Chapter 4

Decolonizing Diaspora Studies

Accounting for the Transnational and Intersectional Interventions of "Striking" Diasporas

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Introduction

This chapter makes a case for decolonizing the field of diaspora studies, a field which, despite the "diasporization of diaspora" (Brubaker, 2005, p. 4), has been trapped in methodologically nationalist perspectives which see diaspora as emerging out of ethno-political struggles within nation-states, often told from a perspective of push factors. This has brought limitations to understandings of diaspora. The chapter reveals and analyzes some of these limitations. It exposes the links between empires and diasporas, expands the transnational dimensions of diaspora, reveals the intersectional underpinnings of their struggles, and provides examples of how diasporas have intervened and decolonized the Global North.

C4P2   Diaspora is a special case of migration whereby politicized decolonial subjectivity is associated with mobility (Demir, 2022). Diaspora research which ignores the colonial and empire axes of diaspora contributes to Eurocentric and North-centric understandings of migration, diasporas, and ethnic diversity. Such understandings act as a justification for the hard, violent borders of the Global North. They ignore that cultural plurality has been woven into the fabric of the Global North due to colonialism and empire. They furthermore fail to recognize that racialized diasporas in the Global North have not only challenged discrimination and racism, but, through their struggles, they also have conceptually and practically expanded ideas about equality, freedom, and justice in fundamental ways through their interventions in and challenges to the Global North. Through examining these and other issues, the chapter makes a case for a decolonial perspective to diaspora but also shows, through two case studies of what I call "striking diasporas," how and why diasporas should be considered as agents of the decolonization of the Global North.

C4P3   Eurocentric assumptions have long shaped how migration, diasporas, and ethnic diversity are understood in the Global North. *Eurocentrism*, in its simplest articulation, is a narcissistic view of self which sees Europe and Europeans, understood here as also incorporating White settler colonies (e.g., United States, Australia, Canada) as a miracle (Bhambra, 2007, 2014). It is ethnocentric and contradictory as it suffers from the view that there is something extremely special and distinct about Europe and its people while at the same time attempting to "sustain the universality of the western project" (Sayyid, 1997, p. 128). Eurocentric assumptions associate Europe, the continent, with Europe as an idea, as an instigator of modernity. They situate and lock the rise of modernity within the physical boundaries of Europe and its people. They thus locate the sources and origins of the three temporal breaks which are claimed to have brought about the "great" transformation from pre-modernity to modernity—namely, the political, economic, and cultural revolutions—solely within European states rather than making central an examination of European empires, together with their colonies (Bhambra, 2007, 2014). Such approaches are

amnesic because they fail to acknowledge that the modern world

we inhabit today is largely shaped by European colonialism and

empires and therefore also through the material and intellectual

contributions of "Others." The "miracle view," the Eurocentric

understanding of these three revolutions, has been challenged,

highlighting that modernity is a product of complex engagements

between different parts of the world, including Europeans and

others, and thus is a collective good belonging to humanity. Its

universalistic claims and assumptions have also been rigorously

questioned (e.g., Bhambra & Holmwood, 2021; Sayyid, 1997).

Yet the shift required to jettison Eurocentrism from our academic

fields and disciplines has not yet materialized. If anything, it

continues to shape—if not dominate—our understanding of

migration and the field of diaspora studies within sociology, the

main area of focus in this chapter. It is thus necessary that we

decolonize and question the long-standing patterns of power,

domination, social relations, hierarchies, and associated

knowledge claims born in, and reproduced since, colonialism.

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Eurocentrism, Migration, and the Borders of the Global North

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The Eurocentric miracle view has consequences. It is central for understanding contemporary migration regimes and discourses, and it acts as a justification for the hard and violent borders of the Global North. If we consider the response of the Global North to what has been a human tragedy and violence at its borders in the past decade (e.g., in the Mediterranean and at the US–Mexico border), the effects of this "miracle view" become clearer. The language of who deserves to come and live in the Global North and the securitization of its borders are closely linked to this miracle view. It is worth asking if these tragedies at the borders of the Global North would have been approached as a security issue if we did not have this ethnocentric miracle view as dominant. What if those drowning in the Mediterranean or the English Channel were White Europeans? Would the Global North have been as tolerant of this violence? Would we have instead demanded humane and compassionate responses to migration and refugees from the Global South? Would Europe be

gearing up to allow the offshoring of refugees (Davies, Isakjee,

Mayblin, & Turner, 2021), a policy which is being adopted by

several countries? Australia has been using an offshore

processing center for asylum seekers on the Pacific Island nation

of Nauru and on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. Moreover,

it refused to allow asylum seekers to be settled in Australia, itself

a (White) settler country, even if they were given refugee status

(BBC, 2017).

C4P5   The racialized bordering of the Global North continues

with other countries also in the process of adopting such regimes.

In June 2021, Denmark passed legislation aimed at using an

offshore processing center in third-country "camps" when

reviewing the cases of those who have applied as asylum seekers

in Denmark (BBC, 2021). Having first considered using offshore

processing and detention centers on Ascension Island, a British

overseas territory in the Atlantic Ocean in 2021, the UK

government brought in the Nationality and Borders Act in 2022

and paved the way for the United Kingdom to remove asylum

seekers to a "safe third country." In April 2022, the United

Kingdom signed a partnership agreement with Rwanda that

enables asylum claims made to the United Kingdom to be processed in Rwanda. The new law also prevents refugees from returning to the United Kingdom after their claims are processed by Rwanda (Home Office, 2022).

C4P6   The hard and violent bordering of Europe is evident elsewhere. The European Union has dealt with refugees arriving in Greece in boats by signing a Refugee Readmission Agreement with Turkey in 2016 and is paying Turkey to "host" refugees. Turkey has become home to many Syrian refugees, hosting about 3.7 million Syrians officially, and close to 4 million including those living in the country illegally. It is worth noting that Turkey is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, yet it maintains a geographical limit and is not accepting those from outside of Europe as refugees but as "guests" under "temporary protection," leaving Syrians in Turkey without refugee rights, settlement, and other protections (Şimşek, 2017; UNHRC, 2021). Such movements from South to North and how to stop them have thus become "the primary migrations of interest" (Mayblin & Turner, 2021, p. 31) while ignoring centuries of migrations from North to South.

C4P7   The miracle view also acts as a justification for violent

borders *within* the North, continuing in the form of counter-

terrorism strategies, hostile citizenship regimes, punitive

policing, and surveillance, securitization, and integration

strategies for many diasporas of color. Eurocentrism, predicated

on an ethnocentric miracle view (a narcissistic self-regard for

Europe and Europeans, their primacy and superiority) continues

to underpin the migration regimes and securitized borders of the

Global North.

C4P8   Second, Eurocentrism makes it impossible to understand

racial and ethnic diversity in the Global North. Eurocentrism

constructs "non-Europeans" as alien to Europe. It finds it

difficult to accommodate "non-Europeans" as it fails to

acknowledge that cultural plurality has been a central aspect of

European history and society due to colonialism and empires.

There is academic work showing how modernity and nations

were created through empires, colonialism, and waves of

diasporas migrating to the "motherland" (e.g., Alexander, 2000;

Bhambra, 2007; Mayblin, 2017; Meer, 2015; Shilliam, 2018;

Virdee, 2014; Wemyss, 2009). We need to question the telling of

migrations to the Global North in a methodologically nationalist way, thereby rejecting empire as an analytically significant category for understanding migration and ethnic diversity. Methodologically nationalist approaches which take nation-states as their starting point for discussing contemporary migrations ignore that many of today's diasporas are an outcome of the empires and their movement of people through plantations, expansions, settlements, slavery and indenture, and later movements to the metropole as postcolonial diasporas. Approaches that ignore these can lead us to the dominant but inaccurate view that diversity is something that happened *to* Europe/the West recently.

C4P9   Many of the constructions tell of a "White/European history" versus "racially diverse today" (Naidoo & Littler, 2004, p. 334), ignoring multiracial and connected histories. As Naidoo and Littler (2004) discuss with respect to the United Kingdom, the presence of post-war 'immigration' is othered and told in a way which reinforces a White history and multicultural present in many institutions, especially in schools and the heritage sector. The connections of many racialized minorities to the United

Kingdom are thus erased. Instead, such narratives promote "the myth of British culture as white and hermetically sealed before the advent of post-war migration" (Naidoo & Littler, 2004, p. 335). Similarly, pushing back this myth in France, organizations such as the Conseil Répresentatif des Associations Noires (CRAN), an umbrella organization of Black activists, and the Indigènes de la République, remind France of the colonial and connected histories existing between its postcolonial diasporas from Africa and the French Empire. They do this by deploying "the past in order to talk about the present" in France (Lotem, 2016, pp. 293–294).

C4P10   Eurocentric perspectives which ignore the diversity of the past are inaccurate. They miss out not only that much of European history happened elsewhere, but also that "in the course of colonial history, European populations moved in greater numbers and with greater effect on the populations they encountered than is the case in the course of migration *to* Europe" (Bhambra & Holmwood, 2021, p. ix). They also miss that it is the colonies and empires of the past which end up presenting many issues of multiculturalism, diversity, and race

today in the metropole—be it Ugandans in London, North Africans in Paris, or the Kurds in Istanbul. To challenge such amnesia, when postcolonial diasporas in Britain were faced with "Go home" signs in Britain in the 1960s, they used the motto, "We are here because you were there", making a spatial link between the United Kingdom and "elsewhere" and a temporal link between the configuration of the United Kingdom today and its history (Demir, 2022).

C4P11   It is both inaccurate and problematic that cultural plurality is not seen as part and parcel of the fabric of European history and society. Yet this perspective is resilient and endures. It is absent in citizenship tests and regimes, in school history books, in annual commemoration ceremonies, in public displays and museums, and in cultural products such as films. For example, the film *Dunkirk*, by Christopher Nolan, was criticized for its whitewashed presentation of the World War II evacuation of troops from Dunkirk, erasing the fact that the evacuation saved a multiethnic army, and entirely ignoring the bravery of Black and Muslim soldiers. It is also there in our imagery of Europe and of freedoms that were won fighting fascism. Non-

White French colonial troops who made up most of the free French forces (more than two-thirds) were deliberately excluded from the liberation of Paris at the end of the World War II. The Allies sought to see Paris liberated by White soldiers, a process now referred to as "*blanchiment*" (BBC, 2009). The White French presence in the liberation of Paris was, at the end, secured by the only French division which was all White and by volunteer soldiers from Spain who passed the color bar that the Allies had imposed during the liberation of Paris. Soldiers from the colonies fought and died for the liberation of France but were denied visibility as liberators of France. France also refused to pay war pensions to the North African soldiers for decades. This was only partially reversed in 2006, albeit with no back payments, thanks to the impact of the film *Indigènes* (Days of Glory), directed by Rachid Bouchareb, a "diasporic" Algerian French film director and producer. The film tells the story of North African soldiers who fought for the liberation of France (Lichfield, 2006). The liberation of Paris has no doubt been "whitened." Alongside colonial amnesia, such erasures are an

impediment to seeing plurality as an integral part of European history and society.

C4P12   Third, the Eurocentric miracle view does not see non-Europe and non-Europeans as originators and sources of concepts and ideas, and it fails to recognize that diasporas in Europe have conceptually and practically expanded ideas about equality, freedom, justice, and dignity. They have done so through their struggle for equal rights and treatment, as in, for example, the women's movements, working-class movements, and disabled movements through the centuries. That such movements expanded rights, freedom, and dignity for us all is now accepted widely and seen globally as part of the history of development and enlargement of our rights, freedoms, and equality. Many now accept them as part of modern history, modernity, political rights, and progress—even if one is not working class, a woman, or disabled. Diasporas in Europe have also resisted and fought against discrimination, poor working conditions, and unequal treatment. They have challenged racist practices and laws and have demanded non-discrimination, equality, racial justice, and dignity. The anti-slavery movements,

rebellions, and emancipation demands in the colonies constituted

important resistance movements that shaped the Global North

(Gopal, 2019). These are struggles that their children, as part of

the Global South in the Global North, are still carrying on,

expanding our understanding of equality, rights, and freedom.

Hence, diaspora research needs to move away from

methodologically nationalist discourses which reduce diasporas

to their homeland politics and at least also make central how

diasporas in Europe have intellectually and practically expanded

ideas about equality and freedom; that is, we must see them as

instigators of ideas and not purely as receivers. Museums, history

books, and even dominant research in diaspora studies do not

talk much about such mobilizations of diasporas, and, if they do,

they do not typically conceive their struggles as contributing to

contemporary understandings of freedom, equality, and human

rights. They are typically conceptualized as a side story, as

something we are "learning about," not as something we have

"learned from," thus reinforcing the myth of the progress of

modernity as an exclusive White European achievement while

simultaneously denying the links of contemporary postcolonial

diasporas with Europe.

C4P13   Diaspora research should construe diasporas as authors,

as makers of modernity and the contemporary globalized world,

instead of merely as an outcome of globalization or of modernity.

It should also pay attention to the dynamics of the relationship

between empires and their former colonized citizens (i.e.,

postcolonial diasporas). Such understandings of diaspora can

help decolonize diaspora studies. It can help push back against

methodologically nationalist discourses of diaspora which trap

diasporas permanently in their homelands or somewhere in

between homeland and host, in hybridity or the tyranny of in-

betweenness (Demir, 2022). It can deterritorialize our

understandings of diaspora and build on the field's previous

conceptualizations of, for example, global diasporas (Cohen,

1997), dispersion (Tölölyan, 2019), and diaspora space (Brah,

1996) by weaving space with time, engaging with empire and

colonialism, and rejecting methodological nationalism. As such,

decolonized diaspora studies can challenge the narrative of

Europe, belonging, and citizenship as White.

The Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963 and the Grunwick Dispute of 1976–1978

C4P14 To illustrate the authorship and decolonizing roles of diaspora, two case studies of diasporic struggle in the United Kingdom will be examined in this section. These are the Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963 and the 1976–78 Grunwick Dispute. Understanding these diasporic uprisings requires an intersectional analysis that brings together class (and union movement), gender, social position as migrant workers, belonging, and links with Britain through empire, as outlined below. Additionally, they highlight the transnational solidarities of diasporas as South-to-South conversations across disparate parts of the world, rather than purely with the homeland. The two case studies also show that diasporas, through their interventions and challenges, have contributed to the decolonization of the Global North and thus should not be reduced to case studies of homeland politics, or hybridity, or locked within nation-state discourses. As such, these two case studies exemplify how empires and diasporas are connected. They help reveal how

diasporas decolonize the Global North, but also how diaspora research itself can be decolonized by expanding the spatial and temporal dimensions of diaspora research beyond nation-centric approaches, further transnationalizing it and revealing intersectional connections.

C4P15   The Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963 drew attention to racial discrimination of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora. By 1963, the West Indian—as they were known then—population in Bristol was about 7,000 (Dresser, 1986). They had arrived in Britain in the 1950s, as Commonwealth citizens, following the 1948 British Nationality Act, which enabled them to settle and work in their "mother" country, joining many others who were members of what came to be called "the *Windrush* generation". They were raised following the British education system, had an idealized vision of Britain, and many of them and their parents had served Queen and country (about two-thirds of the passengers on the *Windrush* had fought for Britain during World War II) (Muir, 2021). Yet they arrived in a Britain that rejected them and sustained a color bar. In the 1960s, in Bristol, there was a labor shortage of bus drivers. Run by the Bristol Omnibus Company,

at the time, Black prospective employees were refused work as bus crews. They were allowed to work in low-paid positions such as in the garage workshops and maintenance, but were not allowed on the buses as drivers, a policy backed by the trade union, the Passenger Group of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU). Additionally, the "City Fathers" (i.e., Bristol Council members and Aldermen who were in the joint Transport Committee for administering bus policy in Bristol) had "officially complied with the colour bar" (Dresser, 1986, p. 19). Afro-Caribbean men Audley Evans, Paul Stephenson, Owen Henry, and others instigated the bus boycott. A job interview with the bus company was arranged by Paul Stephenson, a formidable activist, using his friend Guy Bailey's name. Stephenson was born in England and raised in Essex. On the phone, his British accent helped to not give away that the job applicant was Afro-Caribbean. When Bailey later turned up for his interview, he was told by the manager of the company "We don't employ Black people", thus exposing the color bar—which at the time was not illegal as there was no law against racial segregation or discrimination in the United Kingdom.

C4P16   Two West Indians, Owen Henry and Roy Hackett, who

had set up the West Indian Development Council in 1962 in

Bristol, were joined by Audley Evans, Prince Brown, and Paul

Stephenson in publicly challenging this color bar. They had to

challenge not only the management but also the color bar of the

trade union who were in collusion. They mobilized many others,

including White Bristolians, and, in solidarity with the students

at the University of Bristol and other groups such as the

Campaign Against Racial Discrimination, they organized

marches, sit-down protests, and blockades on the bus routes.

They lobbied for equal rights, gaining support from politicians

such as Tony Benn, Fenner Brockway, and Harold Wilson

(Dresser, 1986). They eventually won. This campaign

contributed to the passing in the United Kingdom of the 1965

Race Relations Act, which outlawed discrimination in public

places. Race discrimination in employment, housing, and service

provision was outlawed in the United Kingdom later, through the

Race Relations Acts of 1968. The 1976 Race Relations Act

extended this legislation to indirect discrimination, and the

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Equality Act 2010 placed a duty on public authorities to actively promote race equality (and other protected characteristics).

C4P17   The instigators of the <mark>Grunwick Dispute of the 1970s</mark>, on the other hand, were mainly South Asian diasporic women, many of whom had arrived from East Africa to the United Kingdom with their families, having previously settled in East Africa, in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda during British colonial rule, some as indentured laborers (Striking Women, 2021). Many were forced to flee East Africa in the 1970s, with some facing expulsion from the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. They were discouraged from moving to the United Kingdom. In 1972, for example, the Leicester City Council put out a newspaper advertisement in the *Uganda Argus* which tried to discourage Ugandan Asians from coming to Leicester stating, "In your own interests and those of your family you should accept the advice of the Uganda Resettlement Board and not come to Leicester" (BBC, 2012). Despite many arriving in the United Kingdom as British citizens (Parmar, 1982), they faced an unwelcoming Britain.

C4P18

To rebuild their lives in the metropole, these South Asian women, who were on the whole educated and used to middle-class jobs back home, had to take up low-paid factory work in Britain. In this process, they became involved in labor disputes due to poor and discriminatory working conditions and pay. One of these, the Grunwick dispute, ran between 1976 and 1978, where the South Asian diasporic women contested being subjected to arbitrary management rules, poor conditions, and unequal pay. They also objected to a lack of dignity at work, such as controlling their visits to the toilet, and to White workers being paid more. Additionally, South Asian women's pay was low compared to the local industrial average with "the average rate of pay at Grunwick for women clerical workers of only £28 per week, well below the industrial average of £44 for women in London at the time" (McDowell, Anitha, & Pearson, 2014, p. 599). These diasporic heroines demanded gender and racial equity in pay and treatment from their employers. The workforce's challenges to their differential and racialized working conditions and pay and their attempt to form a union resulted in the sacking of some of the workers. Jayaben Desai, a

formidable South Asian woman, led the local strike committee and was joined by other trade unions on many rallies and picket lines over the 2 years of the dispute. Desai was a daughter of the British Empire. She was born in Gujarat, then settled in Tanzania when both were under the control of the British Empire, before moving to Britain in 1969. She followed a path familiar to many South Asian diasporas of the British Empire from Africa.

C4P19   The strike eventually became a national issue, and Lord Justice Scarman was appointed by Prime Minister James Callaghan to settle the dispute. Scarman's main recommendations that sacked workers be reinstated and the workers' union be recognized by management were, however, both ignored. Hence the strike did not lead to a successful outcome for those immediately involved. Yet the Grunwick Dispute is central as it challenged the stereotype of South Asian women being silent and subservient (Athwal, 2016) and the image of British strikers as being White male. Additionally, and perhaps more crucially, the Grunwick Dispute challenged the narrative of the British working class as being White male. The South Asian diasporic women revealed and challenged the sexist

and racist practices that very much dominated the industry and put their equality demands out to the British public. As such, these "striking women", through their struggle, expanded ideas about equality and dignity in the metropole.

C4P20   Even though the remainder of this chapter focuses on these two cases, it is worth remembering that there were many other strikes and mobilizations of diasporas in the United Kingdom, such as the Strike at Imperial Typewriters in Leicester (1974); Action at Chix Confectionery (bubblegum) Factory in Slough (1979–1980); Supreme Quilting in Smethwick (1982); Britain's Ltd. (toy manufacturer) in London (1983); and the Burnsall Strike in Birmingham (1992), as well as numerous Irish Catholic and Jewish diasporic mobilizations in Britain throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, with the Irish playing a central role in the "British" Chartist Movement (Virdee, 2014). Besides the decolonizing role of diasporas discussed earlier, I now proceed to highlight transnational and intersectional dimensions of these diasporic interventions.

C4S4 ## Transnationalizing Diaspora Studies

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C4P21 These two diasporic case studies, as argued above, demonstrate

the need to transnationalize diaspora studies by focusing on

South-to-South conversations that take place across the subaltern

and racialized spaces of the Global North. Transnationalism,

simply put, aims to examine and account for the economic,

social, political, cultural, and other processes and networks

beyond the borders of nation-states. Diasporas have of course

been construed by one of the doyens of the field as "the

exemplary communities of the transnational moment" and thus

as "the emblems of transnationalism" (Tölölyan, 1991, p. 6). As

these case studies show, the transnational dimensions of diaspora

need to be expanded further and go beyond their crossing of

borders and beyond their transnational and close relationships

with the homeland. Transnationalism of diasporas needs to be

extended to include how diasporic movements inspire diasporic

uprisings across borders and how transnational solidarities are

created. In other words, the field of diaspora studies needs to

bring to the fore how diasporic revolts as transnational

movements can draw inspiration from other diasporic and

freedom movements across the globe. Such transnational links

and solidarities of diasporas and their South-to-South

interactions, as discussed regarding these two case studies, need

to be seen as a central feature of their transnationalism.

C4P22   In the Grunwick Strike, the protestors' banners called

George Ward—who was the director of the company against

which the strikers had risen—the "George Amin of Willesden,"

likening him to the dictator Idi Amin who was involved in the

expulsion and othering of South Asian diasporas. The Grunwick

strikers also drew comparisons between themselves and the race

struggles in South Africa. Their placards read "Soweto

Grunwick: One Struggle." In the Bristol campaign, similarly, the

campaigners drew parallels with apartheid in South Africa but

also with racial segregation in the United States. They were

influenced by the civil rights campaign, especially the Alabama

Bus Boycott of 1955, which itself had come about because Rosa

Parks refused to give her seat to a White passenger on the bus.

The "cross-national diffusion" (Mansour, 2014, p. 1) was at work

both in terms of inspiring the collective action and also in

developing similar tactics to fight the color bar on both sides of

the Atlantic. The Bristol Bus Boycott occurred in 1963, the same

year as the US civil rights movement had gained significant

momentum. The Bristol Omnibus Company declared that they

were lifting the color bar on August 28, 1963, the very same day

that Martin Luther King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech

to thousands of Americans who had marched to Washington,

DC, to demand racial equality (Mansour, 2014, p. 6).

C4P23   The transnational aspects of the bus boycott and the

responses to it were also noticeable via, for example, the

connections made between the West Indian sugar industry,

slavery, and Bristol's wealth (referring also to Edward Colston, a

well-known Bristolian slave trader whose statue was pulled

down during a Black Lives Matter Protest in Bristol in 2020).

Transnational dimensions were addionally identified via the

Bristol Evening Post making connections to apartheid in South

Africa, asking what the trade union (Bristol TGWU) was doing

against racism in their own ranks in the context of their union's

formal opposition to apartheid in South Africa. It read, "What are

the trade union leaders doing to get the race virus out of the

systems of their ranks and file. . . The union have had plenty to

say about South Africa. They should take a look nearer home"

Verso
(*Evening Post* quoted in Dresser, 1986, p. 20). Drawing parallels with segregation and racism in the United States and apartheid in South Africa, the 1963 Bristol Bus Boycott reveals that diasporic mobilizations can involve transnational solidarity and draw inspiration globally. As Stephenson, who was one of the mobilizers of the Bus Strike in Bristol and the spokesperson for the West Indian Development Council, said,

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> You couldn't help but be impressed by Martin Luther King and what he was doing in America. But without Rosa Parks I'm not sure whether we would have embarked on our boycott. She was a huge influence on me. I thought if she could protest by not giving up her seat on a bus, we could start a bus boycott. (Stephenson, quoted in Verkaik, 2005, n.p.)

C4P25

Transnational aspects of these struggles could also be identified in the negative reporting in British newspapers at the time, which were replete with concerns about people of color supporting anti-racist uprisings in different parts of the world and often telling adverse stories about international Black unrest. For example, the

Times used headlines such as "Alabama Negros Defy the Police"

when referring to the civil rights movement in the United States,

or

"Africans' Attack on British Soldiers" when referring to

uprisings in Kenya, a British colony (Dresser, 1986, p. 36).

Today, in the United Kingdom and Europe, these transnational

solidarities, and even the story of the 1963 Bristol Bus Boycott,

remain largely untold. Seeing race as primarily an American

issue, many in Britain learn about the American civil rights story

of Rosa Parks and the bus boycott in Alabama, but remain

unaware of the 1963 Bristol Bus Boycott, something which

happened on their doorstep.

C4S5 Intersectional Analysis in Diaspora Studies

C4P26 A second important aspect of these diasporic revolts is the way

that they reveal the need for intersectional analysis, especially in

the way in which race, class, gender, migratory background, and

other divisions affect diasporic experience and struggle.

Research on intersectionality and diaspora has examined, for

example, how diasporas of color who are women have to deal

with particular challenges. Diaspora research was gendered using

an intersectional lens through the works of, for example, Anthias

(1998), Brah (1996, 2018), Dwyer (2000), Hussain (2005),

Puwar and Raghuram (2003), and Yuval-Davis (2011). Brah's

(1996) seminal work was critical of privileging the point of

origin and, through an examination of South Asian women,

attempted to reconceptualize "diaspora space" as different from

both the home and the new place. Hussain examined South Asian

women, focusing on how they develop collective hybrid

identities through cultural production (Hussain, 2005). Ong

revealed how women of color of migratory origins were not

regarded as legitimate workers (Ong, 1996). Bassel and Emejulu

(2017) examined the impact of austerity on migrant women.

Such research has successfully questioned the gender-blind

attitudes of previous diaspora and migration research. An

intersectional lens was also deployed to analyze the Grunwick

Dispute, uncovering how the intersections of class, gender, and

ethnicity contributed to diasporic women of color being

exploited and undermined (e.g., Parmar, 1982; Pearson, Sundari,

& McDowell, 2010; McDowell et al., 2014).

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The discussion in this chapter highlights how the intersectional identities of diasporas, (their intersecting gender, race, ethnicity, class, and migratory status) not just affect their mobilizations, but also effect and shape responses to diasporas in the metropole. The two case studies show how striking diasporas in Britain challenged understandings of the working class as typically being conceptualized as "White" or "White male." They revealed both the gendered and racialized divisions within the British working-class movement and the need for an intersectional understanding not just of diasporas but also of how they were received and resisted. The case studies demonstrate that British trade unions were unable to recognize the increasing racial diversity of the British working class or empathize and fight against the particular exclusions and racialized discriminations that working-class diasporas were facing in the workplace. Neither were they able to understand or fight against the gendered exclusions and discriminations at work. They thus reveal that the British trade union movement of the time, while speaking for "universal" working classes, could be reticent when it came to supporting working-class people of color and women.

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In fact, at times, the perceived competition from working classes who were racialized led some to exclude and discriminate against working classes of color. They were regarded as diasporic intruders threatening "British" workers' economic security, job status, and their British way of life, as the Bristol Bus Boycott uncovered. At other times, as in the Grunwick Strike, their gendered, racialized, and diasporic positions and identities led the British unions to see the strike as unwinnable and thus unworthy of necessary support (Pearson et al., 2010, p. 425). The issue of how diasporas decolonize should, therefore, also be understood through an intersectional lens—as it is imbued with gendered and racialized assumptions.

C4P28   In the case of the 1963 Bristol Bus Boycott, the Black workers not only had to struggle with the management, but also with the union. The color bar united those who would have normally found themselves on different sides of labor disputes, namely the Bristol Joint Transport Committee (management) and the Passenger branch of the Bristol Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU). Bristol, of course, was not an isolated case. In fact, British trade unions resisted the employment of

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Black workers: "like the poor white southerner in the American south of the 1950s, even the poorest Bristolian could feel he or she was at least 'a cut above'" the Black laborers (Dresser, 1986, p. 57). Concerns and anxieties about the relative position of the White worker vis-á-vis the Black worker and "anxieties over perceived economic and cultural diminution of status" for White laborers (Shilliam, 2018, p. 156) were common in relation to Afro-Caribbean diasporic migrations in the 1960s, and then also during the arrival of African-Asian diasporas to the United Kingdom in the 1970s. The British unions were able to prevent Black labor from being hired by voting to introduce a color bar; failing that, they were able to impose racial quotas and thus restrict Black laborers' employment to, for example, 5% of the labor force. Unions could impose a "last hired and first fired" policy, and they were able to work with management to ensure Black labor would not be promoted over Whites (National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers [RMT], 2018). In the 1950s, 1960s, and even in the later years, White workers challenged the appointment of Black workers, for example, in West Bromwich. The color ban on driving buses also existed

elsewhere, as in Manchester and Coventry. In 1955, at the

TGWU annual conference, there were motions asking the union

to ban Black workers from the buses, and the assistant general

secretary of the National Union of Seamen told the 1948

conference that "British ports were to be 'no go' areas for black

sailors" (RMT, 2018, p. 7). The color ban in British Rail was not

overturned until 1966. In 1968, there were marches by White

dock laborers in London and by Smithfield porters supporting

Enoch Powell, who had been sacked from the shadow cabinet

following his "Rivers of Blood" speech; there were also marches

against the Race Relations Bill, which outlawed race

discrimination in housing and employment. During the 1974

Imperial Typewriters Strike, South Asian workers were met with

contra-banners: "White Workers of Imperial Typewriters."

C4P29   The Grunwick Dispute, however, was important in that,

for the first time, the unions in Britain supported working-class

people of color in a significant way. They joined the Grunwick

strikers in their pickets, and Royal Mail employees, most of

whom were White male workers, refused to sort or deliver post

from the Grunwick factory, in a move aimed at hitting the firm's

mail order photographic development and delivery business.

Before Grunwick, in the 1963 Bristol Boycott and many others

(e.g., the 1974 Imperial Typewriters Strike in Leicester),

working-class people of color had to fight the color bar of both

the management and the union. In Grunwick, while the

workforce was relatively united and in solidarity across race

lines, support from union leaders was, however, not always

consistent. As Jayaben Desai said, "Official action from the TUC

is like honey on your elbow. You can smell it, you can see it, but

you can never taste it" (McDowell et al., 2014, p. 610). It has

also been argued that

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[t]he trade union movement, despite its initial

support . . ., ultimately abandoned these women.

Whatever the reasons, whether in the Grunwick

case, it was a conviction that the struggle was not

winnable, and/or that there were more important

political issues at stake such as the survival of the

Labour Governments at the time and the standing

of the trade union movement. (Pearson et al.,

2010, p. 425)

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C4P31 Yet, through their actions, the South Asian women challenged

the narrative of the British working class as White. They made

an intersectional intervention, enabling the diversity of the

British working class to become visible. In this case, the

diasporas who revolted were South Asian women in saris and

they were not always treated with respect. Jayaben Desai

reported that George Ward, the manager of the company said to

her, "Mrs. Desai, you cannot win in a sari, I want to see you in a

mini" (quoted in Parmar, 1982, p. 261).

C4P32 That trade unions had a poor record in relation to

diasporas of color is, of course, not specific to the United

Kingdom. It has been noted elsewhere, for example in France,

where unions rarely reached out to protect the North African

diaspora in the workplace. Well into the 1970s, the

discrimination and exclusions that North Africans in France were

facing were ignored.

C4P33 It was from the traditional left that some of these

groups inherited the denial of sociocultural

specificity and a naive view that was both

Eurocentric and universalist. The traditional left

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> was largely unable to conceive the working class
> in terms of what it had actually become, a
> multicultural entity made up of subjects with
> differing living conditions and needs. (Bracke,
> 2008, p. 121)

C4P34   It should also be noted that in both the case of 1963 Bristol Bus Boycott and the case of the Grunwick Dispute, managers and unions had underestimated the educational levels and skills of the diasporas of color. They were simply seen as cheap labor. Their educational levels, their knowledge of the English language and Britain due to their prior connections via the British Empire were not recognized, leading to an underestimation of their creative tactics, resistance, and their solidarity-building capacities as well as their eloquence, confidence, and articulacy when speaking to the British nation and the press.

C4P35   The conspicuous absence of ethnicity, gender, and race in understandings of the working class is well-known. Diasporas, their struggles, their intersectional identities and transnational solidarities, are still invisible or marginalized in narratives of the

working class, especially in terms of how they expanded rights, dignity, and equality. As shown through two case studies, diasporas of color have been part and parcel of the working class in Britain, yet their struggles are not conceptualized in familiar stories about the working class. The "specificity of black women's experiences of racism, which have been structured by racially constructed gender roles" (Parmar, 1982, p. 237) has also helped shift understandings of the working class from being understood as homogeneous, or purely as White and male. However, typically, working-class women of color have been constructed as passive, submissive, meek, and helpless, or their "culture" is essentialized and blamed for the exclusions they face in society instead of understanding the operations of individual and systemic racism, patriarchy, and poverty. In Grunwick and other strikes, diasporic women challenged the particularized forms of racial and gendered oppression they were facing. They also made the working-class movement in Britain recognize their own exclusions and existing blind spots. As McDowell et al. (2014, p. 597) say, it was "the moment when the white working class recognized 'the other.'"

C4P36   That the working-class struggles of diasporas of color and racialized migrants were not recognized as part of the narrative of the working class and that the working class is typically conceived of as White is not confined to history, however. We saw such understandings return to mainstream discussions during recent nativist movements (e.g., some mobilizations in support of Trump in the United States and Brexit). Discourses such as "the left-behind," the "traditional" working class, and the "ordinary" working class emerged and came to be used as a code word for the White working class on both sides of the Atlantic. Some have focused political attention on resentments over what some see as White degradation, centered on the idea of White voters deserving special policy interventions. These gained ascendancy in the Global North, even though a significant proportion of racialized migrants and people of color in the Global North make up the working class and the poor.

C4P37   Concerns about and discussion of White neglect have not only been voiced by nativists but can be also found in academic works (for example, Hochschild, 2016) who have examined Whites as a group that has been left behind. They are said to face

alienation, disenfranchisement, and degradations in relation to others allegedly "cutting the line" and getting in front of them. This narrative, as already discussed in detail, depicts working-class people as White and valorizes Whiteness rather than showing a genuine concern with poverty and exclusion for working-class people of all colors (e.g., Bhambra, 2017; Demir, 2022; Mondon & Winter, 2019; Norris & Inglehart, 2019; Roediger, 2017; Sayer, 2017; Shilliam, 2018; Virdee & McGeever, 2018). It is important for diaspora scholars to assess how, in the past decade, such forms of White identity politics have gained a purchase in certain discussions in wider society, the media, and academia, and how these discourses are related to particular problematic configurations and narratives of the nation, belonging, migration, and citizenship in the Global North. They relate to how some are seen to belong while others are refused entry as legitimate members of the working class or as citizens. As such, they are closely related to broader problematic nation-centric conceptualizations, Eurocentrism, and a scant understanding of the links between empires, colonialism, diasporas, migrations, and ethnic diversity—thus revealing the

urgent need for diaspora and migration scholars to decolonize
and challenge these in their analyses.

_{C4S6} Conclusion

_{C4P38} This chapter not only made a conceptual case for a decolonial
perspective to diaspora, but also discussed, through two case
studies of "striking diasporas" how diasporas of color should be
considered as primary agents of the decolonization of the Global
North. The chapter also discussed how nation-centric
understandings of diaspora should be resisted. It called for
clearer connections to be made between empires and postcolonial
diasporas, thus expanding both the spatial and temporal
dimensions of diaspora research and resisting methodologically
nationalist discourses which hem in diaspora research into the
home country, the host country, or to in-betweenness. The
chapter argued that ignoring the colonial and empire axes of
diasporas in diaspora research has consequences. Eurocentric
assumptions, "the miracle that is Europe," often act as
justification for the hard, violent borders of the Global North,
overlook that cultural plurality due to colonialism and empires is

part and parcel of the Global North, and fail to recognize

"others," including diasporas, as originators and sources of

concepts and ideas. By using two case studies, namely the 1963

Bristol Bus Boycott and the 1976–1978 Grunwick Dispute in the

United Kingdom, the chapter demonstrated how diasporas have

expanded ideas about equality, dignity, justice, and freedom;

examined the importance of recognizing the transnational South-

to-South solidarities and interactions of diasporas; and revealed

how the intersections of their class, race, and gender identities

affected and shaped responses to them, including the gendered

and racialized responses they received from aspects of the trade

unions and the labor movement in general.

C4S7

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