me feel really empty. Yeah....

Stephanie: And so inside the gate, so it signifies spaces like queer spaces that you didn’t feel you belonged?
Aruncati: Yeah, like all those spaces I've tried to belong that I don't belong. I feel like I'm kind of always in a space standing behind this gate, like I can look in at it and I can observe and so if there's something happening on the other side of that gate I can be part of it in a temporal sense but I'm never in. And then just that sense of what then is reflected back to me is the like, yeah, like vacuousness of my life and emptiness of non-fulfilment of things and I know that's really emo and ridiculous but...it speaks to me! [Laughs]’

(Aruncati, p.21)

Aruncati (p.8) powerfully describes the experience of not belonging ‘anywhere’ and the feeling of exclusion, of being outside of different communities looking in. The above extract speaks to a sense of ‘dislocation’ and loss, and a yearning for belonging. There are feelings of ambivalence towards these communities – of wanting to belong, but also defiance in not belonging and a disdain, particularly for (white) queer communities.

This extract illustrates the temporal dimension of coming to the understanding of one’s place in the world and the disturbing and depressive quality to feelings of not belonging as a queer and trans person of colour. In previous experiences in white LGBT spaces they describe the disorientation of

‘this sense of like I don’t quite fit here and never really understanding why that was and then thinking it was just me, like that there’s something wrong with me’.

(Aruncati, p.8)

However, at the time of the interview they reflect that this was related to the intersection of race and class as well as gender and sexuality.

Aruncati describes the disturbing feelings of the loss and emptiness which accompanies the experience of non-belonging. The warehouse symbolizes an ‘unhospitable’ home, in which Aruncati simultaneously sees themselves reflected and un-reflected in, they ‘see something and you see nothing’ (Aruncati, p.21). It is a place where Aruncati (p.21) has spent many years ‘trying to belong’ before realising that this space, ‘what you are it’s you and it’s not me, even though I thought it was me’. Aruncati understands that they will not find a place of belonging here, after years of trying. They describe a
process of trying to assimilate, of thinking that they would be able to fit into
this space, that this was how they could access fulfilment. This space that
they are trying to access in the wider world is also simultaneously structured
within them, so that they see themselves at the same time within and not
within it.

Reading this through the lens of racial melancholia, we could argue that
Aruncati is describing the painful loss of the ideal of whiteness and
assimilation developing an ambivalent relationship to these ideals. The
inhospitableness and hegemony of whiteness and assimilation leaves
Aruncati caught between attraction and disenchantment, desiring belonging
but understanding that they cannot belong here. This is not a pathological
melancholia but one which is structured by the social context of race,
immigration, assimilation and racialisation. Aruncati is interpellated as a
subject who is not one, Eng and Han (2000) describe how the hegemony of
whiteness and the ‘social imperative to assimilate’ can be understood as
what Bhabha (2012) described as the ‘colonial structure of mimicry’ in which
the colonized are instructed to mimic whiteness but are always doomed to
failure (p.676). This structures, as we can see in Aruncati’s account, an
ambivalent relationship to whiteness and a ‘partial success and partial
failure to mourn our identifications with whiteness…our partial success and
partial failure to mourn our identifications and affiliations with our “original”
…cultures.’ (p.679). Therefore, subjectivities and identities are structured by
this loss and melancholia, and ambivalence towards whiteness and
assimilation.

Cheng (1997) notes that the ‘melancholic condition produces a peculiarly
ghostly form of ego formation’ (p.50). This speaks to the haunting quality of
‘something’ and ‘nothing’ being there in Aruncati’s extract (Aruncati, p.21). It
is through identification with the lost ideal that the ‘melancholic takes on the
emptiness of that ghostly presence and in this way participates in
his/her[their] own self-denigration (p.50).

Returning to Ahmed’s (2006) Queer Phenomenology, Aruncati deftly
illustrates the stress felt on the body in not being orientated around and
towards white hetero- or homo-normativity and middle class-ness, however the normativity of white hetero- and homo-normativity and middle-class-ness makes it

‘hard to understand or put your finger on what that is because there’s not one big thing [laughs] that excludes you from the space and then when you don’t know any different that’s so internalised’.

(Aruncati, p.8,9)

The everydayness of intersectional micro-aggressions and the centrality and invisibility of white hetero-and homo-normativity as the centre then makes it difficult to understand one’s discomfort and inability to fit.

Stanley and Sasha share similar experiences of having to search out resources to develop meaning making and naming politically their experiences of difference. Without this language, with the invisibility of white heteronormativity and the commitment to racelessness the social and political bases of racial melancholia become invisible (Eng and Han, 2000).

As previously noted, the problem then risks becoming internalised, as Aruncati experiences themselves as the problem, as does Sasha. This is only something they are both able to come to terms with at a later time through intersubjective dialogue with others in a similar location, however the feelings associated with being excluded can still continue.

A longing for home and somewhere to belong permeates all of the interviews. For Aruncati and Sasha this seems to form in some part their motivations for their role as QTPOC organisers. For Janelle, her exclusion encourages her to seek out these spaces, while Ashok describes activism and friendship with other trans people of colour as providing temporary feelings of being at home.

Munoz (1999, p.74) describes melancholia as a ‘structure of feeling’ and an ‘integral part of everyday lives’ for people of colour and queer and trans people of colour. Munoz suggests a reparative reading of melancholia, in that it may provide a ‘productive space’ in which QTPOC can ‘map the ambivalences of identification and the conditions of (im)possibility’ that shape subjectivity (p.74).
The shared and similar experiences of the question of belonging as queer and trans people of colour emphasises the relational dimension of racial melancholia, the possibility of collective struggle and a ‘politics’ of racial melancholia (Cvetkovich, 2014, 2012 p.135; Munoz, 1999). This may help us in making sense of QTPOC activism and the possibilities for subjectivity it may create. However for Stanley, older than other members of QTPOC groups, he remains on the periphery uncertain of group dynamics and more cautious of involvement noting

‘every time you feel you find your place near people, and you think, oh, you know, all queer things, then you learn, well, no, there’s so much else going on, there’s the same old thing going on within that group, you know, and then you’re left, back to just being, you know, having to create yourself, in a way, because there isn’t anything, which can be quite empowering, really empowering, but also really isolating and draining’.

(Stanley, p.10)

Spaces of belonging are created and sought out by these queer and trans people of colour, navigating a world in which they do not so easily fit and in which they are positioned as the ‘problem’. However, these spaces themselves can be difficult to negotiate, leaving some left to ‘create’ themselves (Stanley, p.10).

Ongoing feelings of unbelonging, dislocation and a search for a place of home are threaded throughout the narratives of participants. Participants describe the disorientation of being queer and trans people of colour in the UK in which they struggle with the language to name and understand their difference, while being left with the feelings of being a problem and not belonging. An understanding of these feelings is shaped by connections to other QTPOC, however this is challenged by the silences around discussions of race in the UK. Participants describe beginning to understand their being-in-the-world as shaped by effective-histories of racialisation within a specific UK context which fails to recognise these histories (Goldberg, 2009; El-Tayeb, 2011; Hesse, 2004). QTPOC grapple with non-belonging and the processes of racial melancholia, however this may prove a productive part of collective struggle.
Chapter Seven: Being in community and developing a critical [decolonising] consciousness

Introduction
Following on from Chapter Six, this chapter presents the three other themes developed from the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis of the interview data. These are 2. QTPOC spaces as spaces of belonging and affirmation; 3. Developing a critical [decolonising] consciousness; and 4. Difficulties of being in community.

Theme 2: QTPOC space of belonging and affirmation
Theme 1 explored the question of belonging for participants – the search for a place to belong and difficulties associated with this both in wider British society and LGBTQ communities. However, for the majority of participants QTPOC groups and connections to other queer and trans people of colour engendered a sense of belonging and an affirmation of one's embodied experiences.

As discussed in Theme 1, Sasha explains that organising a group for queer and trans people of colour is a way in which she combats feelings of disconnection both for herself and others – by creating a space specifically for QTPOC connection. Sasha (p.16, 17) describes Group X as a space which ‘enables people to feel more confident in themselves and maybe more self-secure', and for her, knowing that there are other groups like her own nationally is ‘reassuring and empowering'.

Sasha (p.25) emphasises the importance of connection in combatting isolation and building a sense of ‘belonging' for queer and trans people of colour. Group X and QTPOC activism also provides Sasha with a sense of community that she had always wished for. Sasha describes connection with other queer and trans people of colour as an antidote to the disconnection and disorientation extrapolating that to the experiences of others in Group X. For Sasha, creating an alternative space for bodies that are disorientated and disconnected in the wider world has the potential to stem the nausea of negation providing the possibilities of finding confidence, security, connection, belonging and community. It is suggested
that through relationships and connections with others like themselves that QTPOC find a place in the world. This is echoed by Janelle’s (p.8) description of a ‘need’ for QTPOC spaces, in which her complex, intersectional life can be understood.

‘I think the first QTPOC space that I entered was just meeting that one queer person of colour and just being able to speak to someone who, without even, we didn’t really delve into topics of, you know, Muslim or being a person of colour, she just understood anyway, so that was I guess my first experience of it, wasn’t really a space, it was just one person, but it’s just that same feeling, you know, there’s less explaining to do because they already understand that it’s, you know, there are more angles to it, it’s not just coming out, as in sexuality, it’s also dealing with whatever sort of oppressions you already deal with anyway before taking on that sexuality and, and that it’s difficult and that not, and that, not just because, like it’s not because you’re a person of colour that you necessarily will experience queer phobia, but when you do it’s a different type of queer phobia because there might be other aspects built into it like culture or religion or maybe even that acceptance of queerness isn’t the same, shouldn’t be expected to be the same, and it isn’t the same in like I would say Muslim spaces or Arab spaces or people of colour spaces at communities I mean than it is for white people, it’s very different ‘cos there are other things built into it, so we cannot accept, expect them to accept it in the same way that we expected white people to accept it’
(Janelle, p.2)

In meeting with and talking to another queer person of colour Janelle (p.2) has a ‘feeling’ that there is ‘less explaining to do’, as they both share the embodied experience and understanding of their place in the world as queer people of colour. Together they share an implicit understanding that there are complexities or different issues which intersect with sexuality than white queer people have to contend with or will understand.

Janelle (p.2) notes that they both understand that there are ‘more angles to it, it’s not just coming out, as in sexuality, it’s also dealing with whatever sort of oppressions you already deal with anyway’. Janelle makes sense of her position in the world as shaped by effective histories of the intersections of racialisation, Islamophobia and queerphobia. She also provides a critique of the universalism of the western LGBT project, reasoning that
‘acceptance of queerness isn’t the same, shouldn’t be expected to be the same, and it isn’t the same in like I would say Muslim spaces or Arab spaces or people of colour spaces at communities I mean than it is for white people, it’s very different ‘cos there are other things built into it, so we cannot accept, expect them to accept it in the same way that we expected white people to accept it’.

(Janelle, p.2)

Making sense of what it feels like to be in the world racialized as the Other and the ways people of colour are constrained by this supports the development of a specific knowledge of how ‘acceptance of queerness’ may be different in PoC communities (Janelle, p.2). Returning to Janelle’s experience of white queer communities in Chapter 6, it is clear that the white gaze is experienced as pathologizing and attempts to colonise the gender and sexual expressions of those who are minoritized. For example, Janelle’s (p.3) experience of being positioned as the ‘liberated Arab girl’ when she removes her hijab and is out about her queerness attempts to foreclose and colonise her subjectivity as a Muslim, Arab, queer woman.

The complexity of multiple marginalisation requires a different expectation of acceptance of queerness, one that acknowledges the ways in which UK models of queerness are imbued with whiteness and how communities of colour already under surveillance, pathologized and problematized negotiate difference under the pressure of white normativity and the white gaze within specific colonial histories.

Janelle negotiates some of this by avoiding the white queer gaze. With the other queer person of colour Janelle (p.2) feels she does not have to ‘delve’ into these topics, engendered between them is a ‘feeling’ of shared understanding. Janelle finds comfort in these shared experiences, shared aspects of identity and in being in community with other queer and trans people of colour. In Sasha’s, Janelle’s (p.2), Ashok’s and Aruncati’s interviews it is this ‘feeling’ of being understood by other QTPOC which challenges the potential internalisation of marginalisation as a problem with the self, as discussed in Chapter 6, but to one which turns the lens onto the external world as a way of understanding the ways one experiences being-in-the-world.
‘So, I think that just fed into my internalisation of things of just it’s me that’s the problem and it’s me that’s being weird and stuff so being with [their partner] and being in a relationship with another QTPOC who also hasn’t come from a middle-class background and stuff like is really refreshing because we both walk into a room and you know, 99% of the time know what the other one’s going to feel in that room or like we don’t need to say things in explaining how we’re feeling because half of it is already understood, at least half of it is already understood so we don’t have to do the kind of preamble to get to the point of explanation, we just start like at like point 80% like [laughs]’

(Aruncati, p.10)

In contrast to other relationships and spaces, with Aruncati’s partner there is a shared embodied experience as they share similar embodied knowledge and understanding of what it is like to inhabit certain spaces and places – there is less need for a long explanation of how it feels to be a mixed race queer person and how comfortable or uncomfortable one feels. Making sense of the dynamics of social space and the feelings inhabiting the space elicit are affirmed by Aruncati’s partner who already understands these feelings because they experience them too.

The internalisation of the experience of disorientation is challenged by this intersubjectivity; in sharing the experience of how the skin of the social impresses on them as a queer and trans person of colour Aruncati’s experiences of disorientation are affirmed as a problem that is social and political in its base. Here then there is a sense that QTPOC groups and relationships give some respite to feelings of not belonging, of disconnection and of being a problem. There is a joyfulness in the description of the majority of participants’ experiences in connecting with other queer and trans people of colour through QTPOC groups in this way.

‘So, that’s I think one of the nicest things about being involved in activism and hopefully as well that like just our visibility like means a lot for people. I think on the Pride march this year one of the really kind of things that touched me walking through the crowd was seeing the faces of other black people or people of colour, you know, assuming queer people of colour who were watching the parade and seeing our banner and us having, you know, just being there and there were, it’s
hard to describe, like a lot of their faces were just, you could tell that they were really excited about seeing us there and that it just felt really, again I'm assuming but felt, and it did for me as well to see their faces just like life-affirming I guess, like to know that there's other people. And I mean these were all people I hadn't recognised of coming or engaging with the group so it was like did they know before then or, you know, we're the only black group within the whole of Pride. I think there were a few church groups that had larger numbers of BME people within them but we were the only group that were solely for people of colour so, like that's one of the nice things as well that, you know, I'm privileged enough to be able to be out as an LGBT person but also as an organisation to help people feel that sense of like belonging or connection or maybe momentarily but like that, not like isolation anymore. So I think like, yeah, Pride for me and I think for a lot of people in the group was really special, for that reason anyway I think for me, yeah.’

(Sasha, p.25)

Sasha experiences strong feelings of affirmation shared at the Pride march between herself and other black people and people of colour who were watching the parade. Here a momentary connection, a possible shared feeling of excitement and joint recognition or comradery is ‘life-affirming’ for Sasha (p.25).

For the stranger in the crowd, some of whom Sasha notes give her the ‘Black Power’ fist salute, this connection is perhaps a fleeting respite from the presumed shared experience of isolation. The joint recognition through shared ethnic backgrounds, the shared effective histories of Black British struggle signified in the Black Power salute and the visibility of Group X at Pride provides resistance to the impression of whiteness in the social space of Pride and on the bodies of its attendees. The Black Power fist salute and eye contact are utilised as forms of intra-racial non-verbal communication, and appropriating Mary Rowe’s (2008) work I suggest they could possibly be understood as forms of micro-affirmations in contrast to micro-aggressions. I suggest micro-affirmations could be used to describe micro-acts of solidarity and recognition minorities take up when they are in majority white spaces, such as smiles of acknowledgement and the ‘black nod’ shared between strangers to recognise a commonality of experience
and shared identity. However small the micro-affirmations Sasha (p.25) experiences at Pride, she experiences them deeply as ‘life-affirming’ noting that the power of these momentary connections should not be underestimated.

Sasha (p.9) describes other experiences in which embodied recognition, of a shared ‘vibe’ in a club which was majority ‘working class black, young black women’ was experienced and further affirmed her ‘black gay identity’. Similar ways of expressing oneself as a black, gay, working class woman elicited connection such as speaking ‘road talk’, which is a localised, classed vernacular within black communities in the UK (Sasha, p.10).

For Sasha (p.29,10), these commonalities meant that she experienced these spaces as ‘a lot more relaxed’ and in which she ‘felt more at home’ in contrast to other [majority white] queer spaces. These embodied expressions of young working class, black gay women impress on the social space of this club engendering a shared ‘vibe’, here Sasha quite clearly experiences a space which extends her body and in which she does not experience the pressure of being disconnected and disorientated (Ahmed, 2006; Sasha, p.9). In this club, she is ‘at home’ (Sasha, p.10).

She also relates this relaxed experience to the space created at Group X meet ups. Visibility as a queer brown woman is important to Sasha and engenders an embodied connection to other queer and trans people of colour, a connection which is felt deeply. Sasha’s emphasis on connection and community building for affirmation can be understood if we turn to Lorde’s (1984) writings on the uses of the erotic. The term ‘erotic’ is used by Lorde to describe a way of living authentically and the deep feelings at the ‘interstices of intimate and affective connection’ which ‘animate our human/spiritual beingness’ (Moore, 2012, para, 8). For Lorde (1984, p.56), the erotic functioned in several ways, the first was in ‘providing the power which comes from sharing deeply any pursuit with another person. The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much
of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference'.

Sasha’s commitment to authentic connection after experiences of disconnection and the sharing of this joy in building community forms and strengthens the bridge to others. Sasha’s experiences of visibility, recognition and affirmation also have erotic potential, highlighting the empathetic and pleasurable quality of these experiences for her own subjectivity and in building community (Moore, 2012). Similarly, Arunca ti (p.25) describes the joy in dancing with other QTPOC, and what they describe as its ‘liberatory’ and ‘healing’ dimensions. Arunca ti (p.25) emphasises the importance of dancing and ‘having a really good time’ with others as a way of being in the moment and to be oneself in a space with others with similar embodied ways of being-in-the-world. Building QTPOC community goes beyond political organising, dancing and having fun together provides a sense of deep investment with one another and of love and affection.

‘Arunca ti: so I think that that’s really important with dance but also just having a really good time and having this really nice space that it’s gone beyond just like political organising and this sense of false community about actually people that are really invested in each other and that really love each other coming together and having a really awesome time.

Stephanie: And can you say more about the actual movement of, you know, the dancing.

Arunca ti: The dancing?

Stephanie: Why is it liberating or...?

Arunca ti: I think like there’s something about...

Stephanie: Or how do you feel in your body when you dance?

Arunca ti: Yeah, I think there’s like something. I think I feel awkward, but like also [pause] I think there’s just something about like... What’s the expression, throwing caution to the wind? Is the wrong expression?

Stephanie: Yeah. Yeah.

Arunca ti: Yeah, like just being like fuck it and just like being in your body and having a great time and like I think kind of queer music, like
appreciating that music together, like dancing together, like being in our bodies and just being who we are together, not really giving a shit, like... [Laughs] I don’t know, like... [Pause] I don’t know, there’s almost like physical release, like I don’t know, like all that shit that we hold in our bodies and then just letting it go. I think as well, like for different people, it’s not true for everybody but I think dance is a way through which people can express their kind of culture and their cultural upbringings and things as well so I think for some QTPOCs it’s really refreshing to be in a queer space where they can bring that in because a lot of white queer space is like two steps [laughs] and shit folk music so... [Laughs] I think like being able to be your fully queer self in a space that embraces cultural identity through music, through dance, is really amazing and actually like a lot of the dance last night isn’t my cultural music or my cultural dance or it isn’t my ethnic cultural dance but actually being a queer person of colour in London, and this is where I find conversations about appropriation really interesting because actually a lot of the music and the dance last night is the music and the dance that I’ve culturally grown up with as a queer person of colour, even though it might not belong to me as like my heritage, if you know what I mean.’

(Aruncati, p.25, 26)

Aruncati (p.25) understands community building as something which must go beyond political organising to being deeply ‘invested’ in one another. Drawing on stronger feelings of love and affection, Aruncati echoes Sasha’s investment in the importance of connection with others. The joy of dancing with other queer and trans people of colour creates an affective tie in which Aruncati can enjoy being in their own body together with others who share similar and differing embodiment. The sharing of physical self-expression through dance is a moment of vulnerability and awkwardness for Aruncati while also a powerful erotic moment in which bodies come together to let go, to be in their bodies together and release physical tension.

The release of physical tension which Aruncati describes alludes to the physical, psychic and emotional effects of multiple, intersecting marginalisations that are held in and at the level of the body. Aruncati (p.26) experiences this space as one in which they can ‘be your fully queer self in a space that embraces cultural identity through music, through dance’, compared to other queer dance spaces which suggest one cannot be their full self, or express one’s full self as easily.
Cultural identity is troubled here as Aruncati acknowledges that culture cannot be monolithic or strictly accessed only by those whose 'culture' it emerges from and conversations about 'culture' can also be reductive in relation to questions of appropriation. Culturally specific forms of music, dance and expression are shared, reworked, re-appropriated and imbued with different meanings. For Aruncati, locating themselves in a city like London acknowledges the ways in which different cultures mesh together so that relationships to different cultural forms are complicated and less clear cut as to who these forms 'belong' or engender a relationship to.

For QTPOC then the sharing of cultural expression may support connection across ethnic differences, while acknowledging the relations between people of colour communities and cultural expression in a city like London. The joy and experience of connection challenges the feelings of not belonging, creating feelings of being affirmed, and also feelings of 'home'.

The sharing of location and concomitant feelings at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, class and faith engender erotic potential for a transformative collective experience of belonging for those who have expressed long held feelings of non-belonging. QTPOC groups provide the potential to share the feelings of racial melancholia.

Drawing on Munoz's (2007, p.443) work on 'feeling brown', we can note that QTPOC groups create space to bring together those who are queerly raced and who feel like they are a problem 'in commonality'. Munoz (2007, p.444) argues that feeling brown is about 'feeling together in difference', an 'apartness together through sharing the status of being a problem'. Feeling brown is a way of understanding the transmission of affect, and commonality of feeling among minoritarian communities which is ‘partially illegible in relation to the normative affect performed by normative citizen subjects’ (Munoz, 2006, p.679).

‘Feeling is meant to index a communal investment in Brownness. Brownness is a value through negation, the negation projected onto it by a racist public sphere that devalues the particularity of non-Anglo Americans. This negation underwrites racialized poverty while supporting other asymmetries within the social. Owning the negation
The feeling of brownness is a feeling of being negated, if we look back to theme one we can look to the melancholic and disturbing, depressive feelings of not belonging. Munoz (2006, p.676) suggests that feeling brown is a 'depressive position' which 'chronicles a certain ethics of the self that is utilized and deployed by people of colour...who don't feel quite right within the protocols of normative affect and comportment'.

Munoz’s work on brown feelings holds potential for understanding the sense of belonging engendered within QTPOC groups, of the shared 'angles' of understanding and experience of disorientation, and subjugated embodied knowledges that are transmitted between and among queer and trans people of colour. It can also make sense of the feelings of sadness, loss and melancholia experienced by QTPOC. Using Munoz’s work, we can understand that the shared nausea of negation as queerly raced subjects is collectivized and transmitted through intra-and inter-racial 'emphatic projective identification' in which QTPOC belong together in difference (p.445).

The collectivity experienced at Pride by Sasha, and dancing with others by Arunca could be described as forms of 'emphatic projective identification'. Munoz's focus is specific to Latinx in describing this as 'feeling brown', however the experience of being a problem as a [queerly] racialised minority can be clearly extrapolated to other communities. Within a specific UK context, acknowledging histories of collective political struggles across racial and ethnic groups (e.g. political Blackness) and QTPOC’s re-interpretation of this through the use of 'people of colour' I suggest the feeling here is one of 'feeling queerly raced'. In understanding the self as negated through the intersections of multiple minoritizations and drawing on effective histories of non-belonging as described in theme 1, feeling queerly raced for QTPOC can be theorized as a 'shared and historicized affective particularity' (p.450).
Feeling queerly raced can be understood as the feeling of being different, of being negated, of not belonging. To be queerly raced one fails to orientate around white hetero-homo-normativity, which recognises the hegemonic whiteness of forms of normativity in the UK. Feeling queerly raced is to feel outside of normative modes of belonging, to feel loss and grief of effective histories of colonialism, slavery, and losses of the complexities of sexual and gender expression within cultures of origin. Feeling queerly raced is an affect which is transmitted across QTPOC enabling recognition of each other, and creating a space of belonging premised on shared experiences of non-belonging. The joy and eroticism of recognition and the sharing of feeling queerly raced speaks to the sensuality of bodies in struggle together and underlines these experiences as affective and passionate.

**Theme 3: Developing a critical decolonising consciousness**

In theme one participants described feelings of non-belonging, and being haunted by the silences surrounding their histories as queerly racialised people. Being located in the UK, participants were met with the erasure of their complex histories, struggling against the commitment to racelessness, amputated and objectified by white, queer fantasies of the racialised other (Fanon, 1986). In response to this, participants described the importance of the development of a critical, decolonising consciousness through which they could begin to challenge the silences around their histories and the discourses which positioned queerness, transness and of colourness as separate.

Sasha discussed a number of visits and projects she had organised with Group X. She described the importance of queer and trans people of colour accessing and occupying spaces, such as museums and galleries, that they have more traditionally experienced as ‘not for them’ (Sasha, p.25). Experiencing art pertaining to blackness and queerness in these spaces is potentially ‘empowering’, compared to what is usually exhibited which Sasha describes as being created for or ‘retold through a white lens’ (Sasha, p.25).
Group X had also been involved in a project with a museum developing re-readings of African and Brazilian Carnival exhibits, Sasha describes this as a form of

‘activism in terms of rewriting our own history or kind of decolonising it and, you know, talking about the fact that it exists and that black LGBT people have existed, you know, like forever but maybe not with those acronyms, you know’.  
(Sasha, p.21)

The Group X meet ups and the external visits and projects create temporary queerly raced space, which could be understood as a tactic of survival and a collective working to resist negation and its nausea. Sasha describes the museums and galleries as white spaces made for the white gaze – however in naming this and in occupying this space with Group X’s presence and gaze they momentarily challenge this.

The focus on history – on re-writing and decolonising, as well as Sasha’s discussion of group visits to the Slavery Museum in Liverpool and the work of a black gay artist highlight the effective history within which Sasha develops her understanding. Sasha’s understanding is shaped by her position in history, drawing on specific histories here of black subjugation and resistance. This encounter with the past highlights contesting discourses at work in making sense of life in the UK, as Sasha understands her own history as being misrepresented within British institutional spaces such as the museum or the gallery. She is aware of a ‘white lens’, or the language of ‘Westernese’ in the telling of these histories which infer they do not match her reading and relationship to them (Sasha, p.25; Hesse and Sayyid, 2002, p.150). In re-writing and decolonising them Sasha resists histories ‘retold through the white lens’ which erase the potential for complex, queerly raced histories within which she can understand herself (Sasha, p.25).

The description of museums and galleries as spaces not for queer and trans people of colour reflects the sedimentation of history, in which these spaces orientate and cohere around whiteness, and legitimate the ‘language of Western supremacy’ (Hesse and Sayyid, 2002, p.150). However, Sasha
challenges this all-encompassing reading of history, highlighting its partiality and limitation because of its location. Sasha’s understanding and re-writing of history as well as Group X’s collective presence in these spaces is subversive.

Similarly, Aruncati, Janelle, Stanley and Ashok discuss artwork and cultural interventions created both by themselves and other queer and trans people of colour as ways in which to speak to the erasures of histories and the challenge of representation in contemporary culture. These stimulate reflection on life at the intersections and the development of a critical, decolonising consciousness.

In visiting an exhibition of the work of Zanele Muholi, a South African photographer whose work focuses on black lesbian and queer subjects, Janelle (p.6) is ‘shocked’ at the sheer number of people of colour represented in the exhibition. Janelle is used to ‘LGBT’ issues being defined as ‘white’ and ‘British’ which exclude her own existence as a queer, Muslim person of colour and of those outside of the west. Despite her own self-knowledge, the ‘westernese’ of LGBT communities and movements trouble her own sense of self. The exhibition gives her space to reflect on how white normativity fractures her understandings of her place in the world.

During their interview, Ashok presented a photo of the Jean Charles de Menzes mosaic mural at Stockwell tube station and discussed their plans to create a piece of artwork related to de Menzes murder and their own understanding and critical consciousness of being in the world as a tran person of colour.

'I had a very strong realization which was that if I was going to take hormones, yeah, I’d been doing, I’d been like socially living as male and gender [?? 9:37] for a while and this was the point where I was thinking about hormones and I know that because Jean Charles de Menezes had just been shot dead for essentially being a brown person with a rucksack on a tube train. And even back then I was thinking I would probably move back to London and it took me a long time to do it but I remember thinking in spite of all the stuff of like am I appropriating this gender stuff, transness, maybe it doesn't apply to me, all these people are going to talk about male privilege and I knew there was something in those conversations that just didn't sit with me because I was
absolutely like, yeah, obviously if people think I'm male stuff will be easier but the conversations about it didn't sit right and I realized later on, I know now that it was because I was only seeing white, trans and [??] people talk about this. And so, the construction of male privilege is about the world is centred around white men and you will become one and your life will loads fucking easier and there’s like, it took me a long time to work out that’s not the case if you’re PoC, you go from being one racialized gender norm to another and yes, if you’re assumed to be male, that will give you some points I guess under patriarchy. But my first thought was I’m going to look more like a young, I know I look like a young, Asian man, South Asian man with a beard and I want to move back to London and someone has just been shot dead for essentially being brown with a rucksack. And I realized all of that at once and when I started sort of talking to other people of colour about trans and gender stuff it turned out that that’s not at all unusual and all the South Asian and Arab and Middle Eastern men or people to one who might appear more male at some point, had thought about that and all the black men had thought about being stopped and searched because becoming a 'man of colour' or looking like you are a man of colour is a whole different deal. But I moved into Stockwell about two months ago, and it feels like a really sort of striking circular thing because now I know, because I’ve walked past this picture, I took a picture of it because it basically made me go “Oh”, now I know that that’s when I started thinking about that.' (Ashok, p.2,3)

As a trans person Ashok (p.3) accessed trans spaces in coming to embody their own gender identity and expression, however the conversations in these spaces didn't 'sit' well with them and this was difficult for them to understand. The white normativity of trans spaces had made it more difficult to name their own embodied experience as a trans person who was racialized in a specific way, frustrating the development of a critical racialized consciousness.

However, it is within trans people of colour spaces that his embodied feelings related to being perceived as a man of colour are affirmed – and that the experiences of masculinity as trans people of colour are much different to those racialized as white. Jean Charles de Menzes murder at the hands of the police for 'essentially being brown with a rucksack' creates a critical moment in which the commitment to racelessness is very publicly challenged within the UK and for Ashok opens up dialogue to speak to the issues of racialization at the intersections of trans/gender and develop a critical, decolonising consciousness on these intersections (Ashok, p.3).
All participants describe the process of coming to make sense of their embodied experiences, unveiling white normativity and how this has fractured the development of their own bodily schemas as illustrated in theme one and two. A critical ‘decolonising’ consciousness is developed as participants begin to note the erasure of their experiences and lack of representation in wider culture because of white heteronormative hegemony struggling with erasure and misrepresentation.

Participants experiences in developing critical knowledges about their position in the world could be described as an unveiling, in which taken-for-granted knowledges centring white normativity and the commitment to racelessness begin to be challenged. As a QTPOC activist, Sasha reflected on the nuances of living at the intersections of race, gender and sexuality and developing a better understanding and analysis of the ways in which race is more complex than she or her white work colleagues had previously understood. For Sasha, this is understood as a part of a ‘decolonising’ process. An extended extract from the interview with Sasha is presented here to illustrate her understanding of the complexities of the intersections of race, gender and sexuality.

‘Stephanie: Can you say a little bit about decolonising as well, what do you mean by that?

Sasha: So like the kind of ideas that you are taught about, the structures of other countries and who’s shaping that kind of thought so, you know, I think a lot of people view certain African or Asian countries as being inherently homophobic and the kind of roots to that don’t really go, they go to like religion but they don’t explain how religion got to those places, they don’t explain the fact that religion exists there but that country exists in a world that is, you know, ruled by white supremacy so it doesn’t exist on its own. And the fact that [sighs], so I mean I guess that in terms of decolonising on my mind in that way but also kind of decolonising the kind of dominant ideas and thoughts about black and Asian communities even in the UK. So I think like, you know, I had a discussion with a group of young black men, all like lower class or working class young men in the college and all of them, you know, I was doing it at work and so I was talking about LGBT things and on that there was probably about twelve of them and together they were all very much against LGBT people and were saying quite homophobic things and I think I’m in quite a privileged position because I’ve maybe experienced part of my life being in the
same or similar communities that they’ve come from but perhaps like only within the past maybe year, I don’t know, just come to realise where those thoughts come from. So a lot of people will say “oh black people are homophobic” or “black men are homophobic and it’s awful” but don’t understand the fact that as a black man the expectations of you to be hyper-masculine and providing, big, beefy, strong, emotionally disconnected person who’s going to fight for their family and their woman or whatever in a space where, you know, in an environment there’s a lot, where they’re more likely to get a job, more likely to be policed, you know, there’s lots of things that are policing their identity as a black man that doesn’t give them the privilege to be thinking about, you know, the world and other people’s views. So to then talk about what it might be like to be gay or to even think about that, you know, with acknowledging where they come from or where their lived experience is, a lot of people don’t do that so it’s like they don’t really understand where some of those thoughts are coming from. So I think an example that highlights what I’ve said because I don’t think I’m being very clear is that sometimes a lot of the workshops that I have I think other colleagues might be quite shocked or find it quite difficult to run because of the amount of kind of really quite hurtful things that they’re saying and I don’t think they mean it or have had opportunity to express it and really think about it, so it’s like actually sometimes you need, they need to be allowed to say those things to allow a discussion about those things and they need to understand where that thought is coming from. And actually if you are, you know, a young lad that you have, all those expectations are resting on your shoulder to then, you know, think about what it might be like for a gay person in that community isn’t always possible because those conversations aren’t possible in that community because you can’t necessarily let yourself be seen in that way or to be having those conversations because it’s a threat to so much of what you are expected to be. And I think, you know, one of the young lads said to me, because they all went off and one of them stayed behind and we kind of talked about it a bit more and he said “if I was like white I wouldn’t care”, what did he say? “If I was rich, if I was rich I wouldn’t have to care about, I wouldn’t care about gay people” is what he said, “if I was rich I wouldn’t care about gay people”. And I thought that was so telling because it’s like if you was rich you probably wouldn’t be in a situation where he’s in now where his masculinity and his expectation of him to be a black man is controlled by so many other factors, if he was rich he’d have a lot more autonomy, if he was rich to have less community pressures to be a certain way, to fit into maybe a certain group of people that protect you, he wouldn’t have to worry about potentially messing up all that because he’d be in a position of power, and I just thought that was really kind of telling quote in that a lot of people who look to other communities and say “they’re homophobic”
are in a position where they are allowed to think about things more so they’re in a position where they can discuss what it’s like to be gay or they can wear nail varnish as a man and not get beaten up, you know, they’re very privileged and they don’t understand the pressures and restrictions on other people’s identity that hasn’t allowed them to be able to be emotionally available in that way or to have those discussions because they can’t for their safety or they can’t because they just can’t. So I just thought that was really interesting. So decolonising my mind in ways of thinking, you know, actually everybody comes at this from different perspective, everybody has different family, everybody has a different community and actually, you know, like he said if I was rich I wouldn’t care about gay people and he also said when he was older he probably wouldn’t care about it either. So it very much does speak about their, what’s that saying about that young man’s experience that, you know, that he could say that? So I think a lot of people write off communities without actually giving them time to speak or about, you know, he probably wouldn’t have, didn’t feel able to say that around the other eleven boys that had left at that point. So I think there’s a lot, there’s just a lot that people don’t give time to or to understand doing and they probably won’t ever understand because they don’t have those kind of conversations or understand race in that way or realise that actually race is a massive factor in his life that is keeping, or at the minute anyway in that position, or living in an area like [majority Black area in city group is based] where that probably isn’t something that’s going to be talked about in the same way.’

(Sasha, p.26, 27, 28)

Sasha describes decolonising here as beginning to question and unpick what she had been previously taught about homophobia in African and Asian countries and communities in the UK. Sasha is challenging westernese in its construction of the global south as backwards and traditionally heteronormative and the West as a pillar of progressive values (Puar, 2007; El-Tayeb, 2012).

She is challenging the traditions she belongs to as a citizen of the west which have permeated her own understandings and relationships to her own ethnic community. Here the traditions of the West are unpicked and merge with a decolonising understanding, Sasha begins to place herself within and unpick previously hidden histories of colonialism, white supremacy and religion. This shapes her understanding of her effective history, where once African and Asian countries and communities were
believed to be ‘inherently’ homophobic Sasha places this reported homophobia in light of a newer understanding of their histories (Sasha, p.26).

Sasha describes a much more nuanced understanding of homophobia within black communities in particular. Through her interaction with the young men at college, Sasha’s partial understanding is further developed in this intersubjective moment. Through this embodied dialectic Sasha begins to make sense of the experiences of the young black men. It is important to note how Sasha is invested in listening to and learning from them, despite their expressions of homophobia, which she reflects her other colleagues would not be able to tolerate. Sasha perseveres illustrating an investment in black community, rejecting discourses of inherent black homophobia to an understanding of how power and privilege are embedded within these displays. Sasha’s understanding and knowledge is always on the way.

If homophobia, transphobia and racism are structural then it must be understood that the ways in which these power dynamics and discourses are taken up, worked on and resisted are different depending on subject location. Sasha highlights the effects of racialized and classed stereotypes on shaping black men’s subjectivities and how they are restricted, and amputated from their own selves (Fanon, 1986). There is a heavy weight of expectation on these young black men to be ‘hyper-masculine…providing, big, beefy, strong, emotionally disconnected person who’s going to fight for their family and their woman’ in a world in which they are less likely to get a job in order to provide for others, are disproportionately policed by the state and already perceived in pathological terms (p.27). Sasha suggests that this means they have less power and privilege for discussion and expression of non-heteronormative sexualities. Heteronormativity is then racialized, with heavy penalties for those who do not orientate around both heterosexuality and whiteness and racialized understandings of heteronormativity.

The intersection of race, sexuality and class mean that young black working class men are expected to perform a hyper-masculinity which includes the performance of homophobia, and while this is restrictive and may cause
pain to others, it also works as a potential defence against the white supremacist gaze and policing. Hall (2012) following Fanon, notes how black people are objectified by the white gaze and how this objectification may be taken up through self-objectification to ‘alter the mode of objectification’, defend, and protect the self (p.279). I would argue that the take up of restrictive categorizations by these young black men are invested with the energy of self-preservation and defense against the original objectification and the processes of being determined from without.

The young man Sasha speaks to alone tellingly describes how an increase in bodily autonomy through being rich would mean that there would be less pressure to adhere to these expectations, increasing his power and privilege and in which homosexuality would no longer be an issue. This suggests the intersecting raced, gendered, classed and sexualized pressure to perform a hyper-masculinity would be reduced. Sasha notes that the complexity of the ‘pressures and restrictions on other people’s identity’ is rarely understood by mainstream LGBT organisations and that people ‘write off communities’ who are heavily marginalised and policed, without letting them speak (p.27, 28). Sasha develops spaces within her work in which racialisation and class can be reflected on within effective histories with both young people of colour and her white co-workers, creating dialogue on power, privilege and sexuality.

Sasha develops her own critical consciousness, critically engaging with the past and present in her effective history and her location in the West (Gadamer, 1985). Through this Sasha presents the process of challenging the taken for granted and developing a nuanced analysis of life at the intersections of race, class, gender and sexuality. Aruncati also discusses the need to understand queerphobia and transphobia in cultures of origin within histories of slavery, colonialism and oppression. The development of critical and decolonising consciousness has a transformative and reparative potential for understanding self and divisions within communities scarred by histories of trauma, violence and oppression (Munoz, 2007). This creates potential for the sharing of feeling queerly raced across divisions of gender,
sexuality and class by responding to these histories of oppression and how they have shaped our present.

**Theme 4: Difficulties of being in community**

As key QTPOC organisers Sasha and Aruncati spoke to the fragility of these groups and networks, alongside concerns echoed by Ashok of the ways in which the terms queer and QTPOC were changing in use to become more fixed and less fluid. All participants understood the term QTPOC as a banner or umbrella term under which all number of people could fit – QTPOC was used as shorthand for a specific community, or as Ashok (p.1) suggested ‘it’s like a label to put on a room so that you can gather in that room’. QTPOC was not understood as an identity, but rather a term under which to organise and against which participants identified with and under. However, there were concerns of a shift towards QTPOC becoming an identity.

‘Stephanie: And like do you define under that acronym and how did you come to define in that way?

Aruncati: Yeah. Cool! Yes, I do, er... [Laughs] This feels so funny! Um, [pause] I think... I guess I do and I don’t in that like, yes, I define in the way as it’s useful to understand it but I also think it’s just like a way to understand something quickly, whereas like I think it’s since becoming a way to understand something, it’s become a kind of identity and I’m not sure how useful it is to have the identity QTPOC rather than just like understand yourself as in community with other people with a similar experience. I don’t know if that makes sense.

Stephanie: Yeah, could you say more about it, about the identity bit?

Aruncati: Uh huh. Like, [pause] I guess like within queer, trans, intersex people of colour, like there’s so many experiences, so many different like combinations of those identities and things that like to be QTPOC is useful in terms of finding community and a way to navigate finding people with similar experiences but when it becomes an identity in of itself it like... Whereas it should be a unifying like moniker I guess, like then I think sometimes it can become erasing or homogenous of an experience that isn’t a homogenous experience. Does that make sense?

Stephanie: Yeah, yeah, definitely.

Aruncati: Yeah.
Stephanie: Is there any like examples you could give or anything that made you think...?

Aruncati: I think just generally with labels, like I think that they serve a purpose in terms of bringing us together but we’ve got to be careful, you know, like people of colour in itself has become contentious because it was designed as a way to refer to communities that faced racism in order to like share in our struggle, create a bigger movement of solidarity and challenge racism or white supremacy and now because people of colour became an identity in itself, there’s the critique of it around like erasing blackness as a unique experience or actually any racialised experience as a unique experience which to me isn’t what I identify people of colour is about, like being a person of colour to me isn’t my... It's like it has on some levels become my identity but I think that that's problematic because I think, um... [Pause] I think it is and it isn't problematic actually, in that I think that it’s a term that should unify people not erase the individual, well not the individual but erase the unique experiences within it, so like I think once it becomes an identity, then for some people understanding the different experience is when the identity is left at the door which actually for me it’s never been that, I’ve always understood it as a kind of a reference of solidarity between people who experience something similar but I feel like in... I’m not talking very eloquently! [Laughs]

Stephanie: No, you're fine. Yeah.

Aruncati: It's become... I think a younger generation have taken it on fully as an identity and there’s now a backlash against that because of the way that it erases different experiences within that to different extents. But then also I think that for me, part of the reason it’s an identity for me is around like being mixed race and other diaspora and not really having a strong sense of my own race identity, like I understand my race or my experience of race through racism actually, like not through having a positive racial identity, like whether that’s because I’m not monoracial or whether that’s about being diasporic or having an assimilationist brown parent or all of those things then my real kind of consciousness about my race is through experiencing racism and so then for me people of colour is a comfortable term because although I might identify as Parsee or like mixed race Parsee, like I don’t have much of a connection to... I mean I have a strong connection to my Parsee family but like not in terms of our culture, like that’s something that they have and that I’m there to witness but was never passed onto me in a kind of like... I don’t know what the word is, like practical way or something like...'

(Aruncati, p.1,2)
There is concern here for the ways in which QTPOC can become used as a term which homogenises diverse queerly racialised ways of being in the world, erasing differences between ethnic and racialised communities as well as differences in sexual and gender expression. Its use also potentially hides or erases specific histories of struggle, and issues of power between and within different communities and the state.

Aruncati’s narrative speaks to the tensions between collective work in solidarity and the erasure of specific experiences. This highlights the difficulties of keeping QTPOC as an open and fluid term compared to fixed and static identity category, and echoes the concerns and struggles Swaby (2014) discussed in relation to the project of political Blackness.

While QTPOC have not begun to define quite so rigidly who is and who is not a queer and trans person of colour, QTPOC in itself may have in some groups become an identity which is defined by accepted forms of activism, analysis, community building, talk and behaviour. However, for Aruncati QTPOC as an identity is also useful because of their own lack of positive racial identity. QTPOC allows them access to an understanding of their own racialised ways of being in the world which was not provided for them due to a lack of affective transmission through their family – which Aruncati understands as a function of being of the diaspora, being mixed race, having an ‘assimilationist brown parent’ and a lack of cultural tradition being passed down (Aruncati, p.2). As illuminated in themes one and two, QTPOC allows for an understanding of self and others through the nausea of negation. Aruncati is then at once critical of the movement toward QTPOC as a particular type of identity, while also in some part recruited into claiming QTPOC as an identity.

QTPOC as a term under which to organise hovers on the precipice as something which is useful but may (or already has) become 'stuck' (Ashok, p.2). Ashok (p.1) points to the ways in which 'queer' was ‘a verb, like it is a way of doing things’ and has now become a ‘thing’ or an ‘orthodox’ holding similar concerns for the use of QTPOC. Sasha highlights comparable concerns and experiences, as she notes the turn towards the closing down
of possibilities 'queer' initially gave her and the privileging of what Sedgwick (2003) described as a more 'paranoid' form of reading, critique and activism. Sasha (p.1, 3) describes the changing politics of many more general queer spaces and notes a turn towards more ‘controlled’ environments in which language is policed, in which for Sasha ‘spaces feel very delicate and like safe spaces taken to the extreme sometimes’. She goes further to describe these spaces as ‘quite cotton wool type experiences where you feel like you can’t exist’ and describes leaving a tense queer workshop feeling ‘like “my god, like I feel we can speak, breath again”’ (Sasha, p.30, 31).

Sasha (p.31) paints a vivid picture of experiencing some queer spaces as increasingly difficult, ‘tense’ spaces to be in – in which she feels like she cannot exist, reducing her physical presence to one in which she can barely speak or breathe. The political tool of ‘safe space’ is taken to the ‘extreme’ and is experienced as being ‘cotton wool[led]’ which is almost suffocating (Sasha, p.30). Sasha (p.29, 31) explains that these spaces are designated ‘safe’ and emphasise ‘left-wing and radical’ politics which is seen as equated with what it means to be ‘queer’; respecting different identities, expecting a certain way of speaking and behaviour and with a lower tolerance for people who make mistakes regarding language or other transgressions. These spaces are more engaged in the process Sasha (p.3) describes as ‘calling people out’ which she experiences as a part of these spaces being ‘overly policed by some people’. This changing politics of queer can also be seen to be emerging in certain QTPOC spaces.

‘Sasha: Black queer spaces, I think there is, it [sighs], I think there are some that are like super, like even myself sometimes have to be like super-aware of maybe not saying the wrong thing and then at [Group X] I think because there’s so many different types of people that actually probably don’t identify with the word queer, that’s a space where, you know, if someone maybe said something out of turn it would be a bit like “oh I wouldn’t use that word” and you’d be like “okay, cool” and carry on, whereas I have been in other black queer spaces where I feel like people are very up on kind of the right language to use and things and I’ve just felt a bit like I’m nervous about putting the wrong foot out of turn and I’m nervous of maybe the repercussions that would happen if I said that or what people might think of me, whereas I know I keep coming back to [Group X] and I
have experienced it with the group in Leeds as well again there’s just that kind of, people don’t take things so seriously and there is just a bit more forgiveness and like if you’ve said something wrong someone maybe said to you “oh wouldn’t say that” and it just feels like more relaxed. And it doesn’t almost feel like you’re being challenged, it’s just a space to like explore where that had come from and perhaps why it’s not acceptable to say, whereas I do feel a bit sometimes within QTPOC spaces that maybe just sometimes a bit hyper-aware of what I say or how I come across or, you know, for example I went to a QTPOC meet-up over Pride in London and wore a t-shirt that has got, um, oh an Egyptian queen’s head on it, really famous Egyptian queen’s head on it and I can’t think, Cleopatra’s…

Stephanie: Cleopatra?

Sasha: …head on it and it says “fresh” underneath it and I guess it is, and in my mind, and I really, and I really like this t-shirt and I feel like I’d had maybe a little bit of battle about whether it was cultural appropriation this t-shirt in that I’m not from Egypt and whether people thought that I might be just like celebrating this, you know, this image that is used everywhere and completely taken out of context and everyone uses it and I think like internally I was like “are all these QTPOC people going to be judging me and thinking that I’m culturally appropriating this thing that’s, you know, she’s not from Egypt and her”, you know, my dad is Jamaican and I have no doubt that his roots lead back to Africa but in my head I was like “they’re going to think I’m an awful person” and there’s nothing in me that would, I’d never doubt wearing that t-shirt to [Group X], I’d never doubt wearing that t-shirt to the group in Leeds or to hang out with people that I know and that don’t necessarily identify as queer but are LGBT people of colour. So I do feel like there is that kind of fear of how people are going to see you sometimes within those queer spaces because people are so up on politics, whereas I feel like there are other black or people of colour spaces where it is a little bit more relaxed and that you might joke about it and talk about it a bit more.’

(Sasha, p.29, 30)

Anxieties about use of language and appropriation illustrate the fragility of some QTPOC spaces, in which Sasha (p.30) fears making a mistake and the potential ‘repercussions’ of wearing a shirt which might offend others. The level of unease and trepidation Sasha experiences in these QTPOC groups illustrates a problematic investment on a community level in a ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ in which those multiply marginalised having
experienced trauma, pain and exclusion remain hypervigilant to further attacks on the self (Sedgwick, 2003, p.124).

Sedgwick (2003, p.125) after Ricoeur traces the hermeneutics of suspicion within critical theory – including feminist and queer criticism, noting how it has become the mode of criticism with little room for the consideration of other modes which has privileged 'the concept of paranoia' in critical practice. For those of us who experience the brunt of multiple intersecting 'systemic' oppressions 'to theorize out of anything but a paranoid critical stance has come to seem naïve, pious, or complaisant' (p.126).

For QTPOC this needs to be placed within the context of histories of dislocation, colonisation, trauma and violence. Paranoid reading is not just restricted to theory; Sasha, Arunca and Stanley share in their interviews that this is a form of reading which shapes some current formations of queer activism and organising, including some forms of QTPOC activism. These participants share concerns for the emphasis on paranoid reading within some QTPOC groups, as highlighted by Sasha in the above extract. Arunca (p.5) describes the difficulties of organising spaces which bring together people with histories of ‘trauma’ from navigating intersecting experiences of queerphobia, transphobia and racism alongside negotiating multiple, marginalised identities and the potential impacts this has on our affective lives and relationships to one another in community.

Arunca (p.5) understands the social, political and cultural contexts in which QTPOC are positioned and the struggle to survive and stay ‘safe’. Arunca identifies that this struggle for survival does not necessarily lend itself to positive and healthy ways of being in community; finding that a hermeneutics of suspicion and a paranoid reading of each other is privileged. Arunca describes this as impacting the building of QTPOC community, they suggest that perhaps QTPOC bring dysfunctional coping mechanisms and hurtful behaviour to others because of the trauma and struggle in navigating multiple forms of marginalisation. QTPOC groups may be helpful for many in supporting the navigation of identity and multiple oppressions however as an organiser Arunca is aware of problematic
dynamics within QTPOC groups which can be detrimental to community building.

Renault’s (2011, p.53) reading of Fanon’s theory of violence and the ‘erotic tension’ in struggles of liberation against colonial violence are helpful here. Fanon understood colonial violence to be ‘retained or charged in the body of the colonized’ and that the struggle for liberation is a redirection of that violence ‘against its origin’ (p.53). Fanon conceptualized the ‘dialectic of liberation as the dialectic of love’, re-focusing love onto the ‘(de)colonized community’; therefore ‘anti-colonial counter-violence is at the same time detoxifying/purifying and traumatic/destructive’ (p.53/54).

I would argue that while QTPOC groups bring the potential for belonging through a shared experience of non-belonging and of being negated, a paranoid reading alongside the complexities of retained colonial violence and the impulse of counter-violence for the purpose of decolonisation can make organising collectively together fraught with tension. There is also the question of how the impulse for counter-violence may be directed at one another. As Nayak (2015, p.94) notes about black feminist spaces, QTPOC groups are often far from ‘comfortable, cosy, safe and secure’. Aruncati describes the difficult tension of holding and acknowledging the pain of negation with how we can also build a ‘healthy’ sustainable QTPOC community.

‘Aruncati: like think about what it is you’re doing and what the actual like legacy of that is going to be, like because it’s very easy to be reactionary and to respond to things because you want to respond here and now because you’re passionate about them but like is that response, where’s that response going and where are you going to end up in a year or in ten years’ time with that, like I think that that’s really important.

Stephanie: Can you give an example of that or what you mean by reactionary?

Aruncati: Yeah, so for example, um... Well like on questions of like justice models, like punitive justice versus like restorative community justice kind of thing, so if within QTPOC community there’s a problem and our response, you know, whether it’s something like an allegation of abuse or something and our response is just to weed out the people and get rid of them in order to try and make everybody safe now, if we
do that and we continue to do that then where do we end up in ten years and like I feel like we’re starting to see some of that now when we look at how we were responding ten years ago to now, that we’ve got into this much more punitive model of justice of like kicking people out of communities and stuff and I find that really problematic so actually being much more invested in the community process to understand why people in our community are perpetrating things or just doing shit things because we all do shit things sometimes and how we can create a working alternative to the kind of punitive justice model that’s enforced on us from the outside world in order to help create a healthier stronger community with healthier stronger individuals in it and I think that’s particularly relevant for QTPOCs because of... Because most of us have gone through like lots of shit growing up in understanding our identities, in navigating the worlds that we lived in, in staying safe and staying alive, you know, it’s just been [?? 14.41] like just staying alive is hard enough a lot of the time as a queer person of colour and sometimes some of that shit that we go through we learn coping mechanisms that are fucked up and we do fucked up things to each other because of the trauma that we’ve been through and so thinking about the legacy of what we do, like having ways to deal with that that can mean in ten years we’ve got an overall more functioning healthy community than thinking in ten years well we’ve got rid of all these arseholes, but there’ll still be more arseholes! [laughs]

(Aruncati, p.4,5)

Over the duration of the three years of the research project there were a number of crises within QTPOC networks pertaining to issues of problematic behaviour and abuse, and concern with how to manage these conflicts. As Aruncati notes there has been an emphasis on punitive models of justice within some parts of QTPOC communities which encourage the ‘calling out’ and kicking out of people who exhibit problematic and/or abusive behaviours.

A paranoid reading of others behaviours and intentions, from those who make small mistakes (such as Sasha’s concern with the t-shirt) to more serious issues of violence and abuse means that there is little or no room for reparative work (Sedgwick, 2003). Aruncati is critical of how these strategies of keeping safe collude with the punitiveness and violence of the state, contradicting ideas of a decolonising politic as discussed in theme three.
Aruncati understands their role as a community organiser as supporting the development of compassionate, responsible ways of being in community that emphasise trust and communal wellbeing. They draw on emerging discussions within feminist, feminist of colour and queer communities about how to deal with conflict and violence in ways which resist 'idealized, protectionist notions of community that purport to lessen intra-community violence' challenging the 'dominant liberal rights discourse that demands laws and legislation championing individual benefits or protections while affirming violent state structures' (Durazo, Bierría, and Kim, 2012 para, 17). These critiques challenge the 'policing response to people who perpetrate violence' within domestic violence and feminist anti-violence organisations (Kim, 2012, p.16). Kim (2012, p.17) argues that these movements and organisations have been 'demobilized through professionalization and had become deradicalised through its pursuit of policies that were also championed by proponents of neoliberalism, most notably, criminalization'.

It could then be argued that the difficulties Aruncati and Sasha describe in QTPOC communities may draw from the hegemonic [neo]liberal rights discourse which demands that the individual be protected from harm, and the potential problematics of QTPOC, or feeling queerly racialised becoming ‘stuck’ in which the focus is only on negation, or what becomes an identity of injury (Durazo et al, 2012, p.17; Brown, 1995).

‘Or I think that there’s this feeling, particularly with younger QTPOCs that there’s this kind of you’re either with me or you’re against me kind of thing and the feeling of you’re against me is that you don’t understand how progressive my thought is and I think with [name of friend] and other, you know a few other people, [laughs] that there’s this understanding that we’ve kind of been through that politics and we’re now critical of some of that stuff but not because, not for the reasons that... I’m trying to explain it in a like... So like with community accountability, the topic of the day, but like community accountability things and so like challenging the way that they’re handling an incident isn’t because we’re part of the status quo who thinks that we shouldn’t address these issues, it’s because we’re critical of the way we’re addressing them and what can then happen is that you get called a rape apologist [laughs] or that you don’t understand, you know, like that to be critical you’re seen as part of the status quo and actually there’s this deeper and more nuanced conversation that challenges
that but challenges the colonisation and the colonised thinking that we bring in in all of us as western socialised people into things and trying to really deconstruct that and not just deconstruct it on the surface level and say look, claim this like new identity of being decolonial or like whatever that I think a lot of people who claim that identity as an identity which to me is just bizarre but who aren’t really unpicking what that means, like with [friend’s name] I feel like there’s, you know, and my other friends there’s like, some of my other friends there’s this ability to unpick that or on community accountability and things and that to me is like I can breathe, like I can breathe with this person.’

(Aruncati, p.12)

Aruncati (p.12) emphasises the need for critical reflection on the modes of actions and reactions QTPOC undertake, understanding how they are shaped by colonised thinking as ‘western socialised people’. However, they also run the risk of a backlash for saying so – with younger members of the community ‘there’s this kind of you’re either with me or you’re against me kind of thing’ which can be stifling and silencing (p.12).

The problematics of paranoid readings of each other clearly run through some QTPOC groups threatening the building of community, with the threat of punitive actions against those who question established ways of responding to harm. An example alluded to by Aruncati is the case of one member of a QTPOC group who suggested running a community accountability process for another member of the community who had been accused of sexual assault. The person who suggested the process was lambasted by another member for focusing on the perpetrator and not the victim of the assault, and was called a ‘rape apologist’ (Aruncati, p.12). This foreclosed any discussion of a meaningful, restorative attempt of community accountability; a much more retributive and punitive mode of addressing this harm was taken in which the perpetrator was removed and banned from a number of group spaces, employers were contacted and close friends of the perpetrator were asked to cut ties.

The alarming ways in which some QTPOC group members, particularly younger people responded to one another emphasises the problems of focusing on the self as vulnerable and injured, and a paranoid relation to
others within a neoliberal rights discourse. As highlighted by both Aruncati and Sasha, punitive responses were not limited to perpetrators of abuse but were potentially directed at those who questioned ways of dealing with them, as well as those who caused offense or made mistakes, illustrated in Sasha's anxiety over her t-shirt.

However, Sasha distinguishes between these QTPOC groups and groups such as Group X which are a welcome respite from the tensions of these spaces, in which the bodily expressions of queer and trans people of colour are policed less with more tactile interactions, louder and freer modes of communication and a more relaxed and forgiving approach to the use of language and potential offense. Sasha understands this as in part to do with the make-up of Group X, in which up to half of the members are not from the UK or Europe which means there is more appreciation for difference in ways of relating and that although describing themselves as a 'queer' and 'QTPOC' group, Group X is not as strongly connected to current ways of 'queer' political organising.

In returning to Lorde’s (1984) use of the erotic, Moore (2012) challenges us to question the ways in which activism is undertaken within a neoliberal era which she describes as a ‘theater of disengagement’ (para, 6). She suggests connection and communities in struggle are undermined by this disengagement as we begin to see ourselves as objects in struggle as opposed to people with complex subjectivities which robs us of the potential of the erotic and its utility in connecting across difference.

Sasha’s experiences of other queer spaces as being very controlled and policed, may point towards the ways in which neoliberal ideology has affected activist organising with its focus on the individual, surveillance, safety and authoritarian control. Sasha and Aruncati’s experiences of these spaces also open up questions of what it may mean to come together through shared experiences of negation, injury and harm and how this structures forms of activism. Returning to Munoz (2007, 2006, p.682), the depressive position of brown feelings and feeling queerly racialised has
transformative potential, and he warns against the paranoid move which emphasises a repetitive obsession with the 'unveiling of an external threat'.

We must take heed that it is in the keeping alive of the depressive position, a focus on the sociality of brown feelings and feeling queerly racialised, in which the individual can tolerate 'the loss and guilt that underlies the subject's sense of self', resisting the foreclosure of a reparative and hopeful politics (p.687). It is clear from Sasha and Aruncati's erotic experiences of connection and joy within QTPOC activism that there are still possibilities for the reparative; that the brown feelings and feelings of queerly racialised may be currently under-utilised.

Conclusions

Members of queer and trans people of colour groups are motivated to organize and seek out these spaces by feelings of not belonging in the different communities of which they are a part. Experiencing multiple, intersecting marginalization engenders feelings of sadness, being apart and disorientated in the UK in which the commitment to racelessness creates a difficulty in naming these experiences. Failing to orientate around white hetero- and homo- normativity problematizes their being-in-the-world.

QTPOC groups create spaces of affirmation and recognition as participants describe feeling queerly raced, in which they recognize shared and collective experiences of negation. This provides the potential for developing critical, decolonising consciousness and creatively and reparatively re-imagining a past, present and future of representation and inclusion.

The erotics of feeling queerly raced together provides the potential for a building of community based in hope. However, QTPOC are also troubled by some tendencies to focus on feeling queerly raced as an individualized endeavour in which members prioritise injury as identity and undertake paranoid readings of each other. This may be one way in which feeling queerly raced may be usurped by hegemonic neoliberal rights discourses which threaten the possibilities of a radical collective endeavour.
Chapter Eight: Conclusion

In this thesis, I have explored the lived experiences of queer and trans people of colour and their involvement in QTPOC activism. I have sought to explore what QTPOC activism means in the UK context, how it operates and for what purpose; the ways in which QTPOC activisms support the negotiation and affirmation of marginalised sexual, gender, racial identities and the navigation of racism, queerphobia and transphobia; and how personal involvement with QTPOC activisms impact subjectivity.

The research has been firmly situated within British ‘(post) colonial legacies’, histories of immigration and questions of national belonging for people of colour (Phoenix, 2013, p.102). QTPOC activism has been framed within South Asian, African, African Caribbean and politically Black histories of resistance and struggle that are particular to the British context. Following Johnson (2015) I have worked to knit together these wider historical, social and political contexts and how they may shape subjectivity with critical theory from queer, black feminist and post-colonial theory to attend to the embodied, feeling, experience of being-in-the-world for QTPOC.

I have developed this from a critical psychological perspective, aiming to emphasise how the macro-social structures and shapes subjectivity, introducing the concepts of coloniality and intersectionality to make sense of queer and trans people of colour’s lived experience. I have been increasingly influenced by Johnson’s (2015) turn to the psychosocial and the reparative. Following Sedgwick’s (2003) reparative turn, Johnson (2015, p.176) has encouraged a focus on intersubjectivity, feeling, experience, ontology and community promoting a transdisciplinary approach to ‘reimagine the psychological’.

intersectionality, the post-colonial and critical psychology to develop a unique phenomenological interpretative framework. Following Nayak (2015) and Hook (2008) I have utilised black feminist and post-colonial theory, which have often been overlooked within critical psychology despite providing rich possibilities for addressing the social, political and historical contexts of racialization as well as its intersubjective, subjective and psychic dimensions.

In employing this rich theoretical work, I developed a queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis to analyse the feeling and embodied lived experience of being-in-the-world for queer and trans people of colour. Unlike other forms of phenomenology, in utilising Ahmed (2006) and Fanon’s (2007) interventions, this framework maintains an attention to the macro-social structures and the political, social and historical contexts which shape QTPOC subjectivities and possibilities for being in the world.

Following Fanon (1986, p.111), there cannot be a phenomenology that can simply attend to bodily experience in the world without acknowledging the ‘historico-racial schema’ through which people of colour have been ‘woven’ out of a ‘thousand details, anecdotes and stories’. Meaning is imposed on people of colour through the processes of racialisation particular to the British post-colonial context, and this cannot be dismissed in a phenomenological exploration. Building on Fanon, Ahmed (2006) queers phenomenology by exploring how we are orientated towards and around white heteronormativity and how for those of us who cannot follow these lines we experience a form of disorientation. Utilising intersectionality, the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis has provided a framework to consider the experience of the intersections of being multiply minoritized through race, gender and sexuality through the lens of coloniality. This has enabled an exploration of how subjectivity is shaped and the possibilities of the intersections, the borderlands, and the fracture.

The focus groups illuminated the meaning of QTPOC activist groups for participants finding that the groups functioned as spaces away from what participants deemed the whiteness of LGBTQ communities tempering the
racism, exclusion, invisibility/hypervisibility they had experienced in these spaces. Participants described the difficulty of being within mainstream LGBTQ communities because they felt they were expected to fragment their identities and moved in these spaces with great unease. QTPOC groups therefore challenged these fragmentary impulses and the white normativity of white LGBTQ communities. This offered an intersectional space within which queer and trans people of colour could feel supported and affirmed and able to disidentify with limited and fragmentary understandings of the self.

Participants described the formation of these groups as a form of political resistance, decentring heteronormativity and white normativity and creating possibilities for the creative development of QTPOC culture. QTPOC groups also provided space for participants to speak to their lived experiences without being challenged. Participants noted that within mainstream LGBTQ communities their experiences had often been dismissed and in challenging this they had experienced being ignored, tokenised or punished. They noted the inhibiting effects of whiteness in being able to speak to their own lived experiences. Throughout the research, participants emphasised whiteness as a problem, grappling with the effective histories (and affective dimensions) of the colonial and post-colonial and its legacies.

QTPOC groups were important to participants when contrasted with their individual experiences of non-belonging and disconnection. In the one-to-one interviews, participants shared the difficulties of navigating different communities and failing to find a place to belong. This took place in the wider context of the 'silent racialisations' of British society; a number of participants shared the experience of the slow process of making sense of themselves as racialized others and of their own 'difference'. The commitment to racelessness and denial of race in British society, alongside an orientation around and towards whiteness had made it difficult to find language for and to make sense of their own (racialized, intersectional) exclusion.
However, this was different for Janelle as a Muslim woman who had previously worn the hijab – before she had come to name her sexuality she had already had a clear understanding of being an outsider within the UK as a function of her gender, race and faith. This may be due to the intensities of Islamophobia within Britain over the last 30 years. However, for all the participants, the experience of being racially minoritized intersected with and was further complicated and compounded by their minoritized gender and sexuality; the desire to find a place of belonging was further frustrated within LGBTQ communities. For Aruncati, Sasha, Stanley and Ashok the affective dimension of non-belonging was experienced in feelings of unworthiness, dislocation, disconnection, and loss – taking on a disturbing, and perhaps melancholic quality. I suggested that this strength of feeling, as well as participants’ emphasis on the problem of whiteness may be usefully interpreted through Eng and Han’s (2000) theory of racial melancholia.

I drew on Eng and Han’s (2000) reinterpretation of Freud’s concept of melancholia to further interpret QTPOC lived experience. They utilised the concept of racial melancholia to understand the ‘registers of loss and depression attendant to both psychic and material processes of…immigration, assimilation and racialization’ (p.669, 667).

In the UK people of colour are orientated around and towards white heteronormativity, encouraged towards assimilation while also positioned as the essentialised racialized ‘other’ (Lewis, 2000). The impossibilities of assimilation, and as Fanon described, the ‘nausea’ of negation and non-being position people of colour and QTPOC in an ambivalent relationship with whiteness. QTPOC are faced with the loss of white heteronormativity, the impossibility of assimilation and an ‘impossibility of return’ to a home of one’s own in which one may ‘belong’ (Bell, 1999, p.166).

Participants described a process of developing a critical consciousness about race in which they began to make sense of these feelings of non-belonging – relating them to the intersections of their race, gender, sexuality and class. Janelle, however, was the one participant that seemed to have
developed this critical consciousness earlier – and this may be in relation to the specific anti-Muslim discourses she has had to negotiate.

QTPOC group spaces as well as creative work supported the development of critical consciousness; participants stressed the importance of strategies of disidentifying from white heteronormativity and attempts to ‘decolonise’ gender and sexuality. It may be useful to consider in future research how racial melancholia and strategies for disidentification may relate or speak to racial identity and gay identity development models, particularly in relation to the stages in which individuals immerse themselves within a racial or LGB culture (for example, Helms, 1990 and Cass, 1979).

As some participants noted, some strategies for disidentification lacked ‘nuance’, sometimes causing conflicts within the groups. However, these were also understood as useful ways in which to vent the frustration of being multiply marginalized.

These experiences of non-belonging were described as painful and sometimes traumatic for QTPOC. Key organisers reflected on the possible repercussions this had on organising collectively. They were concerned by the privileging, and perhaps the over-emphasis of paranoid readings of one another within QTPOC activist communities. Heightened concerns over safety and ‘safe’ spaces, as well as an emphasis on the perceived vulnerability of QTPOC did not always support the building of community.

Aruncati was particularly apprehensive of the punitive logics of call out culture and how conflict was sometimes managed by removing people from QTPOC groups and communities. Sasha experienced unease at the ways in which individuals were sometimes strictly policed in group spaces to create a sense of ‘safety’. There was concern over how the hermeneutics of suspicion could work against the possibilities of community building and how this may weaken community relations. Despite these concerns, QTPOC groups provided the joy of connection and feelings of affirmation shared between members. These affirmations, the shared experience of
feeling brown, or queerly raced were transmitted through visibility, dancing together, creating QTPOC space, viewing QTPOC art work and creating shared possibilities for decolonising gender and sexuality. Future research may want to explore these QTPOC activist group dynamics further; the psychodynamics of the paranoid readings of others like ourselves within activist communities; interventions which may encourage the development of more reparative and transformative models of managing trauma, vulnerability, inter-group conflict and abuse; and how the connection that QTPOC groups build offer erotic potential and may provide possibilities for the reparative.

QTPOC situated themselves within histories of Black struggle in the UK, however there were tensions over language – between the historical use of political Blackness and the more recent take up of the term ‘people of colour’. People of colour was understood as possibly more inclusive, as there was concern over who could claim political Blackness. There was slippage between political Blackness and black of African and Caribbean descent. Claiming blackness was fraught for two mixed-race (of African Caribbean descent) participants and the lightness of skin colour as well as ‘authenticity’ were issues raised.

Wright (2013) describes problems of authenticity within black diasporic communities in which authenticity is equated with heteronormativity; in a hierarchy of authenticity black heterosexual cisgender men are often positioned at the top. Fanon (2007) rallied against constructing blackness within the narrow confines that coloniality provides. I would argue that the discourse of authenticity continues racist, colonial constructions of blackness in which black men are positioned as hyper masculine and hyper-virile; refusing the complexity and diversity of blackness and through which other forms of sexual and gender expression are negated. This troubles the place of QTPOC within their communities of colour and raises questions of belonging. This is also implicated in the politics of respectability, in which those deemed inauthentic and ‘other’ within communities of colour are believed to impede racial ‘progress’ or liberation.
This points to the need to ‘queer’ communities of colour and anti-racist movements, to create intersectional spaces which challenge heteronormativity and racism. Cathy Cohen’s (2004, p.27) ‘deviance as resistance’ may be useful for further exploration and for activist practice – of the transformative possibilities of centring deviance in black liberation as opposed to respectability. This would acknowledge the ways in which all black people and people of colour are already positioned outside of white heteronormativity and refusing a liberation politics which centres these forms of normativity.

There also needs to be a further interrogation of the politics of language and a reparative working towards the intergenerational differences and nuances of the meanings of political Blackness and people of colour. Within this research, one older participant was perturbed by what she saw as a ‘running away’ from blackness in the turn away from political Blackness. With the younger participants’ people of colour was still contested but considered more inclusive than political Blackness however there was an awareness of indebtedness to the histories of politically Black struggle.

However, within the media and wider activist communities there has recently been fierce contestation of political Blackness in which there have been calls for a complete rejection of this terminology and way of organising even while there are many other organisations and activist groups who continue to work under this banner. The legitimate concerns over political Blackness must be considered, such as how it may homogenise the different experiences of racism by differently racialized communities, for example glossing over the specific issues of anti-blackness. However, there may be valuable lessons to learn from the histories of organising under political Blackness and why some continue to do so.

There is also a question of an emphasis on political solidarity within the British post-colonial context. I want to trouble the return to focus on ‘cultural differences’ and how this led to the faltering of forms of solidarity. I would
recommend further work for activist practice to facilitate conversation and collaborative work to explore the histories of political Blackness, and across those continuing to work within that framework and those who choose otherwise to seek a way of working together with difference and different strategies to find value in ways of working. I would suggest this as a reparative practice to treat political Blackness as an object of critique, but to do so from a place of love and hope for community building.

The research has highlighted the difficulties of finding a place to belong for queer and trans people of colour and how this may shape subjectivity. It has presented the possibilities QTPOC activist groups provide for supporting the disorientating experiences of being multiply minoritized, and in particular making sense of this experience within a society which denies its colonial and post-colonial histories and legacies.

Situating QTPOC groups within histories of Black and people of colour struggle as well as contemporary queer politics has highlighted the difficulties of organising, raising the questions of how to manage conflict and the hermeneutics of suspicion as well as the lack of resources QTPOC have compared to previous Black Lesbian and Gay and politically Black organising. I have also traced the potential for the reparative in QTPOC organising drawing on the erotics of QTPOC connection and affirmation.

Limitations
There are a number limitations to the research which need to be considered for potential future studies. The research was limited to queer and trans people of colour who were QTPOC activists and members of QTPOC groups; therefore, the research is perhaps restricted to the ways in which queer and trans people of colour navigate subjectivity within an explicitly politicised activist collective. However, the research still provides valuable insight into the experiences of multiple intersecting minoritization and the importance of psychology to address intersectionality, coloniality and post-colonial legacies.
Although the research did highlight the difficulties participants experienced, it is the first study which has explored the potential of QTPOC collectivity and activism for addressing these difficulties. Further research may want to explore how QTPOC or BME LGBTQ individuals outside of these activist groups negotiate these intersections.

Participants were less forthcoming about their experiences within their communities of colour. This may have been a function of my own anxieties about discussing, for example, homophobia within black communities within an academic setting when these narratives are already taken up so widely within contemporary hegemonic racist discourses. Participants may have struggled with similar anxieties, and a number of participants spoke to issues of power and privilege to make sense of the difficulties around queerphobia and transphobia within communities of colour. These conversations felt protective of communities of colour, perhaps because of these postcolonial legacies and the dynamics of racism and current LGBTQ rights discourse in Britain. The research is limited by a lack of further exploration on this topic – future research may want to explicitly draw out the experiences of QTPOC within communities of colour as well as speaking to the difficulties of voicing this experience and undertaking this type of study.

In evaluating the methodology, the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis provided an innovative approach to exploring the lived experiences of queer and trans people of colour which could be utilised in future research. The process of developing this interpretative framework involved moving from theory to data and was developed over a number of months beginning with the focus groups. Therefore, the analysis of the focus groups was undertaken in the early stages of this interpretative framework, and originally, they were analysed as a thematic analysis.

If there had been more time I would have re-done the analysis of the focus groups when the interpretative framework had been more fully developed. The research is also limited by the number of participants. Due to the difficulties of recruiting for the focus groups for the Brighton/London group
and Brighton Group 2 these focus groups were only attended by two participants in each, compared to Group X which had 10 participants for their focus group. Interviews were only held with five participants. Therefore, in future research I would recommend recruiting a larger number of participants, particularly for the focus groups.

The research was increasingly inspired by Johnson (2015) and her call for the psychosocial in sexuality studies, however it was initially developed with a grounding in critical psychology as this is my academic background. Therefore, this thesis charts in some respects the development of my work from a critical psychological perspective towards the psychosocial; inspired by the knitting together of historical and social contexts with the possibilities of psychology, feeling and ontology to explore the lived experiences of queer and trans people of colour. If the research was started again today I may have chosen an explicitly psychosocial approach, this is not so much of a limitation but an observation of my own development as a researcher and academic.

**Recommendations and future directions**

Future research into queer and trans people of colour may want to further explore how QTPOC activists experience their communities of colour and what particular interventions they make in these communities to address queerphobia and transphobia. This could utilise the concepts of intersectionality, coloniality and perhaps Cohen’s (2004) politics of deviance. A more focused investigation into how QTPOC work to creatively decolonise gender and sexuality would also be of much interest.

Future research would need to recruit larger numbers of participants, and also consider the experiences of queer and trans people of colour or black minority ethnic lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans people who are not involved within QTPOC activist groups.

Janelle was the only participant who spoke to the intersections of race, gender and sexuality with faith; I would suggest further research should explore the specificities of lived experience for Muslim queer and trans people of colour due to the contemporary Islamophobic political contexts in
the UK. The queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis would be useful for other researchers exploring QTPOC lived experience – and further research would be recommended to explore its utility.

The research has illustrated the importance of intersectionality, coloniality and the postcolonial for psychological research into the lived experience of QTPOC. I would recommend this for further research to examine processes of racialisation and their intersections with other vectors of experience both for the ‘minority’ as well as the majority. The development of the queerly raced hermeneutic phenomenological analysis provides a reflection on the use of phenomenology in psychology and the possibilities of the psychosocial – in knitting together the historical, social context and the embodied, feeling lived experience of those multiply minoritized. This research is a rich contribution to psychology and an encouragement to turn towards questions of racialization and coloniality in the British context, intersectionality, as well as ontology, feeling and community particularly at a time of rapid change, global uncertainty and growing inequality.

The research was focused specifically on QTPOC subjectivity, on the processes of navigating lived experience at the intersections. However, future research may want to explore how this may relate explicitly to identity development. This may be useful in supporting queer and trans people of colour in counselling and therapeutic contexts in relation to models of racial and sexual identity development; in particular, the intersections of the development of racial consciousness alongside gender and sexual identity development.

The research also highlights the need for LGBTQ and BME third sector organisations to support QTPOC community building as organisers highlighted the problems of lack of resources and financial capital.

For QTPOC and other activist practice I recommend exploring the possibilities of reparative and transformative forms of dealing with conflict and building on the potential of QTPOC connection and the erotic for community building. This might be fruitfully undertaken utilising action
research. This might explore other academic research and other activist practices to find solutions to current issues around conflict and abuse, such as Sarah Schulman’s recent ‘Conflict Is Not Abuse’ as well as the work of organisations such as Incite!. This will also be useful to explore disagreements around strategies, such as political Blackness. Sedgwick (2003), Munoz (2003), Johnson (2015) and Lorde (1984) provide possibilities for emphasising connection, the reparative and erotic to develop and build community capacity further.
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Withdrawal from Brighton/London Group Facebook group

‘Hey folks, just writing to say I am going to leave the online group for a while because as some of you will know I am doing my PhD on QTIPoC activism and I am starting my fieldwork right now. I am beginning to approach groups and asking for participants, so I feel that being a member online might feel like an intrusion while I have my researcher hat on. I will be in contact formally about the research via an admin, also feel free to send me an e-mail if you have any queries: s.davis2@brighton.ac.uk. Cheers’

Posted by key organiser 7th October 2014
Appendix 2

Information and Consent Form for Key Organisers

University of Brighton

Queer Trans* People of Colour in the UK: Community, Activisms and Affirmation

Information and consent form for key organisers and facilitators of QTPOC groups

What is the research about?

I am a PhD research student and am a queer, trans* people of colour (QTPOC) activist. I am focusing my research on QTPOC activisms in the UK. I am interested in what QTPOC groups and activisms mean to those involved, how they operate and for what purpose. I would like to explore how QTPOC activisms affect our own sense of selves and our wellbeing as people who are negotiating multiple-identities.

There is little research done with queer trans* people of colour activists which explores this type of organising away from mainstream and often white-majority queer and trans* groups and organisations. This research would address this gap and may contribute to critical understandings of queer trans* people of colour’s lived experiences and the resources on which we draw on.

Why have I been approached?

You have been approached because you have been identified as a key organiser or facilitator of a QTPOC group. I am asking for your consent to gain access to the QTPOC group that you are involved with. You may want to discuss this with other members before signing this form.

How will the research be undertaken?

If you consent to access to the QTPOC group that you are involved with there will be two main proposed phases of the research:
**Phase 1**

- I hope to invite group members to participate in a formal focus group to discuss what the QTPOC group means to them. This will be recorded with two Dictaphones and transcripts will be included in the final data. Consent will need to be given by all who participate in the focus group. Participants of the focus group will be asked to agree to a code of conduct. The code of conduct will discuss the limits of confidentiality in a group setting. All data will be anonymised (participants will be asked to pick a pseudonym) so what has been shared or discussed in the focus group will not be traced back to those who take part.

**Phase 2**

- Phase 2 will involve one on one interviews and will ask participants to use photography to share their experiences of being a queer trans* person of colour. Involvement will be completely voluntary. Your consent to accessing the group will allow me to invite members to be involved in Phase 2. Participation in Phase 1 does not mean members are required to participate in Phase 2; however they will be invited to. Consent will need to be given by all who participate in the interviews and again for use of the photography they share. All data will be anonymised, participants will be asked to pick a pseudonym or continue to use the pseudonym used in Phase 1 if they wish. Participants will be asked to consent to the use of each photo in the research.

You do not have to take part in this research. If you do choose to consent to access to the group it will be greatly appreciated.

**Is this confidential?**

All data will be anonymised ensuring that data cannot be traced back to individual participants. However participants must be mindful that the experiences they discuss may be recognisable and therefore they will be asked to use a pseudonym. Data will be confidential as it will only be discussed with my supervisors. All data extracts will be anonymised in the thesis, papers and published work. Anonymised data extracts and photos will be used in published work up to ten years from the date of the focus group or interviews. However in the focus groups what is shared and by whom will be known by the participants. Participants will be asked to agree to a code of conduct and to group confidentiality, however this cannot be guaranteed by the researcher.
All data will be securely stored at the University of Brighton. All personal
details of participants that are collected such as legal name and contact
details will be stored separately from the data collected and will only be
linked by your research participant number. I will be the only person who
has access to personal details.

In *Phase 1* all personal identifiable details will be removed from the
fieldwork notes and focus group transcripts. The focus group audio will be
transcribed by me and participants will only be identified by their research
participant number and chosen pseudonym.

In *Phase 2* I will transcribe all interview audio and remove all possible
personal identifiable details from the transcript. Participants will only be
identified by their research participant number and chosen pseudonym.
Participants will decide which photos they would like included in the final
research; it will be down to each participant to decide if they include photos
which may jeopardise their anonymity.

Any information provided will be kept confidential unless you say something
which leads me to believe that you or someone else is at risk of harm. In
this case, I will work with you to think about who might be the most
appropriate people to inform and to identify appropriate sources of support
for yourself and others.

**Benefits and risks in participating**

There are no direct benefits for participating in this research. The research
aims to explore the meanings attached to queer trans* people of colour
activism and how this impacts our sense of selves as QTPOC. The
research aims to address our lived experiences as queer trans* people of
colour. Some distress may arise from these discussions as talking about
experiences of marginalisation, discrimination, our communities and our
identities may be upsetting. This may be a risk in participating. Participants
would be able to withdraw from the research at any time and suggested
organisations for further support will be signposted.

*Whether you decide to participate in the research or not will have no impact
on your participation in your QTPOC group as a whole. Please do not
pressure others to participate as this must be an individual decision. The
research will not have any impact on legal cases regarding immigration.*

**Researcher contact information**

I, Stephanie Davis, am the main researcher and can be contacted at
s.davis2@brighton.ac.uk
**Statement of consent and pseudonym**

As a key organiser or facilitator of _________ I consent to Stephanie Davis, MPhil/PhD researcher from the University of Brighton, accessing the group and inviting members to participate in her research.

I consent to *Phase 1* for Stephanie to recruit members for a focus group discussing the meanings of QTPOC activism and groups. I consent to Stephanie recruiting for *Phase 2* of her research.

I understand that members of the group are not required to participate in the study and if they do decide to participate they are free to withdraw up to one month after participation.

I will keep a copy of this form for my own records and understand that after this my legal name and contact details will be kept separate from my chosen pseudonym and research participant number. The name of the QTPOC group I belong to will be referred to as ____________.

Name
(print)……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Signature……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Chosen pseudonym……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Research participant number………………

Date………………
Appendix 3

Advert for research and recruitment

These were published within the QTPOC groups Facebook pages and mailing lists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brighton Group 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘Hi all, I hope you are well.</td>
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</table>

As some of you may know I am undertaking research as part of my PhD into QTPOC activism. I would like to invite members of **** to be involved in a focus group discussion to talk about what QTPOC groups are for, why people are part of them and what they mean to you. The focus group would be for members of **** only, would take place in the city centre at a time appropriate for all participants, would last up to two hours and food and drink will be provided.

If you are interested, or have any questions please email me on s.davis2@brighton.ac.uk. Please contact me by Tuesday 14th October if you would like to take part.

Many thanks, Stephanie Davis’

Posted by key organiser 7th October 2014

| ‘Hi everyone, it’s Steph. |

Just wanted to do a second call out to invite you all to take part in an informal focus group to discuss QTPOC activism and networks and why these spaces are important to you. This will form part of my PhD research into how queer and trans people of colour create their own autonomous spaces and what it means for our identities and wellbeing.

If people are unsure about being involved I am happy to meet for tea to discuss further, or I can come along to the next **** meet up to answer any questions. Just give me a text on ******** or email me on s.davis2@brighton.ac.uk as soon as possible.

Thankyou!’

Posted by key organiser 14th October 2014

| ‘Hi all, |

Stephanie Davis will be running a focus group tomorrow evening (Friday 14th November, 7.30pm, off Western Road, Hove) as part of her PhD research into QTPOC activisms. There is still space for a few more participants, so if you are interested please text her on ******** or email her on s.davis2@brighton.ac.uk and she will forward you a consent form and further details.
Steph hasn’t asked people to be involved herself to ensure that no-one feels pressured and wants to emphasise that all members of **** are welcome to participate. Food and drink will be provided and the focus group will run for no longer than 2 hours.

Thank you!’
Posted by key organiser 13th November 2014

Group X
‘Hi everyone, I wanted to invite you to take part in a focus group to discuss QTPOC activism and networks. This will form part of my PhD research into how queer and trans people of colour create our own spaces and what this means for our identities and wellbeing. If people are unsure about being involved I am happy to have a chat, or I can Skype you at your next meeting to answer any questions.

If you decide you would like to take part the focus group will be held on Saturday 22nd November at **** in **** from 12-2pm, will last up to 2 hours and food and drink will be provided. I will facilitate the discussion and it will be recorded on two Dictaphones. All data will be transcribed by myself and anonymised. If you are interested or would like further information please e-mail me on s.davis2@brighton.ac.uk

All the best, Stephanie Davis’
Posted by key organiser 22nd October 2014

Brighton/London Group
‘Hi everyone,

I'm Stephanie Davis and I am a co-founder of QTPOC groups in **** and ****. I am now undertaking my PhD research into queer and trans people of colour activistisms, how we create our own spaces and what this means for our identities and wellbeing. I would like to invite you all to take part in a focus group to discuss QTPOC activism and networks. I am looking for up to 8 participants from QTPOC London.

If you decide you would like to take part the focus group would happen in November or December in London, at a time best for participants, will last up to 2 hours and food and drink will be provided. I will facilitate the discussion and it will be recorded on two Dictaphones. All data will be transcribed by myself and anonymised. I would be very grateful if you would like to take part. If you are interested or would like further information please e-mail me on s.davis2@brighton.ac.uk.

Best wishes,

Stephanie’
Posted by key organiser 28th October 2014
‘Just a reminder that the QTPOC focus group is happening this Saturday 28th February at SOAS in room 366 from 12.30-2.30. Please meet me in the reception area at 12.20 - any problems please feel free to contact me on **********.

Travel expenses in London can be reimbursed if on low wage/unemployed and food will be provided. There are still a couple of places for extra participants, so if you know someone who may be interested please get them to contact me on this email: S.davis2@brighton.ac.uk’

Posted by key organiser 24th February 2015
Appendix 4

Information and Consent Form for Focus Group Participants

🌟

University of Brighton

Queer Trans* People of Colour in the UK: Community, Activisms and Affirmation

Information and consent form for focus group participants

What is the research about?

I am a PhD research student and am a queer trans* people of colour (QTPOC) activist. I am focusing my research on QTPOC activisms in the UK. I am interested in what QTPOC groups and activisms mean to those involved, how they operate and for what purpose. I would like to explore how QTPOC activisms affect our own sense of selves and our wellbeing as people who are negotiating multiple identities.

There is little research done with queer trans* people of colour activists which explores this type of organising away from mainstream and often white-majority queer and trans* groups and organisations. This research would address this gap and may contribute to critical understandings of queer trans* people of colour’s lived experiences and the resources on which we draw on.

Why have I been approached?

You have been approached because you are a member of __________ and have been invited to take part in a focus group to discuss this.

What is involved?

- You are invited to a focus group with other members from your QTPOC group to discuss what the group means to you.
- The discussion will be recorded with two Dictaphones and transcripts will be included in the final data.
- You do not have to participate in the focus group, if you choose to do so you do not have to answer all questions or discuss topics you do not want to. You are free to withdraw from the focus group at any time without question.
- The focus group will take place on __________ at ________________.
• Consent will need to be given by all who participate in the focus group.
• All data will be anonymised (participants will be asked to pick a pseudonym) so the risk of what has been shared or discussed in the focus group being traced back to those who take part is reduced.

Is this confidential?

The focus group audio will be transcribed by myself and I will remove all possible personal identifiable details from the transcript. Participants will only be identified by their research participant number and chosen pseudonym. All data will be securely stored at the University of Brighton. All personal details of participants that are collected such as legal name and contact details will be stored separately from the data collected and will only be linked by your research participant number. I will be the only person who has access to personal details. Data will be confidential as it will only be discussed with my supervisors. All transcripts from the focus group will be anonymised in the thesis, papers and published work. Anonymised data will be used in published work up to ten years from the date of the group meeting.

Any information provided will be kept confidential unless you say something which leads me to believe that you or someone else is at risk of harm. In this case, I will work with you to think about who might be the most appropriate people to inform and to identify appropriate sources of support for yourself and others.

Benefits and risks in participating

There are no direct benefits for participating in this research. The research aims to explore the meanings attached to queer trans* people of colour activism and how this impacts our sense of selves as QTPOC. The research aims to address our lived experiences as queer trans* people of colour. Some distress may arise from these discussions as talking about experiences of marginalisation, discrimination, our communities and our identities may be upsetting. This may be a risk in participating. Participants would be able to withdraw from the research during the focus group and data can be withdrawn from the research up to one month after.

Whether you decide to participate in the research or not will have no impact on your participation in your QTPOC group as a whole. Please do not pressure others to participate as this must be an individual decision. The research will not have any impact on legal cases regarding immigration.

Researcher contact information
I, Stephanie Davis, am the main researcher and can be contacted at s.davis2@brighton.ac.uk

Statement of consent and pseudonym

As a member of _________ I consent to participate in a focus group for the purposes of this research.

I understand that I am not required to participate in the study and if I do decide to participate I am free to withdraw from the focus group and data can be withdrawn from the research up to one month after.

I will keep a copy of this form for my own records and understand that after this my legal name and contact details will be kept separate from my chosen pseudonym and research participant number. The name of the QTPOC group I belong to will be referred to as _________

Name (print) ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
................................................................................................................................................

Signature…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
.................................................................................................................................................................

Chosen pseudonym………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
.................................................................................................................................................................

Research participant number………
  Date…………………
Appendix 5

Information and Consent Form for Interview Participants

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University of Brighton

Queer Trans People of Colour in the UK: Community, Activisms and Affirmation

Information and consent form for interview

What is the research about?

I am a PhD research student and am a queer and trans people of colour (QTPOC) activist. I am focusing my research on QTPOC activisms in the UK. I am interested in what QTPOC groups and activisms mean to those involved, how they operate and for what purpose. I would like to explore how QTPOC activisms affect our own sense of selves and our wellbeing as people who are negotiating multiple identities.

There is little research done with queer and trans people of colour activists which explores this type of organising away from mainstream and often white-majority queer and trans groups and organisations. This research would address this gap and may contribute to critical understandings of queer and trans people of colour’s lived experiences and the resources on which we draw on.

Why have I been approached?

You have been approached because you are a member or organiser of a QTPOC activist community and have been invited to take part in an interview to explore your personal experiences of being a queer and/or trans person of colour.

What is involved?

- Two weeks before your interview date you will be given a digital camera (or asked to use your own camera/camera phone) and asked to take photos in relation to the topic of QTPOC activism and your personal experience of being a queer and/or trans person of colour.
- On the day of the interview you will be asked to review your photos before sharing them which will give you the opportunity to delete any that you may not want to share or save them for your own records.
• You will be asked to share up to ten of the photos you have taken in the preceding two weeks during the interview – it does not have to be ten, it can be any number you feel comfortable with up to ten photos.
• The photos you do decide to share will be uploaded onto my laptop and I will ask you to discuss each photo. During the interview I will ask you questions about activism and your own experiences as a queer and/or trans person of colour.
• The interview will last up to 2 hours and be recorded on two Dictaphones.
• I will require you to sign this consent form prior to the interview and decide on a pseudonym. I will also need your consent if you share your photos in the interview and if you decide that you are happy for them to be used in the final thesis. If you choose to participate you do not have to answer any questions or talk about any topics that you do not feel comfortable with. You have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time, and ask for data to be withdrawn for up to two weeks after the interview date.

You do not have to take part in this research. If you do choose to participate it will be greatly appreciated.

Is this confidential?

The interview audio will be transcribed either by myself or a professional transcription service and I will remove all possible personal identifiable details from the transcript. You will only be identified by your research participant number and chosen pseudonym. All data will be securely stored on my computer under password or physically locked away. All personal details that are collected such as legal name and contact details will be stored separately from the data collected and will only be linked by your research participant number. I will be the only person who has access to personal details. The transcript will be anonymised in the thesis, papers and published work. Anonymised data will be used in published work up to ten years from the date of the interview.

Any information provided will be kept confidential unless you say something which leads me to believe that you or someone else is at risk of harm. In this case, I will work with you to think about who might be the most appropriate person or people to inform and to identify appropriate sources of support for yourself and others.

Benefits and risks in participating

There are no direct benefits for participating in this research. The research aims to explore the meanings attached to queer and trans people of colour activism and how this impacts our sense of selves as QTPOC. The research aims to address our lived experiences as queer and trans people
of colour. Some distress may arise from these discussions as talking about experiences of marginalisation, discrimination, our communities and our identities may be upsetting. This may be a risk in participating. You are free to withdraw from the research during the interview and data can be withdrawn from the research up to two weeks after the interview.

Whether you decide to participate in the research or not will have no impact on your participation in your QTPOC group or community as a whole. Please do not pressure others to participate as this must be an individual decision. The research will not have any impact on legal cases regarding immigration.

**Researcher contact information**

I, Stephanie Davis, am the main researcher and can be contacted at s.davis2@brighton.ac.uk

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*See following page for statement of consent and pseudonym*

**Statement of consent and pseudonym**

I consent to participating in an interview for the purpose of this research. I understand I am not required to participate in this research and am free to withdraw at any time.

I will keep a copy of this form for my own records and understand that after this my legal name and contact details will be kept separate from my chosen pseudonym and research participant number.

Name  
(print)…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………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Appendix 6

Information and Consent Form for Photos for Interview Participants

University of Brighton

Queer Trans* People of Colour in the UK: Community, Activisms and Affirmation

Information and consent form for photos

As part of your participation in the interview for this research project you have been asked to take photos with a digital camera about QTPOC activism and your personal experience as a queer trans* person of colour.

This information and consent form discusses guidance for taking photos and asks for consent to using your photography at different stages in the research.

On taking photos

- Consider what you photograph and what you would like to share in the research. The interview data will be anonymised so what is said cannot be traced back to you, please consider what photos you decide to share and if you are comfortable with photos that may give away personally identifiable information. This may include distinctive clothing and home settings.
- If including photos of others in the research please blur out their faces. Taking photos in public spaces which may include crowds of people will not require faces to be blurred as it is reasonable to assume people expect to be photographed in public spaces.
- Please do not take explicit photos or photos which may hint at illegal activities.

How will the photos be used?

Photos can be shared at different levels of the research and this is up to you to decide what you are comfortable with. Before the interview when you will share your photos as part of the research you will be asked to review them and delete any you decide you do not want to share. You are free to withdraw all photos from the research at this point if you so wish.

You will be asked if you wish to share any photos at interview, and if so these photos will be included in the final thesis, future
publications/presentations and a possible future dissemination event. With this consent photos will be used in published work for up to ten years after the project ends. Inclusion of each photo will be decided by yourself on a photo by photo basis.

All photos will be stored on my personal laptop under a password. Photographs will be linked only by your pseudonym and research participant number.

Any information provided will be kept confidential unless you say something which leads me to believe that you or someone else is at risk of harm. In this case, I will work with you to think about who might be the most appropriate people to inform and to identify appropriate sources of support for yourself and others.

**Benefits and risks in participating**

There are no direct benefits for participating in this research. The research aims to explore the meanings attached to queer trans* people of colour activism and how this impacts our sense of selves as QTPOC. The research aims to address our lived experiences as queer trans* people of colour. Some distress may arise from these discussions as talking about experiences of marginalisation, discrimination, our communities and our identities may be upsetting. This may be a risk in participating. You are free to withdraw from the research during the interview and data can be withdrawn from the research up to one month after.

*Whether you decide to participate in the research or not will have no impact on your participation in your QTPOC group as a whole. Please do not pressure others to participate as this must be an individual decision. The research will not have any impact on legal cases regarding immigration.*

**Researcher contact information**

I, Stephanie Davis, am the main researcher and can be contacted at s.davis2@brighton.ac.uk

**Statement of consent and pseudonym**

I understand at the interview I will review the photos before sharing with Stephanie. I will be able to delete any that I do not wish to share and that I do not have to share photos if I do not wish to. If I do share photos, I understand that I can decide the level of use the photos will have in the research on a case by case basis at interview. I understand and will follow the guidelines for taking photos as stated above.
I understand I am not required to participate in this research and am free to withdraw during the interview and withdraw data up to a month from the date of the interview.

I will keep a copy of this form for my own records and understand that after this my legal name and contact details will be kept separate from my chosen pseudonym and research participant number. The name of the QTPOC group I belong to will be referred to as

…………………………………………………………………………………

Name
(print)…………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………

Signature……………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………

Chosen
pseudonym…………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………

Research participant number…………
Date………………….
Appendix 7

Focus Group Schedule

1. What does the term QTPOC mean to you?
   a. How do you define Queer and Trans and People of Colour?
   b. How do you feel about other terms such as Black Minority Ethnic Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans (BME LGBT) or Black LGBT?

2. What is the best thing about being involved in your QTPOC group?

3. Why are you involved in your QTPOC group?
   a. Are you involved in other queer, trans or people of colour groups or activisms? How do they differ?

4. What does your QTPOC group do? How does it work and what is its purpose?

5. Who is involved in your QTPOC group?
   a. Who is not involved? (Place of white people?)

6. Do you consider yourself an activist? Why/why not?
   a. Do you consider your involvement in your QTPOC group as a part of your activism? How important is this to you?

7. What do you think people gain from being involved in your QTPOC group?

8. Are there any problems or issues you have found in being involved with your QTPOC group (coming from within the group or outside of it)?

9. Have you got anything else you would like to add?
Appendix 8

Interview Schedule

- Introductions
  - Thank for participation
  - Consent form – consent for photos
  - Confidentiality/anonymity
  - Right to withdraw
  - How the interview will run

- Switch on recording devices

- Before looking at your photos, I wanted to ask a couple of questions about what the term ‘QTPOC’ means to you.

  - How did you come to define yourself as QTPOC, or under the umbrella of QTPOC?
    - What happened?
    - How does it feel?
    - What does it mean to identify as QTPOC?

- Thank you for that, now would you like to tell me about the photos you’ve picked to share with me today? Remember the prompt was – ‘My experience of being a queer and/or trans person of colour; My experience of QTPOC activism.’

  - What is your experience of the world as a queer and/or trans person of colour?
    - How does it feel to experience the world in your body?

  - Can you tell me how you came to be involved in your QTPOC group/QTPOC activism?
    - Why did you get involved?

  - What does it mean to you, being involved in your QTPOC group/QTPOC activism?
    - What did it mean to you at first? Is this different from now?

  - Has being involved with your QTPOC group/QTPOC activism changed the way you think or feel about yourself?
    - About the world around you?
    - Do you see yourself differently now, as compared to before your involvement?
    - Has it affected your sense of identity?

  - What have you learnt about yourself and others since being involved in your QTPOC group/QTPOC activism?
o What are the main differences in your experiences between being a part of mainstream LGBT communities, communities of colour and being part of QTPOC groups? What are the similarities?

o What do you think your life would be like if you were not a part of your QTPOC group?
Appendix 9

Example of Group X Focus Group Initial Codes

Initial Codes Group X
Defining who is in the group ................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Group X as a support group ................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
A space FOR QTPOC ..................................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Safe space ............................................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Defining ‘black queers’ ..............................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
LGBT spaces as predominantly ‘white’ .........................240
Group X as a space away from ‘whiteness’ and ‘white people’ ....................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Isolation in white majority space .................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Issues with talking about QTPOC experiences with white people ........Error! Bookmark not defined.
Group X group for socialising ......................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Shared experiences ....................................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Different experiences in the group ................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Problems with talking about racism with white people ..........Error! Bookmark not defined.
Needing to talk about racism and your experiences .............Error! Bookmark not defined.
Friendship ...............................................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Engaging with other local projects .................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Creating Black queer culture/Black Queer Cultural activism ..........Error! Bookmark not defined.
Existing outside mainstream/typical gay cultures ..............Error! Bookmark not defined.
Group X as representation and visibility ........................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Group X as Advocacy for Black queers ............................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Signposting ...............................................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Using social media .......................................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Lack of spaces for PoC ..................................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Group X as feeling connected to other QTPOC/creating community ....Error! Bookmark not defined.
Group X as a space to be out ........................................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Group X as a space to be comfortable ............................Error! Bookmark not defined.
Need to create own spaces as QT/POC  
White spaces cannot be relied on to include PoC all the time, even if they do sometimes  
Loss of PoC/Black spaces for culture/art in the city  
Collaborative working with other projects for QTPOC  
Issues of funding  
Satisfaction of working with PoC in PoC spaces  
Importance of Group X being independent from mainstream LGBT organisations  
Experience of QTPOC being tokenised  
Group X as having a political identity, being a political space  
Racism in white LGBT mainstream spaces  
Lack of belonging or connection to mainstream LGBT spaces  
Being stereotyped as a homophobe  
LGBT spaces as too white and male  
Lack of support for QTPOC in mainstream LGBT spaces  
Minorities do not understand other minorities – understanding across difference  
Lack of visibility and representation on the LGBT scene/organisations  
Difficulty finding community  
Mainstream LGBT spaces are not for QTPOC or Black Queers  
Mainstream LGBT spaces do not want QTPOC or Black queers  
Not seen as queer because Black/PoC  
Blackness as threatening for LGBT people/LGBT scene  
Being stereotyped  
Black queers/QTPOC issues dismissed/not taken seriously  
Racism is dismissed
White people do not understand or recognise racism. Talking about race and racism makes one a ‘troublemaker’. LGBTQ spaces position themselves as ‘progressive’ when they are not. POC positioned as the ones who need to work on/talk about ‘race’. Black people are an afterthought in LGBT spaces. Some LGBT groups are inclusive. Intersectional representation and organisation. Important that white people learn about and understand racism. Only being around People of Colour to survive. Choosing not to be friends with white people who do not understand racism, in order to ‘survive’. Dislike for the term ‘People of Colour’. Islamophobia in mainstream LGBT spaces. Group X as welcoming of all QTPOC – embracing differences. Tiring having to explain your queerness as a QTPOC to other LGBT people. Assumptions about the group. Discrimination experienced by asylum seekers. Seriousness of issues facing QTPOC. Some white people dismiss Group X, do not understand why it exists. Racism as comparable to homophobia. Dismissal or disbelief of QTPOC lived experiences. White LGBT people do not want to hear about race or racism. Tiredness and Frustration dealing with racism, or people not understanding.
White people feel discriminated against by QTPOC exclusivity

White LGBT people have to face up to their racial privilege, racism, benefits of being white

Problem with the term BME

Support for the term Black (as in politically Black)

Problems with the term Black (politically)

Support for the use of the term ‘People of Colour’

Political, British context of ‘Black’

Need for a new term to address racial identities

US context of ‘Black’

Differences and similarities of experience for Black people/People of Colour across communities and geographical location

No matter how you define yourself, white people will see you in a certain way that you cannot change

Not being involved in ‘Black’ culture – not seen as ‘black’ enough?

Being LGBT challenges authenticity of Blackness

Need for visibility of specific Black/mixed race/PoC experience

‘POC’ as a fashionable term

Frustration with having to define selves related to racial identity

Appendix 10

Example from Group X Focus Group of one code and the eight different units of text associated with this code.
LGBT spaces as predominantly ‘white’ (code)

Sasha: Yeah, that's the point of the group really because LGBTQ spaces are predominantly white anyway so...

D: Yeah
Sasha: ...as a person of colour you just feel, well you can feel a sense of isolation within that space, which is one of the main reasons why Group X started and why it's still really important to us

Annabelle: and as a woman I feel like that's another, another thing, cos I feel like (name of gay area) always been very white male

D: Mmmmm
S: Mmmmmm
Annabelle: you know, erm, and quite, I mean I've even got white male friends who find (name of gay area) intimidating....
S: Right
Annabelle: cos of the amount of testosterone that's flying around, and
S: Ok, yeah
Annabelle: you know, what's considered to be sort of like ok in terms of different kinds of (loud noise cannot hear)
S: Mmmm
Annabelle: and erm, so I just, I would like it to change I think really
S: Mmmm, mmmm
Annabelle: I think it could be a lot better
S: Right, yeah
Annabelle: More inclusive.

Jay: Erm, for me I think it started off different when I first came to University it was more 20:01 oh my goodness gay spaces, you know, other gay people was exciting for me
D: (laughs)
Jay: And then I got involved in my University quite a lot, working with them, and holding events and everything and then it was only towards like the end my actual like final year
S: Hmm
Jay: that I realised there weren't really any like people of colour spaces, and even now I'm not in Uni now and I still try to get involved, in sort of like steering more of workshops in regards to like people of colour but, when I sort of bring them up, they, it's, they're very dominating, like, I think that's the right word to use.
S: Hmmm
Jay: Cos I feel like, at the moment I come up with any like people of colour workshop ideas or anything like that they sort of like, undermine my ideas and
S: Right
Jay:..I don't know how to explain it. But they don't see it as proper, they don't value it as much as
D: Right
Jay: in other spaces
(Participants murmur in agreement)
S: Yeah.
Jay: Like
S: Yeah
Jay: So that's really, it's really frustrating so,
S: Yeah
Jay: Yeah, to not have any, any erm other LGBTQ people of colour within the spaces, and then to not have support within er, erm, a minority group that's already been discriminated. You'd think that they'd sort of understand but obviously because they're not black.....
S: Mmmm, yeah
Jay: they don't understand to that level.
S: Mmmm
D: Mmmmm
Jay: how one is to make other people feel supported in that community (hard to hear). So yeah.

D: And there was (name of local Black, queer dj/club night) (laughs)
S: Yeah!
D: Yeah, back in the day.
S: Can you say a bit more about (Black queer dj/club night)
D: Well, you know (Black queer dj/club night), there was (name) club nights and then you did see some you know Black women (laughs) and all the Black gay women I knew were either, I knew them from (local theatre with BME and LGBT community links) or I knew them from (Black queer dj/club night).
S: Right
D: But even looking back on that, even on a (Black queer dj/club night) night there was still more people in Group X that were Black than, so...(laughing) that you know, that, but I mean like erm, the, what was it, erm during the last Pride you had a (Black queer
dj/club night)/(local lesbian party) and all these women came up from London

S: Yeah?

D: and you know that was brilliant.

S: Yeah, yeah.

D: It was, you know, it was outside of the you know gay village and, it just felt a lot **better**.

S: Mmmm, mmmm, yeah

D: Cos, erm, when I first came out I was sort of, hanging out with the kind of people who went to (name of defunct queer club night in the city)..? Did people know (name of defunct queer club night in the city)? Nope! I think (name of defunct queer club night in the city) gone. It used to be an alternative night out of (name of local arts/club venue)....

22:14

S: Ok! I know (name of local arts/club venue)

D: and, yeah, so, but you know, heavily white...

S: Mmmm, mmm, yeah

D: a bit, not quite the village, but...

S: Mmmm

D: still part of, a diff - you know, the alternative scene

S: Hmmmm, yeah

D: and, no Black people.

S: Mmmmm

D: (laughs)

Sasha: It's interesting that cos I've had conversations with two different people within the last month that have both said like, one of the problems with the village is, if, if they, if they, had a venue that changed the music up

Annabelle: Yeah

D: Mmmmm

Sasha: there'd be more people going...

Annabelle: Yeah

Sasha: and like part of me's like, oh is it just like, is, would that **really**, would it really work but like....

S: Mmmmm

Sasha: both people were **adamant** (cannot hear)

Annabelle: Yeah

Sasha: out on (name of gay area in city) a black guy, and he was like do you know what? If you switch the music up, more people would come here.

Annabelle: Yeah
(Participants murmur in agreement)
Annabelle: Without a doubt.
Sasha: this, this kind of like...I guess venue owners are scared it's like they don't care that that those people aren't accessing the space
(Participants murmurs of agreement)

Sasha: Yeah, there should be like, one off nights. Like (name of Asian queer club night), is like a South Asian LGBT night and that's like, once every few months, and it's like, that's rubbish you know, we should have nights...
D: (laughs)
Sasha: that exist every other so month, like (name of Black queer dj/night) was just like out of the blue and, (name of Asian queer club night) is like, hard-, you know what I mean very few, it's not regular. So, yeah, I just think it's rubbish. Tha yeah, we have a night, but every so often. You know. And tends to be outside the village as well, and its like no! This is our, well should be our space as well.
Annabelle: Mmmm
Sasha: But we're not welcome here.
S: Mmmm
Sasha: So, erm. Yeah, that's what's rubbish about LGBT spaces (laughs)

Sasha: I think when it's not obvious to people, they don't want to address it. So if you've not out rightly said you're, you know er, racist language or said no blacks allowed, I think that's the type of racism people would be ok with challenging.
Annabelle: Mmmm
S: Mmmm
D: Mmmmm
Sasha: People aren't ok with challenging stereotypes, people aren't ok with challenging silencing voices in that way. Where you feel silenced but everyone else in the room probably doesn't realise, or doesn't care.
Annabelle: Mmmm, mmmm
Sasha: So like, I think white people are like oh, ok you said the n word I can maybe challenge that cos that, that, that maybe didn't sound great.
S: Mmmmm
Sasha: When you said another racist word, or, or, you know you've actually put a block there.
S: Yeah, yeah
Sasha: If it's not obvious, they don't care and they don't realise and they don't understand
S: Mmmm
Annabelle: Mmmm
Dorian: Mmmm
Sasha: and they don't make the effort to understand.
S: Right,
D: Mmmm
Sasha: and you, you, you got very few people very few, you know, allies if you like that term, who will, you know, support you in those things, but it's difficult because if, the whole space is white and, and doesn't even acknowledge that, that kind of racism's happening or that to assume because I'm a Black man I'm gonna, perform this way, or to assume that because I'm a Black woman I'm going to like this sort of thing, and those kinds of you know, really negative stereotypes and, and that kind of racism, people don't, notice it, so they, it doesn't get addressed so you just, seen as a troublemaker or sensitive.
S: Mmmm
(One participant says: Yeah)
S: Yeah
D: Well.....their, I mean LGBTQ spaces and, places are like theatre in that, they think that they're ahead of the game and progressive already.
S: Right
D: So trying to make them understand how they're racist, is almost impossible.
S: Right
D: But they are very racist. Both of them, so....
S: Mmmm, mmmm
D: it's sort of like you can...I was on the Arts Council, and I, the only thing I did on the Arts Council was constantly have to bring up, you know, the Black stuff. Cos if I didn't do it, none of the rest of them would.
S: Mmmm
D: And you know, it wears you out man.
S: Mmmmm, mmm
Sasha: Mmmm
S: Yeah.

Afia: I think like, mainstream LGBT spaces, is like relate...do think about people of colour, Black folk it's, it's usually an after thought or maybe, when it's..Black history month or something like that.
S: Yeah
( Participant laughs)
Aflia: Or, when they, they feel like..
D: Mmmmm
Aflia: well, someone might have made a comment saying oh, you're not really representing, you know, the full community. And then, then they might,
S: Mmmmm, mmm
Aflia: you know, bring in, one person, that they might know, that might be Black...
S: Yeah
Aflia: or, you know a person of colour, to represent a whole community, which is...a form of tokenism. And I find, that is....
D: Mmmmm
S: Mmm
Aflia: definitely more frequent up here.
S: Yeah
Aflia: Cos there's LGBT groups in London, I don't, I don't mean to, sort of you know, but erm, there's some LGBT groups in London that do not have people of colour as an afterthought. I'm on, I'm on, well I'm not gonna say who I'm on the board for, but I'm on the board for an organisation called (name of London based LGBT organisation).
S: Right, right
Aflia: Who the majority of us, on the board, are people of colour.
S: Right
Aflia: And the paid staff, are happen to be white but that’s just, a coincidence, erm but,
S: Right
Aflia: it's an amazing organisation,
S: Ok
Aflia: that erm, represents every you know, nook and cranny of the communities, seriously.
S: Yeah
Aflia: Like on, in a non-tokenised, sort of prejudiced sort of, you know, way.
S: Mmm
Aflia: Erm, and I've never experienced that anywhere.
S: Right
Aflia: You know, in terms of integration, but not in a way that it's being forced, it's a nat-it's a natural way of integrating.
D: Mmm
Aflia: You know, people that, you know, Asian women, erm, families,
S: Mmmm
Aflia: Like, youngers, you know,
S: Yeah
Aflia: under 18 folk,
S: Yeah
D: Mmmm
Aflia: You know. Peoples in their 60s and 70s
S: Right, yeah.
Aflia: You know, this, in one space
S: Yeah
Aflia: I've never seen that in my life, and I would love to see it in (the city we are in). 
S: Yeah, yeah.
Aflia: But, yeah. And when they have an event, I'll let you know about it. Definitely go.
(Participants murmur: Mmmm)
S: Yeah
Aflia: It's, it's it's an amazing space. Like, it's not just space, I mean, they create spaces within London,
S: Yeah
Aflia: Erm, and, yeah, they've been running, for, a few, it used to be called (past name of organisation)
S: Ok
Aflia: and (older name of the organisation) but now they're called (name of organisation) they changed their name last year. And they've got a winter warmer coming up as well..
D: (Laughs)
Aflia: I don't mean to plug, but..yeah
(Participants laugh)
D: I guess you can post in Group X so you can...so you can all see it.
S: Yeah.
Aflia: But unfortunately it's gonna be on a Wednesday this year, but erm, it's yeah, they're amazing, they're absolutely amazing. And I miss that.
S: Mmmmm, mmm
Aflia: About, about London.
S: Mmmm
Aflia: That erm, I can have a queer space, that has everyone, like, you know, that....
S: Mmmm
Aflia: there's white folk there that get it. You know mean? I haven't had, haven't met any white folk, that get it up here, at all.
D: Mmmmm
S: Right
D: Mmmmm
Aflia: Do you know what I mean?
S: Yeah
Annabelle: I think I know one.
Aflia: I think I've got white friends up here, that, get it in London.
S: Mmm
Aflia: You know what I mean? I'm not saying it's, it's because they're in London,
S: No,
Aflia: it's just because they've, they've took the time out to really understand what racism is in terms of a structure.
D: Mmmmm
S: Mmmmm
Aflia: You know mean? It's not about, being brought up in privilege and 33:58 then, you know, just about that.
D: Mmmmm
S: Yeah
Aflia: It's about actually acknowledging, what you've got as, you know,
S: Yeah
Aflia: in terms of privilege and stuff. And how you can make changes in the world,
S: Yeah
Aflia: d'you know what I mean? Those are the types of white folk I have around me.
S: Yeah, yeah
Aflia: And I haven't found them, d'you know what I mean? So I've, I've...
D: (laughs)
Aflia: since I've been here...
S: Yeah
Aflia: I've just been with people of colour,
S: Mmmmm
D: Mmmmmmm
Aflia: out of, er, out of, out of survival to be honest with you.
S: Mmmmm
Aflia: Erm, so, yeah, so it's very refreshing to have Group X here, thank you.
S: Yeah
Appendix 11

Initial Themes and Code Matrix for Focus Groups Data

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<th>Group X</th>
<th>Brighton Group 2</th>
<th>Brighton/London Group</th>
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<td><strong>Negotiating naming selves</strong>&lt;br&gt;Defining who is in the group&lt;br&gt;Defining ‘black queers’&lt;br&gt;Dislike for the term People of Colour&lt;br&gt;Problem with the term BME&lt;br&gt;Support for the term Black&lt;br&gt;Problems with the term Black&lt;br&gt;Support for the use of the term ‘People of Colour’&lt;br&gt;Political, British context of ‘Black’&lt;br&gt;US context of Black&lt;br&gt;No matter how you define yourself, white people will see you in a certain way that you cannot change&lt;br&gt;POC as a fashionable term&lt;br&gt;Frustration with having to define selves related to racial identity&lt;br&gt;Solidarity among POC/Black people&lt;br&gt;Reclaiming derogatory words like ‘of colour’</td>
<td><strong>Naming selves</strong>&lt;br&gt;The term ‘QTPOC’ as a challenge&lt;br&gt;Problems with other names and terms&lt;br&gt;Name and labelling selves and group&lt;br&gt;Queer as a political identity&lt;br&gt;Difficulty defining PoC&lt;br&gt;Different groups use POC, BME, or Black&lt;br&gt;Defining ‘queer’ as opposed to ‘LGBT’&lt;br&gt;Importance of ‘queer’ space as opposed to LGBT space&lt;br&gt;Group for LGBT and Queer poc</td>
<td><strong>Building QTPOC social and support networks</strong>&lt;br&gt;Lack of networks, need for QTPOC network&lt;br&gt;Brighton/London Group as a support group&lt;br&gt;Brighton/London Group as a social group&lt;br&gt;Brighton/London Group as a space to develop further networks for QTPOC&lt;br&gt;Developing QTPOC community&lt;br&gt;Brighton/London space to develop friendship networks&lt;br&gt;QTPOC have a lack of networks or community&lt;br&gt;Intergenerational networks and friendships in Brighton/London Group&lt;br&gt;Experience of isolation&lt;br&gt;Developing friendships in Brighton/London Group&lt;br&gt;Difficulty finding community&lt;br&gt;Brighton/London Group as a form of resistance</td>
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<td>Difference, managing difference</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Brighton/London Group</td>
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<td>Leaving the group to work out what is and is not appropriate online; admins only step in when something abusive occurs</td>
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</table>
| Racism in white LGBT mainstream spaces 
Issues with talking about QTPOC experiences with white people 
White people do not understand or recognise racism 
Problems with talking about racism with white people 
Black queers/QTPOC issues dismissed/not taken seriously 
Dismissal or disbelief of QTPOC lived experiences 
White LGBT people do not want to hear about race or racism | Brighton Group 2 as an activist group 
Brighton Group 2 as a social/support space 
Brighton Group 2 as a place to share experience as QTPOC 
QTPOC builds confidence to address intersections, speak for self QTPOC as a ‘safe space’ | Tensions of addressing racial identity – asking ‘are you QTPOC?’ 
Brighton/London group for ‘self-identifying’ QTPOC 
Being conscious of different racial dynamics in QTPOC 
Being mixed-race; mixedness 
Definitions of QTPOC 
Learning from/linking to QTPOC/Black queer history 
Definition of politically Black 
Hidden history, history being ‘whited out’ 
The term ‘PoC’ as more current |
| Racism is dismissed LGBTQ spaces position themselves as ‘progressive’ when they are not Islamophobia in mainstream LGBT spaces  
|—|PoC as more inclusive  
|Racism seen as comparable to homophobia  
|Tiredness and frustration dealing with racism/people not understanding  
|—|Politically Black less well known term; not as inclusive  
|Importance of clear, inclusive definitions – not academic  
|When the term Black is used it is hard to figure out who is welcome  
|Importance of political blackness  
|Problems with the term ‘politically Black’  
|Change in language relating to Black ‘Political Blackness’ still used by others, still current in other circles  
|Difficulty defining who exactly is a ‘person of colour’  
|Rejection  
|Painful being asked your ethno-racial identity – are you POC or not?  

| **Managing difference**  
| Different experiences in the group  
| Group X as welcoming of all QTPOC – embracing differences  
| Discrimination experienced by asylum seekers  
| Differences and similarities of experiences across communities and geographical  

| **The problems of talking about race**  
| Difficulty talking about race and its intersections with other  
| External resistance to Brighton Group 2  
| Risky to talk about/take action regarding experiences as QTPOC  
| Causing ‘trouble’ talking about race  
| Addressing racism is seen as PoC’s job  
| Problems of Visibility  
| Feeling ‘unsafe’ in the city, in the LGBT/Queer scene  

| **Mental and physical wellbeing**  
| Accessibility and barriers to QTPOC  
| London face to face meet-ups  
| Disability  
| Impact of racism on physical and mental health/wellbeing  
| Accessibility  
| Trauma  
| Experiences of racism  
| Validation helps the healing process  
| Survival as a QTPOC  
<p>| Suicide |</p>
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<td>Visibility and inclusion of older QTPOC in Group X</td>
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</table>

**The problems of talking about race, the burden on POC**

Neeiding to talk about racism and your experiences

Talking about race and racism makes one a ‘troublemaker’

PoC positioned as the ones who need to work on/talk about ‘race’

Important that white people learn about and understand racism

White LGBT people have to face up to their racial privilege

**Negotiating and developing QTPOC identities**

Being asked to choose between identities/fragmentation/one minority at a time

Coming to terms with queer and poc identities

Vulnerability in figuring out QTPOC identity

**Lack of funding and support for QTPOC**

Lack of funding

Working with other PoC organisations

Lack of research or understanding for funders to fund QTPOC

Minimise queer or ‘of colour’ parts to get funding

Narrative of QTPOC being ‘saved’
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<td>Group X as feeling connected to other QTPOC/creating community</td>
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<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
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<td>Issues of funding</td>
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<td>Queer culture encourages QTPOC to reject their culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Tokenism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Time in QTPOC spaces supports you to be ready to address specific ethno-racial background/identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Feeling like an outsider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Lack of support for developing QT/POC identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Having to develop QTPOC identity in isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Choosing different parts of yourself for different communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Different stages of developing a QTPOC identity; different stages of decolonisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Issues of funding</td>
<td>Avoiding your own ethno-racial culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity of negotiating QTPOC identity in the West Anti-imperialism and global struggle QTPOC lives as political Resisting Western definitions of the self Importance of defining the self Questioning Western LGBT paradigms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>QTPOC constrained by stereotypes</strong>&lt;br&gt;Being stereotyped as a homophobe Not seen as queer because Black/PoC Blackness as threatening for LGBT people/scene Being stereotyped Tired of having to explain your queerness as a QTPOC to other LGBT people Hypersexualization of Black gay men Experience of QTPOC being tokenised Not being involved in 'Black' culture – not seen as 'Black' enough? Being LGBT challenges authenticity of Blackness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brighton as a racist and exclusionary place for QTPOC</strong>&lt;br&gt;Brighton very white and racist Experience of exclusion as QTPOC Brighton/London Group as life saving Problems of racism in anarchist and queer scenes in Brighton Experiencing few spaces of support in Brighton as QTPOC Support in Brighton if you are queer or trans, but not if black or brown Brighton a ‘great queer destination’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of support for QTPOC in mainstream LGBT spaces</strong>&lt;br&gt;Lack of support for QTPOC in mainstream LGBT spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Difficulties of managing difference in QTPOC</strong>&lt;br&gt;Differences in QTPOC experience, managing difference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of visibility and representation on the LGBT scene/organisations</td>
<td>Feeling left out in QTPOC groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream LGBT spaces are not for QTPOC</td>
<td>Issues around dating white people, dating POC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black people are an afterthought in LGBT spaces</td>
<td>Relationships in QTPOC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some LGBT groups are inclusive</td>
<td>Being misgendered in QTPOC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersectional representation and organisation</td>
<td>Experiences being minimised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of inclusion and support in mainstream services for QTPOC</td>
<td>Feeling unsupported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– this needs to be addressed to support Group X</td>
<td>Feeling unsafe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure on organisers</td>
<td>Group breakdown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty finding community</td>
<td>Managing conflict – mediation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing racism and homophobia</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans people feeling on the edge of QTPOC space</td>
<td>Trans people feeling on the edge of QTPOC space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of TPOC specific spaces</td>
<td>Exclusion of trans women of colour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility of trans women of colour</td>
<td>Uncertainty if you are welcome to QTPOC meet ups if you are mixed race</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing racism and homophobia</td>
<td>Differences in language used in QTPOC can cause conflict and be isolating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding of racism and anti-racism of white people</td>
<td>Lack of resources addressing the needs of TPOC from a UK perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contending with homophobia in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politically Black communities</td>
<td>Resistance to QTPOC groups existing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 12

Development of Themes Across Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group X</th>
<th>Brighton Group 2</th>
<th>Brighton/London Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating naming selves</td>
<td>Naming selves</td>
<td>Building QTPOC social and support networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for dedicated QTPOC space for variety of reasons</td>
<td>Difference, managing difference</td>
<td>Using social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteness of LGBT spaces</td>
<td>Problems LGBT communities for QTPOC</td>
<td>QTPOC space learning, development, navigating oppression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems of racism in LGBT spaces</td>
<td>Brighton Group 2 addresses range of need</td>
<td>Difficulties naming and addressing racial identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing difference</td>
<td>The problems of talking about race</td>
<td>Mental and physical wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing QTPOC/Black Queer culture</td>
<td>Negotiating/developing QTPOC identities</td>
<td>Lack of funding and support for QTPOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QTPOC constrained by stereotypes</td>
<td>Lack of support for QTPOC</td>
<td>Negotiating and developing QTPOC identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support for QTPOC in mainstream LGBT spaces</td>
<td>Brighton as a racist and exclusionary place for QTPOC</td>
<td>Difficulties of managing difference in QTPOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experiencing racism and homophobia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group X</strong></td>
<td><strong>Brighton Group 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Brighton/London Group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating naming selves</td>
<td>Naming selves</td>
<td>Difficulties naming and addressing racial identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for dedicated QTPOC space</td>
<td>Brighton Group 2 addresses range of need</td>
<td>QTPOC space learning, development, navigating oppression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for variety of reasons</td>
<td>Lack of support for QTPOC</td>
<td>Lack of funding and support for QTPOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support for QTPOC in</td>
<td>Difference, managing difference</td>
<td>Difficulties of managing difference in QTPOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mainstream LGBT spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing difference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteness of LGBT spaces</td>
<td>Problems LGBT communities for QTPOC</td>
<td>Brighton as a racist and exclusionary place for QTPOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems of racism in LGBT</td>
<td>The problems of talking about race</td>
<td>Experiencing racism and homophobia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QTPOC constrained by stereotypes</td>
<td>Negotiating/developing QTPOC identities</td>
<td>Negotiating and developing QTPOC identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developing QTPOC/Black Queer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Building QTPOC social and support networks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Mental and physical wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>Using social media</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Themes:

1. Naming selves
2. Being excluded
3. QTPOC groups address variety of needs, addresses lack of support; Managing difference in QTPOC – renamed QTPOC groups provide social support
   a. Developing QTPOC networks and culture
4. Negotiating and developing QTPOC identities
5. QTPOC mental and physical wellbeing
### Appendix 13

**Summaries of Sasha’s Interview Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 - Being an Activist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time/Amount of Work/Frustration</strong> Add to 4 being overworked?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being an activist – ‘importance of connecting people’, stem from own experience of being ‘disconnected’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get less from QTPOC as an organiser – had a ‘rubbish’ experience as a teenager, want to make better for young people and adults – Sasha’s experience of need to have identity reassured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration at having experience not understood – being told one is being ‘hyperbolic’; tiredness at ‘educating’ others. Add to 7 Challenging racism?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activism as re-writing or decolonising history, art, as empowering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activist development and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being an activist improved Sasha’s confidence, built community she had always wanted, built visibility which she experienced as ‘life-affirming’ however also pressure of being the only one doing the work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activism – for Sasha has led to development of a critical consciousness, understanding of own isolation, colonial history in relation to sexuality, understood as ‘decolonising’, understand more clearly nuances of race and sexuality – intersectionality, power, privilege, intersection of racial/sexual stereotypes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2 - Being an Activist

- Time/Amount of Work/Frustration: Add to 4 being overworked?
- Being an activist – ‘importance of connecting people’, stem from own experience of being ‘disconnected’
- Get less from QTPOC as an organiser – had a ‘rubbish’ experience as a teenager, want to make better for young people and adults – Sasha’s experience of need to have identity reassured
- Frustration at having experience not understood – being told one is being ‘hyperbolic’; tiredness at ‘educating’ others. Add to 7 Challenging racism?
- Activism as re-writing or decolonising history, art, as empowering
- Activist development and learning
- Being an activist improved Sasha’s confidence, built community she had always wanted, built visibility which she experienced as ‘life-affirming’ however also pressure of being the only one doing the work
- Activism – for Sasha has led to development of a critical consciousness, understanding of own isolation, colonial history in relation to sexuality, understood as ‘decolonising’, understand more clearly nuances of race and sexuality – intersectionality, power, privilege, intersection of racial/sexual stereotypes.

### 2- Affirming Identity

- Coming to QTPOC – finding oneself, understanding one’s position in the world as it relates to race/gender/sexuality and their intersections. Importance of reading Lorde/tumblr/QTPOC visibility for affirming identity and improving confidence
- Being with other black, working class [queer] women and sharing a ‘vibe’ that Sasha didn’t experience with white lesbian friends – feel like she ‘can be me’ – ‘affirmed my black gay identity’ – include 11 - embodied visibility and connection?
- Learning how others navigate the intersections of their identity
<p>| Importance of QTPOC connecting people – as Sasha felt a ‘disconnect’ growing up not knowing any QTPOC, feelings of being unworthy |
| Having identity reassured by being involved in QTPOC group |
| Being in a QTPOC group has improved confidence, life-affirming to connect, have community always wanted |
| Feeling frustrated by the way white LGBT communities are obsessed with black people and black culture |
| Being exoticised in white LGBT spaces |
| Cultural appropriation |
| Racism in white LGBT communities |
| The feeling of juggling lots of commitments |
| LGBT third sector very white, so all things to do with ‘race’ fall to the person of colour – frustration |
| Lot of work for few QTPOC activists |
| Stress, frustration over too much work to do |
| Lots of work as organiser, means gain less from being involved in QTPOC |
| Being exoticised in white LGBT spaces |
| Few QTPOC organising, therefore lots of pressure on those who do and white LGBT organisations want your involvement - Subsume into 4 Being Overworked |
| Subsume into 1 Being an Activist and 2 Affirming Identity |
| At Pride importance of Black Lives Matter banners, highlighting racism in LGBT communities |
| Exhaustion in addressing race, challenges to addressing race |
| Developing nuanced understandings of the intersections of race, gender, sexuality |
| Subsume into being an activist? |
| Subsume into 1 ‘being a QTPOC activist’ |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9 – Developing a Critical Consciousness                              | • Process of developing a critical consciousness – questioning normativity through Uni, the people surrounded by
• Coming to ‘queer’ through this, and queer being experienced as ‘liberating’                                                                                                                     |
| 10 – Effect of Racial Stereotypes                                    | • Affect the way one acts in certain spaces, affects relationships with others
• Code switching                                                                                                                                  |
| 11- Embodied Visibility                                              | • Importance of embodied visibility, physical signifiers of black queerness, and embodied connections with other black working class [queer] women                                                                 |
| 12 – Experience of Connection with Others                           | Subsume into 1 Being and Activist [building/facilitating connections] and 11 Embodied Visibility and connection                                                                                     |
| 13 – Feeling out of place in queer space                            | • Queer spaces as ‘controlled’, ‘cotton wool’, uncomfortable to be in
• Feeling out of place as a Black LGBT person in white LGBT space                                                                                                                                       |
<p>| 14 – Finding Ourselves                                               | Subsume into 1 Being an Activist and 2 Affirming Identity                                                                                                                                              |
| 15 – Impact of activism on mental health                             | Delete                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 16 – Importance of QTPOC Visibility                                 | Subsume into 2 Affirming Identity                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 17 – Internalisation and shaping of subjectivity                     | Delete – may be useful to think about in second phase of analysis                                                                                                                                   |
| 18 – Intersubjectivity of Identity                                   | Delete as code - Useful to think about at second phase of analysis, or write up                                                                                                                       |
| 19 – Intersubjectivity of QTPOC identity                             | Delete as code – Useful to think about at second phase of analysis, or write up                                                                                                                       |
| 20 – Lack of Spaces for QTPOC                                       | Delete                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 21 – Lack of Support for QTPOC                                       | Delete                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 22 – LGBTQ Organisations as White                                   | Subsume into 4 Being overworked and 13 Feeling out of place in queer space – into write up/analysis; experience of space as white                                                                                                                                 |
| 23 – Not being able to be out                                        | • Change in identity with situation – may not be able to always be visible because of children                                                                                                         |
| 24 – Nuances of race and sexuality in POC communities                | Subsume into 1 Being an Activist                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 25 – Policing own behaviour in white spaces                          | Subsume into 13 Feeling out of place in queer space                                                                                                                                                  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>26 – Queer space as freeing</th>
<th>Subsume into 9 Developing a Critical Consciousness; note the temporal quality of this in write up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27 – Queer space as problematic</td>
<td>Subsume into 13 Feeling out of place in queer space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 – Queer space as space to learn</td>
<td>Subsume into 9 Developing a Critical Consciousness and 13 Feeling out of Place in queer space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 – Resistance to challenging racism</td>
<td>Subsume into 7 Challenging racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – Safe Spaces are uncomfortable</td>
<td>Subsume into 13 Feeling out of place in queer space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – Temporality of identity</td>
<td>Delete as code, but consider when writing analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 – Understanding racial identity and dynamics</td>
<td>• Sasha’s understanding of own racial identity, racial dynamics and place in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 – Understanding self in relation to history</td>
<td>• Sasha places her understanding of self in relation to historical standing, relation to other historically and culturally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 – Understanding self through history</td>
<td>Subsume into 33 Understanding self in relation to history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – Understanding self through intersectionality and political social historical perspectives</td>
<td>Subsume into 33 Understanding self in relation to history (and add politically/socially too)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 – Understanding self through others</td>
<td>Subsume into 2 Affirming identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 14

#### Themes from each individual interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee/Theme</th>
<th>Themes from themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sasha – 1. Being a QTPOC Activist</strong></td>
<td>Disconnection – loneliness, unworthiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>QTPOC group a way of building sense of belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of Art to combat erasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of decolonising history to combat erasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being under-resourced and overwhelmed by work as organiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sasha – 2. Affirming identity</strong></td>
<td>Making sense of identity through position in the world – connection with other QTPOC (through lit, group etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visibility of QTPOC, embodied connection and erotic potential (Fanon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problematics of queer activism and white queer spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sasha – 3. Developing a Critical Consciousness</strong></td>
<td>Developing a critical consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decolonising process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding intersections of class as well as other vectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Janelle – 1. Being Unwelcome in majority white LGBT spaces as a queer Muslim woman</strong></td>
<td>Exclusion from white LGBT spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needing QTPOC spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intensity of white gaze on queer Muslim women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Janelle – 2. Understanding self as an outsider</strong></td>
<td>Understanding self as an outsider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Janelle – 3. The importance of QTPOC connection</strong></td>
<td>Need for QTPOC spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affirmation of embodied experiences at the intersections – through connection with QTPOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of art to understanding experience and see self represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respite from the white gaze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aruncati – 1. Activism as building healthy community</strong></td>
<td>Trauma of living at the intersections and not belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conflict and building healthy communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decolonising process, healthy communities and relation to histories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aruncati – 2. Feeling ‘outside’ and negotiating being-in-the-world as a QTPOC</strong></td>
<td>Not belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internalising not fitting in – being the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of embodied connection and shared experience with other QTPOC – feeling like one belongs with them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aruncati – 3. Challenges of being a QTPOC activist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the complex dynamics of QTPOC community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhaustion in activism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley – 1. Difficulty talking about race, talking about difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being able to talk about race, or about experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a critical consciousness, trauma of unveiling whiteness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley – 2. Identity as a process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing unpacking and navigating in relation to position in world and to others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley – 3. Navigating QTPOC and LGBT communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT communities fail to address nuances of intersections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying on the periphery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict and difficulties in QTPOC groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashok – 1. Relationship to ‘queer’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queer and QTPOC become too ‘fixed’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XYX ‘struck’ by queer theory, but difficulties with regards to race</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashok – 2. Problems of being in white queer and trans communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited relevant support for TPoC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable to racism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashok – 3. Importance of connection to other QTPOC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not feeling ‘at home’ very often – do with QTPOC friend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being with other TPOC is affirming in understanding self</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 15

Ethics Application to the Faculty of Health and Social Science Research Ethics and Governance Committee at the University of Brighton

See following pages.