Cleaning up Westminster: Understanding Racial Capitalism rough Ethnographies of Racialised and/or Migra3n5xN10 (oight leanirst

> UCL Sarah Parker Remond Centre *Working Paper* — no.002

WP-no.002 WP-no.

Sarah Parker Remond Centre (SPRC) Working Papers are downloadable at: <u>https://www.ucl.ac.uk/racism-racialisation/</u> working-paper-series

SPRC Working Papers enable postgraduate students and researchers to disseminate ideas and work in progress, thereby initiating discussion. Comments and correspondence are welcomed by authors.

Copyright of a SPRC Working Paper lies with the author. SPRC Working Papers are refereed and edited by SPRC academic sta before publication.

Design and layout: Orin Bristow

2024



Cleaning up Westminster: Understanding Racial Capitalism

Abstract

is paper is an ethnography of racialised and/or migrant night cleaners in the Houses of Parliament who are unionising at the Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union (CAIWU) against outsourcing. It explores the experiential dimensions of night cleaning in relation to themes such as (in) visibility and exhaustion and considers cleaners' strategies of coping that unsettle ontologies of su ering/agency. It adds to literatures on racial capitalism which have not studied night work. By spotlighting male cleaners, it also addresses a gap in feminist work on racialised cleaning/care labour. e case does not explicate the exceptionalism of Parliament's night cleaners, but highlights context-speci c variations in racial capitalist modes and the generative possibilities destabilising foreclosed social separateness. Connecting the 'local' and the theoretical, therefore, I argue that racial capitalism could be better understood by grounding theory in lived experience and focusing on the differentiated processes through which groups operate within it.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the people who assisted me with my research at CAIWU: Alberto Durango, Henry Tufnell, and of course Ana Aguirre, who helped arrange my interviews. I would also like to acknowledge the sta at the Sarah Parker Remond Centre at UCL for helping me to complete my master's, particularly Pragya Dhital for all her detailed feedback on my written drafts and helpful insights during tutorials, and my previous personal tutor, Luke De Noronha for introducing me to Bridget Anderson's work and all things mobility studies.

Introduction

"Who walks alone in the streets at night? e sad, the mad, the bad. e lost, the lonely. e sleepless, the homeless. All the city's internal exiles." (Beaumont 2015: 3)

Technological transformation and post-Fordist, exible structures of work are increasingly eroding the temporalities of the nine-to- ve working day.

ese trends have been catalysed by the rise of the platform-based gig economy and global communications technology such that night working has become normalised across the labour market. e term '24/7-city' now celebrates the convenience of continual production and consumption. At the same time, there is a generalised sense of anxiety over collective exhaustion and a lack of time. Trends towards labour exibilization heralded as a bene t to workers are often coercive measures that force people to work during previously protected personal time (Crary 2013). e modern 'injury of sleep', Jonathan Crary argues, is inseparable from the neoliberal dismantling of other welfarist social protections in the late-twentieth century, signalling the prioritisation of pro t over rest (*Ibid*.).

e notion of work-life balance is a manifestation of the persistent pressures facing workers and families. Among the a uent, it has created the need to import more labour for tasks such as childcare and cleaning. Culturally, it has also tended to atten ontologies of exhaustion. Travelling on London's night buses and tubes, however, our journeys are more likely to be shared with a nurse, careworker, maintenance personnel, or cleaner, than a white-collar professional. 15.1% of employees in UK night time industries are in low-paid roles, compared with 10.5% as a whole, and night work is disproportionately carried out by foreign-born workers. (Fernandez-Reino and Rienzo 2022). It is often migrants, refugees, and displaced persons, who lack access to daytime labour markets, taking on night work; those with little or no language skills, limited education, or coming from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, which suggests that night work reinforces existing inequalities (Duijzings and Dusková 2022). Cleaning, especially, is dominated by migrant workers. 53% of cleaners on London's underground were born in Ghana or Nigeria, whilst 28% of those cleaning London's o ces were born in Latin America (Datta et al. 2007). Much of this work happens 'out of hours', unseen by daytime workers. When we arrive in the morning onto London's streets, universities, hospitals, and transport, it is often without thinking that our ability to do so is made possible by another person's labour - because someone has cleaned and cared for that space overnight and in the early hours of the morning.

e idea for this research was initially provoked by a discomfort over these very conditions. As a student, I did platform-based gig work, bartending until late at night in various venues around London. At the end of a shift at the London Stadium, I passed a queue of women at the exit, seemingly middle-aged or older, all Francophone-speaking, two who were visibly pregnant, being signed in to begin night cleaning shifts. As Matthew Beaumont (2015) reminds us in the epigraph to this working paper, despite the onset of arti - cial lighting and 24-hour cities, there is, residually, something both intriguing and unsettling about activity at night.

Historically, walking around London at night was criminalised through legal curfews guided by cultural associations between the night and a variety of moral transgressions, including prostitution and idleness. is perceived danger persists, and curfews continue to target an assumed criminality posed or 'slippery to name' (Puwar 2004: 23). Working through this entanglement, I suggest that Parliament's night cleaners illuminate a dimension of politicised struggle at a particular time and place. is is not, therefore, an overview of night work or the politics of unionisation generally. Rather, Parliament's night cleaners can be considered a localised but globally resonant condition of racial capitalism, being contested by everyday strategies of coping and formal broad-

rarely separated from the labourer's body – naturalised associations which cast racialised and/or migrant labour as 'unskilled' (Anderson 2022: 9). Marx was attentive to how capital's exploitation of wage labour relied on 'relay systems' of day and night shifts. Prolonging the proletariat's day, he wrote, was an 'inherent tendency of capitalism' (Marx 1887: 59). However, Marx's account, unencumbered by racism's consequences, does not consider the *kind* of worker carrying out night work. Nocturnal labour therefore generates a productive encounter at the intersection of Marxian insights on night work and racial capitalist literatures yet to engage with night work.

A key contribution of racial capitalism has been to theorise the racialised in ection of what Marx argued was the 'disposability' and excludability of surplus populations - the unemployed and underemployed (Marx 1887: 698-714). is surplus, he believed, ful lled a strategic function in capitalism: exerting downward pressure on wages, and providing an alternative pool of cheap workers that employers could discipline and organise (Rajaram, 2018). Racial capitalism suggests that 'disposability' relies on racial ideologies which determine the terms of inclusion and exclusion of certain populations in economic activity (Hall 1996). Surplus labour's disciplinary function, designed to fragment labour-power, then serves to intensify racial divisions amongst workers, preventing the coming to consciousness of the proletariat (Du Bois 1935). Whereas Classical Marxism argues that collective exhaustion from night work gives rise to class consciousness, Du Bois would argue that the allocation of precarious, anti-social work to racialised and/or migrant workers serves to stratify, not homogenise, labour-power. Considering that daytime work is often public facing, requires Anglophone speaking skills, and contingencies such as an ability to a ord childcare, the theory of surplus populations is helpful in describing the relative position of night workers in capitalism.

In Britain especially, these exclusionary logics are entwined with migration politics, whereby exploitable populations are also managed through categories of '(il)legality' and '(in)authenticity' that work to control migrants' mobility. is essay engages an important contribution from migration-mobility studies that explores the role of temporal control in racialised border regimes. Work on temporality has highlighted the arrythmia of lifecourses and lived time engendered by temporary visa and working arrangements (Rotter 2016). Despite the dominance of foreign-born workers in night-time sectors, and its occurrence during exhausting, anti-social hours, night work is rarely the focus of studies. Unlike displaced persons on the move, Parliament's cleaners possess the right to work in the UK and have been settled for some time. However, short-term contracts, manual, and highly-mobile work, alongside the (im)mobility of exhaustion and dependency on low-paid service work, speak to how 'mobility ux' (Ahmad 2008) continues to reproduce inequalities even after migrants settle at their point of arrival. Night work also contends with heteropatriarchal constructions of the night that restrict women's mobility compared to men (Patel 2010). Meanwhile, night can ease the mobility of some, such as London's necessarily hidden 'illegal' migrant economy wanting to avoid state surveillance (Ahmad 2008). Mobility is not, therefore, always disciplined from above. Rather, there is a need for political readings of mobility that see how night

cleaners nd strategies of coping and managing which explicate emerging forms of subjectivity (Andrijasevic and Anderson 2009). Placing literatures of mobility and racial capitalism in dialogue, therefore, Parliament's night cleaners attune us to how labour-power is also strati ed by a spectrum of (im)mobility, in ected through race and gender.

Alongside race and migration, the other important strati cation of labour deciding 'who cleans' in global capitalism, is gender. Marxist feminists have highlighted that capitalism tends to devalue labour associated with feminine capacities for care. Capitalism often refuses to acknowledge forms of social reproduction as productive 'work' for the market, rendering women's work 'invisible', despite being indispensable to capital accumulation (Katsarova 2015). Black women like Hazel Carby (1997), however, have challenged these white feminist rubrics, pointing out the triple oppression faced by working-class black women. Indeed, as some white feminists liberated themselves from "backward" domestic tasks and entered waged work, other women, often racialised and/or migrant, were imported to do the job (Vergès 2019). is critique remains relevant to today's cleaning/care industry (Anderson 2000; Chang 2000). Literatures on the (in)visibility of feminised work are pertinent to the experiential dimensions of working during the naturalised invisibility of the night. Postcolonial feminist Francoise Vergès (2019) has discussed the dialectical relationship between the invisibility of racialised female cleaners and the visibility of the white, male, bourgeois body. Verges' dialectic is acutely politicised and materialised in this context, which re ects upon localised calibrations of racial capitalism at the institutional heart of democratic power. In considering a masculinised gender con guration, and wider trends of professionalisation, toughened workloads, and nocturnality in cleaning, it updates theoretical work on feminised cleaning/care.

Parliament: A Material Elaboration of Racial Capitalism?

An ethnography of Parliament's night cleaners, therefore, pushes us further in analysing both racial capitalism and Marxist feminism, unsettling the use dressed by Nirmal Puwar's *Space Invaders*, in which ethnographies of female and non-white civil servants and MPs explicate the sensation of 'being of and inside Parliament, but not belonging to it' (2004). is research extends Puwar's work by considering the spatial and temporal marginalisation of outsourced workers – who are inside, but do not formally belong, to parliamentary space. Doing so deepens understandings of racial capitalism by imbricating the state-a rmed spatial practises that authorise it.

Material in this working paper is principally drawn from consultations with the Cleaners and Allied Independent Workers Union (CAIWU) between June and September 2023, a period during which they were assisting the unionisation e orts of cleaners at the Houses of Parliament looking to settle contractual disputes, increase pay, and abolish outsourcing. I conducted two semi-structured interviews of around one hour with night cleaners, and gathered an additional six responses from cleaners using a self-administered questionnaire. One interview, with 'Cleaner X', took place in-person at CAI-WU's o ce, and the other 'Cleaner Y', took place via Zoom. All participants were male, born in West Africa, and have been settled in the UK for varying lengths of time; some over twenty years, some for less than ten. Interviews were guided by a set of questions, however interviewees raised di erent themes and ideas. All provided consent for their answers to be recorded, with face-to-face interviews being audio-recorded and then transcribed. Questionnaires were e ective in achieving higher response rates among night cleaners who would otherwise have been inaccessible given work schedules. Semi-structured interviews, meanwhile, have the advantage of providing more complex answers than questionnaires whilst still being time-e cient, however they were impractical for some cleaners who slept during the day. Material such as articles, media reports, and policy documents are also used for further context on Parliament.

Studying night shift work poses methodological problems given its

cleaners to introduce the world of formal political representation in which they work is essential if we are to grasp the structures of inequity and power they are navigating and struggling against. Finally, Section 3 considers night cleaners' move towards unionisation in the face of racial capitalist modes that, according to some politically defeatist rubrics, fracture labour-power. e energies of multi-ethnic, broad-based collectives among night cleaners and others inside 'indie' unions are countering subjectivities of exhaustion.

Section 1: Night Cleaning and Distributions of Time in Racial Capitalism

Night shift cleaning is strenuous and physical work. In Parliament, night shifts typically start at ten in the evening and can nish eight to eleven hours later. Considering all the cleaners in this study spend over one hour travelling to and from work, what should be an eight-hour shift can elongate into a ten-hour shift. Whilst much of the rest of the country shuts down, nocturnal service workers commute late at night and in the early hours of the morning. Once cleaners arrive for the night shift, they begin an overnight 'deep clean' of the almost-deserted Palace of Westminster. ey clean all the spaces in which it would be impractical or disruptive to clean during daytime use, such as the kitchens or commons debate chamber. As one former cleaner told me when I visited CAIWU's o ce in June, 'night cleaning is the *worst*, because you have to clean *everything*.'¹ Asked how frequently they felt their workload overnight was excessive, all cleaners responded with 'often' or 'very often', with one

Vries 2016). Whilst Parliament's cleaners, many from West Africa, might be well-settled in the UK, histories of exhaustion and bodily depletion arising from experiences of transnational migration remain helpful in thinking through the temporal and spatial mobility of migrants once at their point of arrival. MacQuarie (2019) has done important work showing how manual work at night depletes bodily resources through pain and exhaustion. Putting these two insights together, I argue that the disproportionate number of racialised and/or migrant workers occupying night shifts reveals how Britain's labour market is characterised by a spectrum of spatiotemporal mobility; there is employment with privileged forms of mobility, such as the capacity for remote working or control over working hours, and there is precarious employment that can constrain mobility, for instance by immobilising workers in speci c locations, or imposing uncertain and hypermobile working hours (Hewison and Kalleberg 2013; Frydenlund and Dunn 2022). Night cleaners in this study experience a mobility 'ux' (Ahmad 2008). ey commute long distances across London to access work at a time when others stay in yet lack time outside of work to move freely through the city. Characteristic of many in precarious employment, night cleaners experience an immobility consequential of a dependency on low-paid service work. In response, they have developed strategies of coping and managing that unsettle ascribed ontologies of su ering/agency commonly arising from ethnographies and analytics of structural oppression.

Time and Bodily Management

'We have to manage ourselves because the retirement age is sixty-seven. at is why you need enough hours' [rest] - to manage your body'.⁴

When Cleaner X arrives home at three in the morning after a shift, he wakes up four hours later for the school run, as his wife has already left for work. He returns home to rest but is usually unable to sleep again. Outside of work, he says, 'we don't try and do anything more than have a rest'. All respondents reported that nocturnal work impedes their ability to socialise with friends and family and carry out tasks such as housework. Antisocial hours and tiredness mean that cleaners struggle to care for themselves in the same ways that they carry out care/cleaning for others. Cleaner X explains his exhaustion in terms of bodily depletion. Were he to work until retirement (67 years old), he says, he would nd himself in a hospital bed. He is concerned about the impacts of the job's physicality, the dangerous chemicals he handles daily, and sleep deprivation. His current job, however, is the result of a high degree of job turnover. Previously, he worked in construction, at a restaurant, and later trained to be a bus driver, however put the latter on hold when his third child was born; 'right now whilst they're at school I can't move on. When they reach college then I will move on for sure'. Job turnover re ects a hypermobility in search of optimal working conditions but is time-restricting in limiting longer-term opportunities for promotion or up-skilling. Like with others interviewed, night shifts are one strategy he uses to balance reproductive and productive

responsibilities. For now, he is content with a pay rise and fairer contractual terms to 'manage' his body better. 'It won't change our life', he says of the campaign, but 'I would feel a bit calmer'.⁵

In a culture of round-the-clock work, night cleaners are called upon to manage their own health and exhaustion. Yet harm is not an individualised *event* in a society that is, for the most part, structured around diurnal work. Testimonies suggest that Parliament o ers little, if any, provisions for night workers. Services open to daytime sta are closed, such as canteens and kitchens, however I am told cleaners are not expected to use Parliament's bars and restaurants anyway. One break room is left open for night cleaners, but it lacks single sex changing rooms. e decision is then between changing in front of other, sometimes female, cleaners, or commuting home in dirty, chemical-covered uniform.⁶ Across London, services at night are also generally lowered, giving night workers less control over their non-working time. During weeknights, shops and restaurants close by the late evening, emergency services are scaled back, and waiting times are longer for night buses. Post-Covid, London's provision of night transport and services, particularly for night life and leisure industries, have improved. Yet if 'everything that fair employment rights, or transferable quali cations, which can limit their horizons under capitalism. ere is something collective in the shared blurring of work and private time for both MPs and cleaners; MP Stella Creasy, for instance, was forced to breastfeed in the House of Commons due to a lack of maternity leave (Bowden 2023). e di erence is that some time-scarce professionals are better able to 'buy' time, perhaps taking taxis over buses, or employing people to help with cleaning or childcare at home.

e dominance of racialised and/or migrant workers in night cleaning.

Articulating inequalities in time can thicken analytical understandings of labour segregation. e question of who is available or suited to carrying out night cleaning, is invariably conditioned by perceptions of gender and race which can constrain or privilege certain categories of work. e following re ects on two qualities pertaining to Parliament's night cleaners: its masculinised workforce and nocturnality.

Domestic work such as cleaning has long been racialised and gendered. e historical feminisation of cleaning carries forward the devaluation of socially reproductive work from the patriarchal domestic sphere. Precaritisation within the cleaning sector is an extension of the Western, liberal separation of private and public spheres which constructed women's domestic work as economically unproductive, and therefore obscured from the 'public' sphere. e dominance of male cleaners is, therefore, an interesting recalibration of these dynamics. Partly, this relates to prevailing hetero-patriarchal constructions of the night, which have implications for which bodies get to apply for night work. Women's nocturnal mobility tends to be more restricted given moral discouragement of their walking around at night (Patel 2010). Yet Parliament's cleaners have also used attributes of gender and race/ ethnicity to their advantage, using a West African employment network to access work, creating a gendered and ethnic clustering. Cleaners were referred to the job by housemates, landlords, and cousins, at the request of their employer who believes the job's high-pro le is best served by one network. Employers' demand for certain nationalities because they are associated with personal and physical characteristics is one process through which aptitude becomes mapped, and naturalised, onto certain racialised and gendered bodies (Anderson 2022). Parliament's cleaners have varied educational backgrounds, including one possessing an accountancy quali cation, which is not captured by this hierarchy. More notable than this, however, was respondents' desire to have their work recognised as physically demanding, a departure from the gentler, feminine qualities historically associated with cleaning/care work. In understanding this, we must turn to structural changes that have marketised cleaning in recent decades (Rees and Fielder 1992).

Cleaning's Neoliberal Restructuring and Labour Atomisation

Outsourcing is CAIWU's main grievance, and critical to understanding the working arrangements of Parliament's cleaners. Apart from some more 'skilled' Heritage Cleaners (more on them in Chapter 2), cleaners are employed by a contractor, Atalian Servest. Empirical studies have shown how labour processes in the service sector have intensi ed under higher competition the servant (Atanasoski and Vora 2019: 89). In these conditions, cleaners have found alternative comradery amongst each other. 'Working at night, it's supportive', one cleaner tells me. He struggles to socialise with friends outside of work but has built relationships with the night guards who walk around during shifts. Many of those working at night prefer its solitude. During previous employment at a restaurant, Cleaner X said, he found working with other people claustrophobic. Whilst Parliamentary sta 'do not see our work', he values having control over his work, with there being less managerial oversight at night.

In blurring the lines between accommodation/resistance, activity/ passivity, these testimonies remind us that conceptually foreclosing racialised and/or migrant labour inside capitalism's march towards social separateness can create a determining sense of the everyday. Rather, when we ground labour relations in lived experience and everyday scenes of coping, nuances emerge – of the masculinisation of cleaning, and more complex subjectivities of complicity or accommodation. is demonstrates the importance of grounding conceptual frameworks in the context-speci c materiality of time, social relations, and location, to which this essay now turns.

Section 2: e 'White World' of Parliament

' is establishment was not built for somebody like you in mind'.

When Diane Abbott arrived in Westminster in 1987, as Britain's rst black, female MP, one of the immediate problems was space. Abbott had no desk or o ce, and her black visitors were regularly sent to the Stranger's Gallery rather than sent to her (Bunce and Linton 2020). Like other black MPs, including Keith Vaz, Bernie Grant, and Paul Boateng, she was frequently stopped by security guards when moving around Parliament because attendants did not believe she was an MP (*Ibid*

Parliament's heritage status denotes the need to conserve, and care for, its material integrity. I draw attention to this because dedicated in-house Heritage Cleaners are responsible for 'high pro le' areas such as the statues, brassware, is subset of cleaners are described as 'predominantly female, and libraries. foreign-born, and ercely proud of their work' (Fenwick 2021).. 'It's the history of our country' is how one heritage cleaner explained her pride in working at is complicity in the heritage project is not shared by Westminster (*Ibid.*). Cleaner X who epistemically distances himself from Westminster; 'they just want to conserve the building' is what he believes explains the di erential status of heritage and contract cleaning. Any di erential sense of institutional inclusion mattered less to him. It is di cult to see Parliament's preferential treatment of heritage cleaning as anything except a hierarchisation of their perceived contribution to the Estate, however. Cleaner Y, however, felt di erently, saying that being employed in-house is 'like being part of the family'.¹⁵

Parliament: A Status Quo No Longer Tenable?

Even within my small sample, then, arise complex relationalities to Parliament, unsettling the foreclosure of a Fanonian 'white world'. If the normative lines making Parliament 'white' space are 'shaped by the repetition of bodily and social actions over time (Ahmed 2006: 66), then the repetition of bodies 'out of line' creates new 'lines of rebellion... that gather over time to create new impressions on the skin of the social' (18). is is an important insight because Parliament, as democratic space, is also uniquely vulnerable to contestations of state violence and exclusion. Recall the women who stormed the Chamber demanding enfranchisement, routinely breaching the viewing gallery's con nes to protest their political exclusion. Recently, Parliament's heteropatriarchal orientation has been challenged by female MPs breastfeeding their babies in the Commons (Mason 2015). I would add to this the anecdotes I gathered from night cleaners; of 'sitting where the MPs sit' when sta have left,¹⁶ and of covert tactics used to organise their union campaign.

ere is perhaps an as yet unrealised opening for these alternative recon gurations of parliamentary space amidst the public debate over its refurbishment. e heritage e ort to clean and conserve Westminster's predemocratic remnants are rendered deeply ironic by the building's state of decay and disrepair. Parliament's outer walls are corroding, it caught re forty times between 2008 and 2012, has sewage leaking throughout, and requires repairs at a minimum of £3.5 billion (Higgins 2017). It is a symbolic decline of a building that is, as this chapter explored, a stage for Britain's masculinised and hierarchical democratic rituals. ey are traditions that construct desires for pomp and ceremony that its members do not need, while obstructing access to what workers do need – re safety, sanitation, changing rooms, fair wages, and rest, to name a few. In debates over rennovation, some voices cling to Parliament's theatre and connection to British identity, those who fear a new space where they, too, feel like a 'space invader':

15 Interview with Cleaner Y, 16 August 2023.

'I think there is an agenda with restoration and renewal', says Conservative Sir Edward Leigh, for 'in kicking us out, the whole thing will change... If you are out for years, institutional memory will die very quickly' (*Ibid*).

If that institutional memory is democratic, then incorporating those outsourced or marginalised by Parliament through acknowledging the everyday occupation of political space by a heterogeneity of people is one route to renewal.

Indeed, there is something redeemable in the way night cleaners are exhausting the democratic avenues possible *within* Parliament for their campaign, by approaching HR, strategizing how to lobby MPs, and writing a letter to the Speaker about the campaign:

Organising the 'unorganizable'

Labour organisation is di cult in any industry, but obstacles in heterogenous service sectors are particularly challenging. As outlined in Chapter 1, outsourcing and night work's asociality can atomise cleaners, through sub-contracting, short-term tendering processes, smaller workforces, and the related spatiotemporal dimensions of working away from one another. ese factors make it harder for cleaners to organise than in the past. Historically, perhaps the most durable base for trade unionism was the coal eld. As Timothy Mitchell (2013) writes of coal's unique vulnerability to sabotage by miners:

e power [of workers] derived not just from the organisations they formed, the ideas they began to share or the political alliances they built, but from the extraordinary concentrations of carbon energy whose ow they could now slow, disrupt or cut o .' (403).

Mitchell proceeds to argue that coal's replacement, oil production, is much harder for workers to disrupt because workforces are smaller, closely supervised above ground, and operated through tankers and pipelines, rather than railways. If space and infrastructure are pivotal to labour organisation, the heterogeneity and dispersal of night cleaning - its associality and the complex inter-organisational relations characterising outsourced arrangements - might then preclude organisation. Cleaner X spoke of both spatial and legal barriers to union membership. Spread across shifts on the Parliamentary estate, there is no obvious place to meet and organise. Fear of disciplinary action prevents cleaners from openly discussing the campaign at work anyway. One cleaner described how his supervisor reported him to management when he overheard him discussing CAIWU with another employee.¹⁸ gglted o (icpor)--4.9 mportedtratiavised nd/sor mirrat segements of tho woriang

caoss(raree (2043).)70 (P)32 (ul Gilfr)10 (o-12 (yheas discusbed ho)5 (wB(r)-10 (iish ttr)-5 (a)5 (de unio)5 (nise)5 ()]TJ0

social movements of the late-twentieth century (Shukra 1997: 241).

CAIWU is an interesting case amidst this pessimism towards modern labour movements.

Its history highlights the ssures that have emerged in attempts to organise precarious service workers. Yet it also represents innovative forms of mobilisation that have re-energised organised labour. CAIWU's origins lie in a series of breakaways from larger unions. Firstly, the founders of the Latin American Workers Association (LAWAS) left UNITE citing a 'lack of democracy' and joined the Cleaners' Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Political di erences and 'limited control over their own resources' then led to a breakaway from IWW, to found IWGB in August 2012. Simultaneously, a group of outsourced workers of the '3 Cosas Campaign' working at the University of London broke away from UNISON in 2013 after feeling ignored and formed the University of London branch at IWGB. After more internal di erences, members of the Cleaners and Facilities branch at IWGB left to set up CAIWU. ese break aways, largely of independent unions from established unions appear, principally, to be over politics rather than policy. ere has been resistance to larger unions' bureaucratic style of organisation, in which members have limited control over industrial disputes (Aslam and Woodcock 2020: 418). Larger unions, meanwhile, have been more reluctant to organise the (dis)organised, precarious workers, making 'indie' organisations particularly attractive to the migrant workers on outsourced contracts. Whilst UK trade union membership levels have not recovered from record lows in 2016, all 'indie' unions have seen growth (Smith 2022): CAIWU increased their membership from 684 in 2016 to 1,537 in 2021 (Gov.uk 2021a), and IWGB from 915 to 6,658 (Gov.uk 2022b). us, despite precarious working arrangements and an increasingly heterogenous workforce, cleaners at Parliament and elsewhere are organising across major cities.

approached once cleaners had launched their own campaign - in lieu of unionisation, as one sta member emphasises during my second visit.²⁰ e generative power of these workers, therefore, is not solely trade union-led. What unions provide, however, are legal, administrative, and, importantly, wider social alliances to build bargaining power and prepare to ght disciplinary action. Having joined CAIWU, cleaners identify an improvement in Atalian's response to complaints, due to the union's legal scrutiny. ey are now trying to recruit more cleaners into the union to strengthen numbers. Fears about disciplinary action are the most common reason why cleaners are reluctant to join.²¹ However, I learnt also of cleaners wanting to join CAIWU, but being tied to memberships at other unions in the meantime.²² Nevertheless, and in spite of their spatiotemporal dispersal, Parliament's cleaners have managed to forge networks during brief conversations before or after shifts and recruited colleagues outside of the workplace over WhatsApp.

Similarly, in overcoming the (dis)organisation of its members, CAIWU and other 'indie' unions have articulated their demands through innovative

CAIWU's protest tactics are similarly broad. ey combine traditional industrial action of strikes and picket lines outside the workplace, with social movement tactics such as systematic social media use on Twitter and Facebook, featuring interviews with members and videos of their marches. ev nd allies online from the media, gaining much of their traction from retweets that raise awareness of cleaners' conditions. ematically, campaigns revolve around the word 'justice' as opposed to economic slogans, which broadens the remit of workers' struggle. ey also incorporate street protests and marches, with the aim of obtaining support from members of the public, spectacles which are designed to 'make as much noise as possible' - featuring dancing, singing, and Latin American and African drums.²³ Solidarity is such that an industrial dispute with a particular workplace is engaged with by a broader alliance of members and other 'indie' unions, who attend each other's protests.

is participatory culture is embedded in the structure of the union itself. It is a grass roots, strongly democratic, and multi-cultural organisation. Its member-led ethos entails a commitment to acting according to the decisions of its members, such that Parliament's cleaners have agency over their campaign and its direction. Established unions, whose members must show solidarity in the workplace and, if necessary, risk disciplinary action if a strike is voted, often develop bureaucratic structures. ere is no hierarchy in decision-making here, but horizontal webs and circuits of power that connect members.

Mitchell felt that miners had a unique capacity to obstruct production. Industrial strikes by cleaners can cause similar levels of disruption (Willsher 2023), of literal blockages in sanitation which is, after all, a networked system. In cleaning movements driven to strike, the materiality of cleaning has become an important part in the making of its politicisation, and in this study it emerges from con ict over the institutional and valuative judgements of its labour, which in turn imbricate questions of race, gender, and anti-capitalist oriented 'justice'. Critical work on British trade unionism has been impoverished by an over-identi cation of the labour movement with white working-class mining and factory cultures, using the same narrow de nitions of racialised identity that they struggle to overturn. Meanwhile, emphasis on the increasing dominance of di erentiating economic rationalities over democracy and liberal concepts of 'justice' might nd something redeemable in the 'indie' union movement, which recognises the messiness of a liations that class or race alone cannot encompass.

Conclusion

'e time for decolonial caring/cleaning (for reparation), for caring and cleaning what has been laid to waste in the past, clashes with the accelerated time of neoliberalism.' (Vergès 2019).

Neoliberalism's rapacity for round-the-clock work and its pressures on work-life balance brings night work into representation because increasingly exibilised work structures have elongated day into night. Vergès refers to this sense of accelerated time and its temporal inequalities, which resonate with this study's exploration of the accelerations/decelerations characterising night cleaners' lived time and mobility through space. Lived experience can remind us that such capitalist rationalities are not foreclosed possibilities; the case of Parliament's night cleaners have generative potential in bringing together everyday strategies of coping and unionised protection as ways of living through the contradictions of being outsourced inside representative space.

e campaign speaks to the collective possibilities of racialised and/or migrant workers' struggle – to scrutinise webs of public-private power up and to contest these inequalities on multiple fronts that articulate intersecting issues, such as exhaustion, (im)mobility, race, gender, and institutional inequality.

e rst chapter explored the ways racial capitalist modes of di erentiation are lived in the everyday by Parliament's night cleaners. It introduced masculinity and nocturnality as conceptual elisions that can deepen understandings of labour strati cation. But beyond this, are mundane strategies of coping and hopes for the future that reveal subjectivities within capitalist rubrics. Chapter 2 explored Parliament's place in the campaign, suggesting that cleaners' lived experience are imbricated in wider processes of di erentiation that have materialised in space to codify exclusion/inclusion in formal politics. It revealed a particular generative irony in how democracy, shaped by colonial-era racial capitalist rationalities, takes on the terms of collectivity whilst futilely trying to foreclose the exclusion of 'others'. Finally, Chapter 3 re ected on the hopes of collective protection against racial capitalist modes of separateness and associated precarity. 'Indie' unions may not be a panacea for anti-racist and anti-capitalist activism. However, perhaps those who lament the lost momentum of BLM, the decline of the left, or the dominance of identity-driven politics, need not be so politically defeatist.

Bibliography

Adam, Barbara. 2004. Time. Polity Press.

Adam-Smith, Derek, Gill Norris, and Steve Williams. 2003. 'Continuity or Change? e Implications of the National Minimum Wage for Work and Employment in the Hospitality Industry'. *Work, Employment and Society* 17 (1): 29–47.

Ahmad, Ali Nobil. 2008. 'Dead Men Working: Time and Space in London's (`illegal') Migrant Economy'. *Work, Employment and Society* 22 (2): 301–18.

Ahmed, Sara. 2007. 'A Phenomenology of Whiteness'. *Feminist eory* 8 (2): 149–68.

Anderson, Bridget. 2000. *Doing the Dirty Work? e Global Politics of Domestic Labour*. London: Zed Books.

Andrijasevic, Rutvica, and Bridget Anderson. 2009. 'Con icts of Mobility: Migration, Labour and Political Subjectivities'. *Subjectivity* 29 (1): 363–66.

Armitage, John., and Joanne. Roberts. 2002. *Living with Cyberspace : Technology & Society in the 21st Century / Edited by John Armitage and Joanne Roberts.* London: Continuum.

Aslam, Yaseen, and Jamie Woodcock. 2020. 'A History of Uber Organizing in the UK'. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 119 (2): 412–21.

Atanasoski, Neda, and Kalindi Vora. 2019. *Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures.* Perverse Modernities. Durham: Duke University Press.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2007. *Liquid Times : Living in an Age of Uncertainty / Zygmunt Bauman.* Cambridge: Polity.

Beaumont, Matthew. 2015. *Nightwalking : A Nocturnal History of London : Chaucer to Dickens / Matthew Beaumont.* London: Verso.

Bowden, George. 2023. 'No Babies Allowed in the Commons, MP Stella Creasy Told'. *BBC*, 24 November 2023. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-59396801 (accessed 28 June 2023).

Bunce, Robin, and Samara Linton. 2020. 'How Diane Abbott Fought Racism - and Her Own Party - to Become Britain's First Black Female MP'. *e Guardian*, 29 September 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/ politics/2020/sep/29/how-diane-abbott-fought-racismand-her-own-party-to-become-britains- rst-blackfemale-mp (accessed 28 June 2023).

Butler, Dawn. 2016. 'Black MP Told " is Lift Isn't for Cleaners". *In Short*. BBC Radio 5 Live. https://www.bbc. co.uk/programmes/p03kyjs1.

———. 2023. 'Dawn Butler: "It Is Shocking, the
Disrespect for Black Women at the House of Commons".
e Guardian, 14 August2023. https://www.theguardian.
com/politics/2023/aug/14/dawn-butler-mp-it-is shocking-the-disrespect-for-black-women-in-the commons (accessed 1 August 2023).

Carby, Hazel. 1997. 'White Woman Listen!' In *Black British Feminism: A Reader*, by Heidi Sa a Mirza.

Dovey, Kim. 1999. *Framing Places: Mediating Power in Built Form.* London: Routledge.

Duijzings, Ger, and Lucie Dusková. 2022. *Working At Night: e Temporal Organisation of Labour Across Political and Economic Regimes.* Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter.

Dyer, S., L. McDowell, and A. Batnitzky. 2008. 'Emotional Labour/Body Work: e Caring Labours of Migrants in the UK's National Health Service'. *Placing Splintering Urbanism* 39 (6): 2030–38.

Franz, Fanon. 1967. *Black Skin, White Masks.* Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press.

Fenwick, Jack. 2021. 'Keeping Parliament Clean in a Pandemic'. *BBC News*, 28 March 2021. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-56541374 (accessed 1 August 2023).

Fernandez-Reino, Maria, and Cinzia Rienzo. 2022. 'Migrants in the UK Labour Market: An Overview'. University of Oxford. Available at: https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/ uploads/2019/07/MigObs-Brie ng-Migrants-inthe-UK-labour-market-an-overview.pdf (accessed 1 August 2023).

Fowler, Corinne. 2021. *Green Unpleasant Land: Creative Responses to Rural Britain's Colonial Connections.* Peepal Tree Press.

Frydenlund, Shae, and Elizabeth Cullen Dunn. 2022. 'Refugees and Racial Capitalism: Meatpacking and the Primitive Accumulation of Labor'. *Political Geography* 95.

Gilroy, Paul. 1990. 'e End of Anti-Racism'. *New Community* 17 (1): 71–83.

———. 2004. *After Empire : Melancholia or Convivial Culture? / Paul Gilroy*. Abingdon: D(do)5 utledg,Gilr 2021. 'nti-R**¥**ÛÃp -#.¥ ÚŠÚÐũ¥Ũ(∯ p0.[®]A¥ÛÃp -#.¥ ÚŠ Respeati Kirk, Tristan. 2017. 'House of Commons Cleaners Wins ousands of Pounds after Slipping on Puddle of Fat at Leaked from Ovens'. *Evening Standard*, 13 September 2017. https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/ house-of-commons-cleaner-wins-thousands-of-poundsafter-slipping-on-brown-fatty-liquid-ooze-from-mpsroast-dinners-a3689231.html (accessed 10 August 2023).

MacQuarie, Julius-Cezar. 2019. 'Invisible Migrants: A Micro-Ethnographic Account of Bodily Exhaustion Amongst Migrant Manual Labourers Working the Graveyard Shift in New Spita elds Market in London'. *Journal of Health Inequality* 5 (2): 1–5.

Marx, Karl. 1887. *Capital: Volume 1*. London: Everyman's Library.

Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. 1977. *Manifesto* of the Communist Party / Marx, Engels / with an Appendix: Engels, Principles of Communism. 2nd rev. ed. Moscow: Progress.

Mason, Rowena. 2015. 'Female MPs Call for Breastfeeding to Be Allowed in House of Commons'. *e Guardian*, 10 November 2015. https://www.theguardian.com/politics /2015/nov/10/female-mps-breastfeeding-allowed-houseof-commons (accessed 10 August 2023).

McDowell, L. 2009. *Working Bodies: Interactive Service Employment and Workplace Idenitites*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Mitchell, Timothy. 2009. 'Carbon Democracy'. *Economy and Society* 38 (3): 399–432.

———. 2013. *Carbon Democracy : Political Power in the Age of Oil / Timothy Mitchell.* London: Verso.

Mori, Anna. 2017. 'e Impact of Public Services Outsourcing on Work and Employment Conditions in Di erent National Regimes'. *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 23 (4): 347–64. https://doi. org/10.1177/0959680117694272. Noronha, Luke de. 2022. 'e Conviviality of the Overpoliced, Detained and Expelled: Refusing Race and Salvaging the Human at the Borders of Britain'. *e Sociological Review (Keele)* 70 (1): 159–77.

Anderson, Bridget. 2022 'Deciphering "Skills": Class, Nation, Gender' in Osterman, Paul, et al. 2022. 'A Forum on the Politics of Skills'. *ILR Review* 75 (5).

ParliREACH. 2019. 'Stand in My Shoes: Race and Culture in Parliament: A ParliREACH Report'. https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/ foi/201041pr.pd*f*(accessed 15 August 2023).

Patel, Reena. 2010. *Working the Night Shift : Women in India's Call Center Industry / Reena Patel.* Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press.

Puwar, Nirmal. 2004. *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

———. 2010. ' e Archi-Texture of Parliament: Flaneur as Method in Westminster'. *Journal of Legislative Studies* 16 (3): 298–312.

Rajaram, P.K. n.d. 'Refugees as Surplus Population: Race, Migration and Capitalist Value Regimes' 23 (5): 627–39.

Rees, Gareth, and Sarah Fielder. 1992. 'e Services Economy, Subcontracting and the New Employment Relations: Contract Catering and Cleaning'. *Work, Employment and Society* 6 (3): 347–68.

Robinson, Cedric J. 2000. *Black Marxism : e Making of the Black Radical Tradition / Cedric J. Robinson ; Foreword by Robin D.G. Kelley ; with a New Preface by the Author.* Chapel Hill: e University of North Carolina Press.

Rotter, Rebecca. 2016. 'Waiting in the Asylum Determination Process: Just an Empty Interlude?' *Time & Society* 25 (1): 80–101.

Sara Ahmed. 2006. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Duke University Press.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 2020. *Death Without Weeping : e Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil / Nancy Scheper-Hughes.* "A Centennial book", Reprint 2020. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Shukra, Kalbir. 1997. 'e Death of a Black Political Movement'. *Community Development Journal* 32 (3): 233–43.

Smith, Holly. 2022. 'e "Indie Unions" and the UK Labour Movement: Towards a Community of Practice'. *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 43 (3): 1369–90.

Spillers, Hortense. 1987. 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book'. *Diacritics* 17 (2): 65–81.

Spradley, James P. 2016. *e Ethnographic Interview / James P.Spradley*. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland.

Studies, Centre for Contemporary Cultural. 1982. *EMPIRE STRIKES BACK: Race and Racism In 70's Britain.* London: Routledge.

Syal, Rajeev. 2020. 'Westminster's Links to Britain's Slave Trade Revealed in Art Survey'. *e Guardian*, 30 September 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/ politics/2020/sep/30/westminsters-links-to-britainsslave-trade-revealed-in-art-survey (accessed 20 August 2023).

Tomlinson, John. 2007. *e Culture of Speed : e Coming of Immediacy / John Tomlinson.* eory, Culture & Society. Los Angeles ; Sage.

UNESCO.org n.d. 'Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey'. https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/426/ (accessed 19 August 2023).

Vergès, Francois. 2019. 'Capitalocene, Waste, Race, and Gender'. *E-Flux Journal*, 100: 1–13.

Virdee, Satnam. 2014. *Racism, Class and the Racialized Outsider / Satnam Virdee.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Virdee, Satnam. 2019. 'Racialized Capitalism: An Account of Its Contested Origins and Consolidation'. *e Sociological Review* 67 (1): 3–27.

W. E. B. Du Bois. 2017. *Black Reconstruction in America: Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880.* Taylor and Francis.

Welender, Marta, and Leonie Ansems De Vries. 2016. 'Refugees, Displacement, and the European "Politics of Exhaustion". *Open Democracy.*

White, Michael. 2013. 'Parliamentary Bars - What Are ey Really Like?' *e Guardian*, 15 March 2013. https://www.theguardian.compolitics/2013/mar/15/ parliamentary-bars-what-really-like (accessed 15 July 2023).

Willsher, Kim. 2023. 'Paris Breathes Easier as Refuse Workers' Strike Called O and Rubbish Cleared' *e Guardian*, 29 March 2023. https://www.theguardian. com/world/2023/mar/29/paris-breathes-easier-as-refuseworkers-strike-called-o -and-rubbish-cleared (accessed 30 August 2023).

Wise, Amanda, and Greg Noble. 2016. 'Convivialities: An Orientation'. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37 (5): 423–31.