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Feeling race: mapping emotions in policing Britain's borders

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ABSTRACT

Collaboration between the police and immigration has expanded in Britain, following implementation of renewed legislative and policy imperatives to ensure swifter removal and deportation of foreign national criminals. The roles and powers of ordinary police and immigration officers have blurred, allowing both to play a greater part in enforcing migration control as part of their daily routine. Race-making practices are woven into immigration enforcement, policing and criminalization, and agents undertaking policing migration responsibilities animate and enact racial ideas as part of their work. This article considers the affective contours of race in policing migration and explores the consequences when agents from racialized and migratory backgrounds hold positions of power, thereby scrambling the binary of 'us' (citizens) and 'them' (foreigners).

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Introduction

Enforcement of migration control in Britain has increasingly enlisted ordinary police officers to perform nationality checks to identify foreign national offenders who may be eligible for removal and deportation based on their criminality. This illustrates how migration control has become diffuse and tentacular as it inveigles agents that were not directly tasked with migration duties to take responsibility for them. Operation Nexus (Nexus) was introduced by the government in London in 2012 and rolled out across the UK since (Vine 2014). As part of Nexus, immigration checks on foreign national suspects are now part of the diverse regime of everyday work undertaken by ordinary police. Immigration officers (IOs) have also been vested with crime focussed powers as part of the overall bid to conjoin immigration and crime control.¹ Under Nexus, IOs are physically placed in police custody suites to

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facilitate the identification of foreign nationals brought into police stations under suspicion for criminal offending.

Emotional registers of migration control encompass both sensory and affective experience. Whilst the procedural implications of the fusion between policing and immigration have been documented, the emotional contours of this enmeshment have been under addressed. Detailed examination of race-making practices, racism, and the feelings they evoke require deeper excavation. While the designation of race has always carried an emotional quality (Fanon [1967] 1986), the imperative to 'feel race'; to map the racial economy of emotions and to acknowledge the significance of the emotions that race and racism engender, has recently been reinvigorated (Bonilla-Silva 2019). Taking the cue to 'feel race', in this paper I draw on ethnographic observations in police custody and interviews with police and IOs to understand the texture and nuance of racialized emotions by those who are increasingly tasked with migration control duties because of policies such as Nexus. The analysis focuses on emotions expressed by these actors in the performance of their occupational roles.

Conceptually, the article discusses how feelings of power, pleasure, vindication, denial, and complicity expressed by police and immigration agents are framed, suffused, questioned, and suspended by race. The complexity and contradictions of these emotions are further explored in relation to racial minorities who are in policing and immigration control related roles and are therefore perceived or understand themselves to be complicit in the production of neo-colonial racial hierarchies in Britain (Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012). This blurs the distinction between foreigners (them) and citizens (us) and starts a deeper conversation about how state policies are racially reordering multicultural societies in ways that are difficult to contemplate and assign responsibility to given that racial minorities are often delivering these practices at the front line of these services. The paper touches on the relationship between sensory forms of race-making and feelings/emotions. Everyday racial interactions are corporealized and the senses are visceral spaces where racial ideas are registered, enacted, and naturalized (Rankine 2014; Smith 2006; Ioanide 2015). It is recognized that reading and interpreting emotions is an opaque exercise and people's outward emotional expressions cannot be taken for granted. Emotions such as sympathy or guilt may be expressed performatively to reduce officers' sense of accountability or self-condemnation.

Research on detention officers in immigration removal centres and on how race-making practices operate within immigration policing and immigration detention has shown the transferability between their occupational skillsets and the perpetuation of everyday racism through the ethos of immigration control work (Parmar 2018b, Parmar 2019; Bosworth et al. 2018; Turnbull 2017). Immigration work is recast in affirmative terms by those who perform it

by infusing it with positive value for example as a mission to shield the country from dangerous foreign national offenders (author 2020) or to protect vulnerable individuals (Aliverti 2020). Immigration control's focus on nationality enables effective disavowal of the racialized foundation and meaning of immigration enforcement (Bosworth 2018). The blurring of citizenship and race that is advanced through migration control means that the precarity and mutability of race requires even more nuanced research attention (Kaufman et al. 2018). The article builds on this work by considering the affective dimensions of migration control; presenting findings about how race is emotionally felt, sensed, animated, perceived and inscribed by those vested with policing migration duties. I saw that racialized emotions and sensory stereotypes inflect and shape how police officers and immigration enforcement agents rationalize, experience, and understand their work and how they feel about who they target through their work, how they measure their performance and how they digest the (in)consequences of their actions. Race renews its material presence through latching onto the sensorial experiences of those undertaking migration control work. These felt qualities of race are as much part of the mechanism of the social construction of race as institutions that uphold racial hierarchies (Sekimoto 2018).

Emotional encounters: researching policing migration in Britain

Between 2013 and 2021 I conducted empirical research on the merger between ordinary policing and migration control in the UK. My aim was to understand the changing nature of policing and the consequences of the enmeshment between police work and immigration enforcement. I requested access to conduct observations and interviews within local police custody suites and specifically to explore Nexus, a policy ostensibly devised to ensure quicker identification and removal of eligible foreign national criminals who came into police custody. Nexus dovetailed with the controversial policy to make Britain a 'hostile environment' for illegalized migrants (Jones 2021). This policy had significant consequences for racialized citizens, most infamously the 'Windrush scandal' exposed how Black people with the right to stay had been wrongly targeted for removal and deportation (Gentleman 2020). This context meant that police and IOs were sometimes reticent to talk about race and emotions but when probed, many were keen to give their side to vindicate themselves and their employers. I conducted over 250 hours of observation in police custody suites, shadowed and interviewed (98) various ranks of police, custody detention and immigration enforcement officers. I witnessed their interactions with other actors including lawyers, appropriate adults, medical and mental health personnel, and other police force representatives. Crucially, I observed the booking in procedures performed when suspects were brought into police custody, how IOs stationed in police

stations performed their identity checking duties, interacted with the police officers. I wanted to explore the relationship between race and emotions and so was attentive to these concepts as they emerged in the fieldwork and its analysis. Participants were given informed consent and the research approved by the university's ethics committee. Pseudonyms are used throughout the article to protect the identity of those who participated in the research.

Affect, senses and race

Emotions shape the ways that the world is experienced and infuse day to day interactions with people (Ioanide 2015). They are malleable and shape the politics of everyday interaction (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). And emotional narratives require contextualization to understand the work that they do. Moving away from models which assume that emotions are primarily psychological states and instead social and cultural practices, I endorse the idea that emotions come from without and move inward (Ahmed 2014). Although the social force of emotion in shaping racism is recognized, understanding of the role of emotion and affect in expressions of racial violence and discrimination has been largely overlooked or considered as part of broader projects rather than placed at the centre of the research (Green 2013). But race has always held an emotional quality and racism is felt in psychological, physical, psychic, and visceral terms (Yancy and Zack 2017; Fanon [1967] 1986). Racialized emotions, however, are a lesser used analytical framework in criminal justice and migration control, although both institutions are patterned by race/nationality. Emotions shape the lived interactions for those subject control as well as those working to implement controls.

The relationship between embodiment and race is crucial to understanding ways which race is activated and represents another technology through which race is (re)produced. However, 'the corporeality of the racialized body has remained an enigma' (Alexander et al. 2005). A sensory framework, prioritizes embodiment and comportment, treating the body not as an object waiting for commands of the mind or society but as a productive mechanism of power whose capacity enables a certain kind of knowledge, experience and meaning. Construction of the racialized other, argues Sekimoto requires hegemonic body-subjects who (sub)consciously engage perceptual habits to otherize bodies of colour based on the normativity of whiteness (Sekimoto 2018). Ways of seeing are vital to the operational interstices of policing and migration control and visual categorization is often the first form of sorting and profiling in professions which involve face to face contact with members of the public.

Findings: capturing the emotional register of race making in border control

Seeing race

Racialized vision is an institution and sensory construction which, like other race making practices, needs careful excavation. In my research, seeing and declarations of 'not seeing' race were often made by police officers and IOs alike. Arun, an IO, exalted that he was especially skilled in his role because both saw and didn't see race. Cognizant of the inherent paradox in the comment he'd made, he explained:

You see my job has ... well ... it's trained me for my intuition to kick in and spot ethnic minorities and recognize them before I even register who they are or what they look like, their colour if you like. But then ... it has also meant that I have to fight against that instinct and not take into account what they look like – you know, the colour of their skin, hairstyle and that. *(Arun IO)*

He went on to say that often seeing a person would trigger a subconscious feeling in him, like a feeling in his stomach before he would register what ethnic group the person belonged to or what nationality they could be by looking at them. He claimed to have conditioned himself to 'not see' a person's skin colour and to carry out immigration checking procedures as he'd been trained.

In another instance, Jen, a police officer, talked about how visual cues (other than race) were vital to identifying a person's particular situation and whether they were 'genuine' or not. Jen talked of migrants who had 'been on the back of a lorry ... you could see it in their faces, in their clothes and by the state of them'. Here Jen was alluding to various markers, likely to be racialized which she used to decipher to identify illegal migrants. She claimed that this was a 'sixth sense' which she had acquired following many 'run-ins with artful dodgers'. I later asked her how she had developed her sixth sense. She explained it was profoundly visual. 'I tend to see someone or something ... predict something ... an outcome I guess and then I see if it matches up to what I saw. It's like I test myself to see how honed my ways of seeing actually are'. I asked her about what happened when she saw someone who was Black, or Asian. She said, 'well I see them and immediately categorize them, where they might have come from, and I combine that with the attitude they might be displaying. So, I think to myself this person looks Afghan, this person seems African, Indian or Turkish for example'. Jen was insistent that this was not prejudice but based on gut feelings she'd developed thanks to years of work. For her, grouping people was not an inherently prejudiced practice because it was 'not malicious' or something she consciously thought about but just made life easier 'for them and me' she defiantly claimed. Here we see how Jen separated prejudice from what she was doing as racism or prejudice

was more of a rational or cognitive process compared to what she was doing. Categorizing didn't make her feel bad, because sometimes the assumptions were positive or accurate. 'The Chinese are always polite, tend to listen – especially the women – so submissive' she insisted. Here was an example of how the problematic aspects of racially categorizing human beings were denied or framed as benevolent by emphasizing conciliatory stereotypes of the group she was talking about. The organization of difference according to packaged collective identities have always been underwritten by the conflation of psychological dispositions, sexual proclivities, cultivated habits and cultural competences (Stoler 1996). Jen's distinction between feelings and racism is also indicative of the vital importance for the theorization of racialized emotions to explore how feelings or instinct are presented as incongruous with racist thought and action as the latter are considered to be rational and deliberate.

Feeling race

Late one evening I was talking with Stuart, an IO about how spending time in police custody affected his work:

It's much more investigative ... I suppose I feel less sympathy than I did for those we saw on raids because they are in trouble with the police anyway ... It's easier to distance yourself in the criminal justice setting than say picking someone up in little Indian restaurant or someone who is just trying to make a life for their family. If I used to identify with them – you know same age as me or something silly like that, it would make me sad ... What I like about being here in custody is that I sometimes don't even have to see the suspect – the officer just requests a check and if the person is eligible to be passed on to CC (criminal cases) I do it electronically or with a phone call. *(Stuart IO).*

Our discussion showed how police activity pre-framed individuals as criminal, dissipating feelings of sympathy, guilt or sadness Stuart might otherwise have felt. Other officers also talked of the police now doing immigration's heavy lifting and their cases being more likely to hold water as they were dealing with recorded criminals. Stuart's comment about the distance between himself and those he had to exclude can be read as an evaluative judgement he was making about the racial distance he felt. Emotions are often deployed to reinforce power relationships and to calibrate one's place in the world and this was clearly at play in Stuart's narrative (Svašek 2002). Narratives such as Stuart's and Jen's are illustrative of the way in which officers tried to frame their behaviour as not racist, denying accountability for the racism that formed the subtext of their actions, words, and feelings. The accompaniment of racism with denial is well accepted – and immigration restrictions are often presented as rational forms of racism (Goldberg 1990). As others have argued, the denial of racism is regarded as the post racial

manifestation of the durability of race in present times and the discursive development of postracial racism (Goldberg 2015; Lentin 2018). Participants mobilized a narrow definition of racism which effectively downplayed the idea that racism was embedded in the very practices of immigration control and police work. When probed defensive denials surfaced along with rebuttals that the police were regularly diversity trained, revealing that the real force of having completed diversity training was to legitimately deflect any hint of racism or uneven practice. 'We've come a long way from when the police were calling people from different backgrounds names' Chris, a police officer proudly told me, framing racism as aberrant, pathological and primarily expressed through language (Lentin 2020).

Mixed emotions

Research on migration and its control is accepted as emotionally laden: hopes, anxieties, pain, fear and apprehension (Svašek 2010). Acknowledging emotions is particularly pertinent for ethnographic work, despite the discomfort it may cause (Çankaya and Mepschen 2019; Hage 2009; Behar 1996) and researchers' emotional receptivity has been shown to generate insights into the complex motivations of human decisions (Shaw and Charlsey 2006).

Recent critical scholarship about border control has included attention to how agents (un)feel about their work; how they emotionally withdraw to do their jobs and how mundane tasks obscure the regime's coercive reality (Bosworth 2018). I found that IOs would often talk about their work in broad terms without specifying exactly what they do to avoid judgement and interrogation. Some reported telling others they worked for the government or did security work. Others admitted shame and the preference to avoid heated emotional and political debates with friends or relatives more liberal towards immigration policies. 'Sometimes you just want a quiet drink at the pub with friends rather than Question Time style debates. I've ended up being called racist by friends who just don't understand the difference between immigration work and racism', Daniel (IO) told me.

The feelings of social disapprobation explained by Daniel were curious, particularly in England where it is so strongly imagined that people are hostile to migration and migrants (Jones et al. 2017; Anderson 2013). Research has shown that those who police borders do grapple with moral ambivalence towards their work (Aliverti 2020) and experience compassion towards those they deal with (Aas and Gundhus 2015) but also that compassion can be concurrently repressive (Kalir 2019). Shared emotions including empathy and vulnerability do emerge even if momentarily to resist the disciplinary regime (Hall 2012). Those working in British Immigration Removal Centres often feel that their attitudes towards racial diversity are hardened and various nationalities are spoken of in stereotypical terms by detention officers because of

their daily roles which condition them to categorize humans by nationality (Bosworth et al. 2018; Hall 2012). The racialized emotional contours and consequences of criminal justice experiences remain to be fully excavated. Arguably, criminal justice and migration control research needs to make headway here particularly because, racialized emotions are not fixed; our racial selves are constantly being retooled in ways that both perpetuate and rupture racialized habits (Bonilla-Silva 2019) making their capture now, even more important for seeing how racialized emotions transform over time.

In the hands of power

Albert Memmi argues that ultimately, the goal of racism is dominance (Memmi 2000). In my fieldwork, I avoided direct conversations about power and feelings of dominance out of concern it would cause offence and foreclose genuine information sharing. Although direct expressions of the power that agents held were explicitly dismissed, I detected feelings of power in some of the interactions I observed. For example, police officers described how they educated people who did not seem to understand the system. The script of edifying 'racial others' was typical and emerged in subtle and overt forms. The racial power play underscored the conditionality of citizenship for those 'who simply happen to be born elsewhere' Sarah (police officer). Police officers' honed knowledge about foreign national suspect cases also allowed them to play power games with legal professionals:

Terence (police sergeant):we are referring this one to criminal cases (home office) he's no leave to remain, suspected rape, convicted sexual assault and a string of minors so should be eligible

Solicitor: Have you checked his current imm [immigration] status?

Terence: Yeah, he is definitely on track for CC² to pursue intelligence-led deportation based on that rap sheet

Solicitor: Well, I'd like to talk with my client please

Terence: I think there's little point, if you ask me

Solicitor: Well, I'd like to make my own mind up about that

Terence: You'll have to wait because there is a long queue for booking people in tonight and we don't have a clear interview room. Are you sure you want to wait? He's been checked with the IO here ...

Police officers are not supposed to influence the actions taken by solicitors. However, in practice they undermined solicitors, and challenged their right to advocate for their clients and the interactions and atmosphere in custody suites were frequently hostile (McConville et al. 1994). Police – solicitor

exchanges revealed how racial power was reinforced through discretionary means for example by reducing a suspect's opportunity to receive sound legal advice or 'pre-informing' the solicitor that it would be an immigration case and disinvesting the solicitor's willingness to hear the client's case. Such practices were often directed towards racial minorities because they were immigration related. Police officers talked about how some solicitors 'got on their nerves' or 'gets my back up' or 'makes my skin crawl'. These vivid expressions signalled feelings of annoyance, fear, dislike, and disgust towards the legal advocates and was markedly different to what I'd seen in other research I'd conducted in police custody where the police and solicitors were often so friendly suspects would regard them as complicit (see also (McConville et al. 1994).

Vexatious feelings towards other agency representatives one must engage with professionally is of course part and parcel of working life. However, I noted the strength of negative feeling towards one firm predominantly represented by South Asian solicitors. Nothing apparent had created this fractious relationship, but the solicitors felt the police did not like them because they always pushed for a client protective stance and, they felt as though the police were racially prejudiced against them. The solicitor told me 'Many of the clients are Asian and so are our solicitors. Once a solicitor from my firm asked one of the clients in Punjabi if he was doing okay when he stood at the custody desk and the custody sergeant came down on him like a ton of bricks. He said we needed to make sure we used official translators and the "inside chit chat" was not on'. I witnessed expressions of frustration and impatience directed by the police towards solicitors from this firm I perceived to be palpably racialized. Whilst I can only speculate, it appeared as though Asianness within this police station acted as a signifier for an undesirable foreignness. A significant number of Asian Pakistani migrants had been placed in police custody at this station and it seemed as though the categorization of migrants and the solicitor's firm had blurred and resulted in the racist assumption of sameness between the migrants and solicitors.

At one point a South Asian female solicitor came into the suite and the custody sergeant stared at her, for a moment too long where it felt uncomfortable. He finally uttered a sentence that made no sense, momentarily lexicologically paralysed. Was this because he was in the middle of something and the solicitor had interrupted his thinking, was it an expression of his frustration or psychic annoyance at having to see her (another Asian solicitor) again? Racialized emotions often manifested in this way and required recognition of certain moments, discombobulated expressions, uncomfortable silences, extended gazes, rolling of eyes, sucking of teeth, being at a loss for words, creating and feeling doubt, uncontrollable coughing, sweating, interlocking hands, rage and so on, which bioaccumulated to produce sensory shifts (Rankine 2014) which then seeped into the structural level creating

uneven impacts (in this instance strained legal advice) for racial minority suspects (Bosworth 2018). The intersection of affective and structural technologies of racialized power were clear in these examples and showed how the two aspects worked together and in this case the fusing of criminal justice and migration control imperatives enabled situations that shrouded or erased recognition of racial power in action (Murukawa and Beckett 2010).

I regularly witnessed expressions of sympathy which often functions as a modality of power while seeming not to be one (Rai 2002). In explaining the connection between sympathy, race and power, Rai argues when we sympathize with another's suffering, we anticipate we may suffer similarly in the future and consequently it is harder to sympathize with people with whom we do not share an ethnic background. If this similarity cannot be perceived or imagined, sympathy may be misdirected or hollow. Katie (police officer) said to me 'I do feel so sorry for some of them. I do. But I can't imagine I'd be in that position, I wouldn't let myself be. Katie was oblivious to the privilege and ignorance she'd expressed and demonstrated the absence of real sympathy and identification, despite her claim she 'felt so sorry for them'.

Pleasure and vindication

The pleasure of performing and witnessing racist practices and racist outcomes have been discussed with reference to past and present expressions of racism (Memmi 2000). The subject of pleasure through work was not easy to broach with my participants. I did however ask about the satisfaction they felt in the work they did and whether there were aspects of it they enjoyed. A moralistic satisfaction was expressed by Yvonne, an IO, who said she enjoyed her work because it gave her a chance to 'put things in order ... the governments over the years have let things get out of control ... I take pride and pleasure in getting things back on track. I feel I'm in an important position'. A sense of duty or seeing themselves as performing a key role represented a recurrent theme particularly among immigration agents. Police officers gave examples of how they were removing paedophiles, rapists, violent robbers, and drug dealers who were not conducive to the public good. This crime fighting mission was a repeated narrative to illustrate how they found meaning in what they were doing:

I do get satisfaction from doing my job, yes and I enjoy being with colleagues who are on the same page as me. The same political views if you like ... guess I feel a sense of purpose. (Taylor IO).

A workplace consensus or shared politics towards immigration control as expressed by Taylor was notable and chimes with research that evidences the resilience of the mission aspect of police culture and idea the police believe they are protecting the vulnerable (Bowling, Reiner, and Sheptyki 2019; Bacon

2016). In this case it was interesting to see immigration also seemed to have a shared political sentiment and ethos amongst the staff, perhaps increased contact with the police had nurtured this development amongst the officers. In my observations the togetherness amongst immigration officers was apparent and seemed to be cultivated through the collective exercise of power. Others felt vindicated because they were fighting against liberal notions of open borders and ‘that kind of unrealistic utopia’ as James animatedly told me:

I feel happy about the work I do. Maybe not always on a day-to-day basis but in terms of the bigger picture, the principles I am upholding, I feel it. People do have to face the consequences of not obeying the law and be punished.

(James IO)

The pleasure of punishment in a criminal justice context has been shown to be long-standing and ordinary (Hörnqvist 2021) however removal and deportation practices in Britain exacerbate the ambivalence around who belongs, rather than providing clarification (Bridget, Gibney, and Paoletti 2011). The sentiment to punish and to feel satisfied in remedying transgressions of citizenship rules was remnant of colonial powers to exclude and epitomized their (re)inscription in the present. This further underlined the ways in which belonging and non-belonging in post-colonial Britain has relied on the ongoing construction of distinctions between lawlessness and lawfulness to manage racially undesired populations (Trafford 2021).

Denial, complicity and sensory stereotyping

Participants were keen to draw a line between migration control and racism and in their disavowal of racist intent would often emphasize they were not making moral judgements about the people they were processing and who they were but simply doing their job in fighting crime or removing people from the UK:

you see, I don't have an issue with the work I do. Its crime control. I do not look at ethnic background, its just a coincidence – people who are subject to immigration control are likely to be a different colour and of certain nationalities. If I start to think oh . . . I am profiling certain groups or I am being unfair, it would make me lose focus and sight of the whole point of the work I do. I believe in what I am doing and this makes me feel job satisfaction overall.

(Edwin IO)

Disavowal of racialization or stereotyping within immigration work were frequently legitimized by the conjoining of crime and immigration initiatives like Nexus. As Edwin's words show, he was convinced by the crime combating focus of his role and its outcomes. It was the types of criminality rather than the backgrounds of the people he emphasized were his targets, in

particular terrorism and organized crime. Edwin's approach represented an even more compelling paradox when he told me he was mixed race 'my father was Indian-Guyanese and mother white, however you can't tell from looking at me' he proudly remarked. This made his denial of the racializing aspects of his work easier as he went on to say he couldn't therefore be accused of racism. He claimed he fully accepted if he had been born in Guyana he would always be living in a contingent way, and 'playing by the British rules. If anyone knows this, it's me, relatives of mine, from Guyana have been wanting to come to Britain but they can't because they were born there or they've been removed because of their criminal history'. Ironically, Edwin's multi-layered colonial heritage meant he felt he understood nationality and immigration 'in all its complexity ... so I am suited to this work because I am partly ethnic, but do not look it. So people might think the work I do is racist and so then I am seen to be racist but it's much more layered. It also means I do not only rely on what I see at the surface level' he told me. Racism may call on the visual, but the certainties of visual recognition are never secure and popular conceptualizations of racial difference are as sensory as they are somatic. Racial distinctions were and are tethered to sensory distinctions of smell, sound and comportment and underwrite the racialized assessments validated in new racisms today (Stoler 2016). Sensory stereotyping presented itself in various forms, for example, I heard police and IOs often talking about smells in police custody and following the booking in of seven young Black Somali men who had been arrested at a nearby motorway station, custody detention officer Lewis, came in multiple times spraying air freshener, claiming the place smelled of sweat and filth. Subtle coded references were often made, for example a police custody sergeant who was coming onto his shift was going through the list of detainees and was told by the handing over officer (Police Custody Sergeant Mark) there were two Africans in 'but then again you can probably hear for yourself' he said enacting the racialized stereotype of associating excessive noisiness with the African men in the custody suite. It was difficult, to always identify the sensory regime of racism because despite feeling and sensation being fundamental they were often unarticulated or implicit (Sekimoto and Brown 2020).

IOs and police officers of colour adopted strategies of denial to cope with their jobs and to assuage feelings of moral ambivalence. Neeraj a police custody officer explained his mother was refugee from Uganda and who came to Britain in the 1970s. He expressed how migrants coming to Britain today had more choice than members of his family, thereby disassociating himself and his migratory background from people he interacted and governed daily. Neeraj said he had to always 'remember' the difference between his mother or grandmother and the people he played a part in detaining in order that he could carry out his work. He said, 'otherwise I wouldn't be able to do my job ... you know if I thought they were the same as my family was

say forty years ago. Once I just froze when one of the detainees was talking to me in Hindi. . .the words were ringing in my head I literally couldn't move or serve him as I felt so guilty, so disrespectful and so asked someone else to take over his care'. This paralysis, Neeraj talked of was an embodied memory, an unwrapping of race in everyday life, and gave an account of the intercorporeality and viscosity of race. Its racialized emotional response (Nayak 2017) was triggered by an accumulation in the body of sensory triggers that ultimately bridged the racial distance between Neeraj and the South Asian man subject to his control. This was a difficult theme in the research for me to make sense of. Notably Neeraj expressed increased rhetorical incoherence including grammatical mistakes and lengthy pauses when he discussed these issues in line with scholarship which has identified such changes in speech when discussing sensitive issues related to race (Bonilla-Silva 2018).

Saher, an IO of Bosnian origin who had come to Britain in 1992 from Srebrenica discussed how her ethnicity, religion and migration history meant she was obviously 'a bit of a hypocrite' because she had experienced statelessness and had seen what it was like for her family and friends to be faced with genocide and the threat of torture. 'It was a miracle my uncle survived', Saher told me with tears in her eyes. 'And I do, I do [long pause] recognize it was only because of of of of the . . . what's the word . . . the kind . . . no the . . . openness of Britain even I survived and my family are here. I'm not ungrateful'. She went to talk about her experiences of racism; 'I know what it's like and it's not nice to be treated in a certain way because of your background' when probed, she floundered in a way she had not previously. 'Well . . . I mean . . . you know [long pause] . . . kind of looked at differently, people not respecting you. Names called, I feel . . . [long uncomfortable pause] . . . I've had it all'. In her discussion of 'colonial aphasia', Stoler (2016) talks about the troubled psychic space aphasics occupy, the misrecognitions, the disconnect between words and things, the inability to assign names to people and things in the world. Saher struggled to make explicit the connections between her own story and those of the people she saw every day, even though she recognized the crossovers between their stories and hers. This was not amnesia, she had not forgotten the experience or names, but rather displayed an interruption in the pathways and systems of association, seeing details but failing to see the whole. Saher's not wanting to seem ungrateful echoed research which has found refugees and migrants once settled in a country are expected to be grateful to their hosts (Moulin, Nyers, and Rygiel 2012).

I also often came across feelings of racial affinity – Tarun, an IO stationed at a police custody suite explained his feelings of sadness and betrayal:

You see, my family is also from India, from Daman and so I do understand why people migrate and the benefits it brings, what people will go through to come

here and I feel upset sometimes because of the things I have to enforce – I share a lot with many of the people, after all . . . But it's a stable government job and I have little choice to pursue another career . . . I am respected by my colleagues.
(Tarun, IO)

Tarun's words evidence how racialized emotions became entangled with the personal histories and how difficult feelings of (racial) affinity can be to renounce. These feelings seemed to influence the moral perceptions some of the officers held of themselves. Biographies like Tarun's scramble the line between immigration enforcer and migrant producing daily dilemmas and consternation. The balance of needing a stable income whilst recognizing racialization, unfairness, and exclusion was intrinsic to the occupational space he inhabited was clearly something he was working through emotionally. Immigration work being taken up by settled migrants like Tarun is not new, the culture of racism has never contained by the colour line and modes of belonging are hierarchically ordered (Back, Sinha, and Bryan 2012; Fanon [1967] 1994).

Making sense of race

The relationship between senses, affect and race making has been neglected in migration and criminal justice scholarship. My aim was to examine policing migration practices in terms of the affective and sensory aspects of racial stereotypes advanced through police enforcement of migration control work and to understand how the reliance on visual forms of racial identification are destabilized or sustained through such practices. Understanding the power of perception is at the heart of migration control because many people who may look 'foreign' are British and vice versa and migration control ostensibly legitimizes ocular racializing processes. The article has illustrated the sensory and affective dimensions of race as expressed by police and immigration officers alongside highlighting the contradictions of these emotions particularly when agents in roles of power belong to racialized groups. The emotional and sensory insights reported cast doubt over the idea that increasing racial diversity in criminal justice and immigration professions will necessarily lead to a reduction in racist practices towards the people they work with. Despite their uncomfortable implications, complicity in the advancement of neocolonial racial hierarchies by agents from racial minority backgrounds through adherence to state policies cannot be overlooked. Rather, findings reported in this paper serve to illustrate how racism insinuates itself throughout lived experience and inter-personal interactions at the level of feeling and emotions (Hsu 2020). In this case we see how senses and emotions intersect through the ever-blurring space between migration control and criminal

justice and how within these spaces, race renews and inscribes its material presence every day.

Notes

1. See *Immigration Act 2016* Paragraphs 46–51.
2. Criminal Casework team at the Home Office for Foreign National Offender referrals.

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