'No Justice, No Peace': Black Radicalism and the Atmospheres of the Internal Colony

Illan rua Wall (iD)
University of Warwick

Abstract

Instead of thinking of 'public order' as the type of power that police deploy to manage disorder, this article suggests that we understand it as a set of background affects. The problem of analysing these affects is that (aside from moments of unrest) the majority of the populace is anaesthetised to them. Most people take the public feelings of calm predictability for granted. Crucially, however, the everyday management of public order does not anaesthetise everyone. It also produces 'suspect populations', who must remain attentive to its low background hum. This article focuses on the US 'colony within' literature, developed by civil rights and black nationalist traditions from the late 1960s. The article suggests that this internal colony analysis contains a nuanced exploration of the spatialised affects of public order; the clouds of suspicion; the atmospheres of tension; and the police encounters that generate an affective substrate of relations.

The slogan 'No Justice, No Peace' has become a central articulation of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. It promises the continuation of disruptive protest until such time as society begins to address racial justice in a genuine way. 'It is a vow by the movement to transform the crisis that is inflicted on black people into a generalized crisis for the larger society, and for those who currently rule' (Ford, 2017). So the slogan might be expanded to say something like: 'If there is no justice, then we will make sure that there is no peace.' In this reading, the sense of justice and injustice is central. Injustice must be

Corresponding author: Illan rua Wall. Email: i.r.wall@warwick.ac.uk
TCS Online Forum: https://www.theoryculturesociety.org

challenged, and if that leads to disorder, so be it. But we might also read the slogan in a different way. This second sense of the slogan hangs instead on the meaning of 'peace'. 'The peace' is an often overlooked but core component of the legal theory of sovereignty. In the US it is the 'public peace', in Britain it is the King or Queen's peace (Wall, 2021; Vitale, 2017). Generally, 'the peace' is largely coterminous with the term 'public order'. To 'keep the peace' means to manage public order, to suppress riots and to disperse unlawful assemblies. But 'the peace' is also conceived as a sense of calm habitual docility within the overarching social order. When the BLM slogan centres this sense of 'peace', it underlines the ways in which the dominant order is racialised in an everyday manner. This second sense of the slogan could therefore be rendered: 'There is no justice *and* there is no peace'; or 'There is no justice because this is not peace'. While there have been many texts which emphasise the question of racial justice (Shelby, 2014), this article seeks to explore 'the peace', to show how it helps us to see fresh continuities and discontinuities.

The slogan tries to make the coercion behind 'the peace' visible as a *particular* order. But the difficulty is that 'the peace' in its non-spectacular everyday sense of calm habitual docility seems obvious and 'natural' to a large part of the population. In its everydayness, 'the peace' fades into the background. It is a vague atmosphere of social calm through which people live out their lives. As Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos (2015) explains of legal atmospheres more generally: they are *anaesthetic*. When the populace attunes to them, they fade from perception. On an everyday basis, then, the general populace does not notice public order precisely because it operates atmospherically. It takes a major disordering event for the populace to notice the interventions that maintain the sovereign's peace. And because the general populace only notice public order in these spectacles, the everyday sense is further invisibilised. A different way into this question of the everyday sovereign peace is to focus on those parts of the populace who cannot remain insensitive to its affects. The everyday affective ordering of public space is often a matter of life and death for those deemed 'suspect populations' by the apparatus of 'the peace'. In this way, we might begin to get away from that uncritical sense of 'the peace' as a sense of calm and begin to grasp that it names a more complex affective structure. 'The peace' names the affective forces that are necessary to shape social reproduction. It is not reducible to the social order itself, but closely related.

This article will focus on one particular literature of a suspect population. It will explore the 'internal colony' analysis proposed by black liberation movements in the US in the late 1960s. In particular, the article will explore the affective and spatial currents at play within that analysis of public order. While never explicitly theorised in the late 1960s, the article insists that with a careful re-reading we can discover a distinctive atmospheric account of public order as what Cornford (2021: 209) calls a 'substrate of relation'. At the core of the atmospheric insight into the internal colony analysis is the idea that control and resistance radiate outwards from specific encounters, creating an affective substrate from which further interactions occur.

The internal colony tradition had found early formulations in the Marxist tradition, with Lenin, Gramsci and the 'black nation thesis' of the inter-war Communist Party of the United States providing a starting point for the analysis. In a different but related vein, W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey and later Harold Cruse and the Revolutionary Action Movement began to develop the 'nation within a nation' analysis (Kelly, 2002).

But it was the dual tracks of Latin American underdevelopment theory and US black power that would bring the idea of an 'internal colony' to increasing prominence (Hind, 1984; Casanova, 1965; Stavenhagen, 1965). In the mid-1960s black nationalist and black power movements began to posit the idea that American society should be understood in colonial terms. In particular, they insisted that the racialised urban enclaves that emerged in the Northern cities after the great migration should be conceived like the native quarters of the colonised world. Looking back on this analysis, Pinderhughes defines the internal colony as a 'geographically-based pattern of subordination of a differentiated population, located within the dominant power or country' (2011: 236). The internal colony was adopted and developed by a number of key political theorists, briefly becoming a keystone of black nationalist analysis (Adamson, 2019: 345; Allen, 2005: 2; Sales Jr, 1994: 71–4). It facilitated new ways of mapping the tangle of economic, social, psychological, affective, and spatial forces that facilitated white power and black subjugation.

In turn, the internal colony analysis helped to constitute forms of domestic solidarity around new social organisations and political praxis, while also constructing 'internationalist imaginaries and . . . alliances within a burgeoning Third Worldism' (Adamson, 2019: 346). However, despite its apparent potential, the internal colony analysis drew the heckles of anti-imperialist theory (Burawoy, 1974). The problem was that the colony 'within' and 'without' do not share the same social and economic relations. These problems were acknowledged throughout the literature. The 'internal colony' was variously construed as a metaphor (Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967), a process rather than a structure (Blauner, 1969), an emergent form of power (Allen, 1969), or more recently a frame of thinking (Adamson, 2019). While the political economy of the internal colony might have been quite different from the more conventional colonial spaces (Blauner, 1969: 394–6), as Stuart Schrader comments, 'its undisputed strength was its focus on policing' (2019: 3). And this is precisely why it is important to return to the analysis in the context of BLM. It focuses us on the question of public order, underlining the everyday affective and spatial dynamics of policing black people.

This article begins with the basic contours of the analysis itself, focusing on descriptions by Kenneth Clark, James Baldwin and Robert Allen. The aim here is to sketch out the contours of a common analysis, and to mark its shifts across civil rights and black power struggles. The article then turns to the operationalisation of this analysis in the Black Panther's brief period of 'police patrols'. In both of these sections, the work will primarily pay close attention to contemporaneous sources. In the final section, the article turns to contemporary affective analysis to draw out and reflect upon the significance of the internal colony framework. In particular, it seeks to focus on the dual questions of the public and the peace within 'public order'. At the core of the article is a focus on the way in which a social atmosphere can emerge, wherein the everyday encounters of public order can become particularly sensitive sites, precipitating mass protest and social unrest.

The Colony Within and Public Order

Kenneth Clark's (1965) germinal analysis of what he calls the 'dark ghetto' insists that US urban space in the mid-1960s should be conceived as divided by a series of invisible

walls. 'The dark ghetto's invisible walls have been erected by white society, by those who have power, both to confine those who have *no* power and to perpetuate their powerlessness. The dark ghettos are social, political, educational and – above all – economic colonies' (Clark, 1965: 11). Clark conceives of the city as striated space. It was not simply that communities were drawn to people like themselves, as the racist defence of de facto segregation often ran, but that there was a structure in place that ensured the functional segregation of the populace. This system ran through local and national political leadership, educational settings, economic relations and patterns of property ownership, all the way to the very psycho-social spatialisation of the city. In Clark's analysis we find an attempt to convey the psycho-affective dynamics of this segregated space. He explains that the ghetto is a bubble in which black populations are corralled; their objective conditions of overcrowding, disease and crime specifically generate 'resentment, hostility, despair, apathy, self-depreciation and its ironic companion, compensatory grandiose behavior' (Clark, 1965: 11). The materiality of spatial relations and social conditions generate psycho-affective dynamics.

While Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1991) was not published in the US until 1965 and so did not impact on Clark's analysis, it is useful to read alongside it for its particularly sophisticated theorisation of how racism might operate atmospherically. Fanon used 'atmosphere' to explain both the social forces of racism and the manner in which they 'rippled under your skin'. Affective atmosphere was a substrate of relation that persisted in the environment and in the body. This psycho-affective play of common and individualising effects was crucial. As Renisa Mawani explains, Fanon 'conceptualizes the atmosphere to be a material product of the colonial encounter' (Mawani, 2019). In every little encounter between the 'native' and the colonial power, the relations of subjection would be re-inscribed. But while the atmosphere is made by these encounters, it is not reducible to them. Instead they generated an 'atmosphere of violence' which floated like a cloud over the colony; the population (both coloniser and colonised) breathed this atmosphere together. It affected them all. Malcolm X used similar language in a 1964 comment. He explained: 'This is a country where the social, economic, political atmosphere creates a sort of psychological atmosphere that makes it almost impossible . . . [for a black person] to walk down the street with a *white* person and not be self-conscious' (1990: 214). The psychological atmosphere makes you feel wrong for appearing together. But while it might be you that feels 'this racist tendency that pops up', it is actually the racism of society itself that ripples under your skin. Where Malcolm X identifies the movement from the social atmosphere to the affective bodily experience, Clark maps the obverse. He traces the manner in which the atmosphere of racism is created through particular policies and decisions in the realms of housing, political leadership, education and a myriad of other points of intersection. Together we can see the circular causality at play here (Ahmed, 2010, 2014): the 'atmosphere of violence' is created in the colonial encounter, but the atmosphere of violence gives the affective terrain in which these encounters occur. The atmosphere is both cause and effect. Each new encounter intensifies and subtly shifts the atmosphere in which each new encounter will take place.

One surprising element of Clark's *Dark Ghetto* is the almost complete absence of the police. James Baldwin's 1960 'Fifth Avenue, Uptown: A Letter from Harlem' and the

1966 'Report from Occupied Territory' are therefore useful correctives. They place housing and the police at the heart of the generation and maintenance of the spatial order of the 'occupied territory'. They are also particularly sensitive to the mood of the space. The police are the face of occupation. They manifest the extreme aggression necessary to signal white supremacy to the black populace (Baldwin, 1961: 63). They are not the sole cause of the racist atmosphere, but it does collect around them. The everyday humiliations of over-policing in particular have a lingering effect on the atmosphere of the 'dark ghetto'. In an exceptional mention of the police in *Dark Ghetto*, one of Clark's Harlem interviewees details the affective atmosphere of the police's spatial management:

> the officer stopped some fellows on 125th Street. . . . And because this fellow spoke so nicely for his protection and his rights, the officer said 'All right, everybody get off the street or inside!' Now, it is very hot. We don't have air-conditioned apartments in most of those houses up here, so where are we going if we get off the streets? We can't go back in the house because we almost suffocate. So we sit down on the curb or stand on the sidewalk, on the steps, things like that, till the wee hours of the morning, especially in the summer when it's too hot to go up. Now where were we going? But he came out with his nightstick and wants to beat people on the head and wanted to – he arrested one fellow. (Clark, 1965: 5)

We can see a clear sense of the entanglement of atmosphere and the material conditions. The atmosphere of the private space of the housing, and the public space of the street are part of the apparatus of the 'dark ghetto'.

Baldwin's 'Report from Occupied Territory' concerns the targeting, beating and prosecution of the Harlem 6. But while the plight of the six boys and the people who tried to help them is the focus of the essay, Baldwin uses this moment to open a window onto the 'occupied space' of Harlem. In his account, again the affective articulation of public and private space in Harlem is in focus. In particular, we find spaces suffused with a jittery atmosphere whenever a police officer enters:

> the police are afraid of everything in Harlem and they are especially afraid of the roofs, which they consider to be guerrilla outposts. This means that the citizens of Harlem who, as we have seen, can come to grief at any hour in the streets, and who are not safe at their windows, are forbidden the very air. (Baldwin, 1966)

The policeman in Harlem is 'exposed, as few white people are, to the anguish of the black people around him' (Baldwin, 1961: 64). Baldwin suggests that the policeman can feel that he does not want his children living in this squalor and, retreating from this uneasiness, the officer 'becomes more callous'. In turn, 'the population becomes more hostile, the situation grows more tense, and the police force is increased. One day, to everyone's astonishment, someone drops a match in the powder keg and everything blows up' (Baldwin, 1961: 64). At the end of the decade, the Kerner Commission would give precisely the same account of the decade of civil unrest. Disorder emerged from an increasingly 'disturbed social atmosphere'. In this atmosphere, 'tension-heightening incidents . . . became linked . . . with a reservoir of underlying grievances. At some point in the mounting tension, a further incident – in

itself often routine or trivial – became the breaking point and the tension spilled over into violence' (1967: 64).

Where Clark was closely involved in the civil rights movement, as the 1960s progressed black nationalist writers increasingly made the internal colony analysis their own. Robert Allen's *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* (1969) is exemplary of this work. Allen focuses in on the way the police attempt to destroy black organisation. The aim of policing in the internal colony was ultimately to maintain the docility of the black populace, undermining black activism and crushing outward expressions of unrest. Like Clark, Allen details the various ways in which black organising was appropriated and redirected so that it could pacify black neighbourhoods and cities without leading to anything more than the most superficial of changes in the social structure. The appropriation and direction of black leadership is a key part of colonial public order management. But, unlike Clark, Allen goes much further. In the occupied territory of New York, Oakland and Atlanta, police power is entirely free-floating. It is coded as 'law and order', but it actually remains unencumbered by any real limitation. It reacts to the denizens of the 'ghetto' in the way that colonial forces respond. In this sense, their primary fear is the release of the pent-up tension of all the varied humiliations. The first problem of colonial policing is rebellion. Allen writes: 'Most major cities . . . have detailed "emergency mobilisation plans" which provide for virtually instantaneously sealing off of ghettos, arrest of militant leaders, and movement of armed troops to preselected areas' (1969: 170). The police's fear of the space of the 'ghetto' in the state of 'normalcy' exponentially increases when there is the sniff of a riot. References were common, but Allen specifically quotes a National Guardsman in Maryland who feared that 'the riots were guerrilla warfare'. 'These people [black rioters] have been learning the lesson of Vietnam' (1969: 166). The 'ghetto' is a zone of fantasy for the police, 'jungles' where officers were exposed to the monstrous proxies for the Viet Cong.

Allen takes the increasing militarisation of public order policing as a sign of this preparation for internment of large swathes of the black population in the advent of a guerrilla war (Schrader, 2019: 188), and possibly worse.

> Black suspicions were reinforced by press reports of a mushrooming domestic arms race, which could only be interpreted as a direct threat to black survival. . . . Cities across the country were stockpiling arms, buying tanklike armored vehicles, building up huge caches of ammunition and tear gas, and arming their policemen with helmets and high powered rifles and shotguns. . . . Equipment like this obviously was not intended for routine police work. These were preparations for warfare. And this is exactly the way many law enforcement and military officials viewed the riots. (Allen, 1969: 166)

The riot control programs 'take effect only after a riot has started'. To prevent riots, Allen continues, 'the police mentality thinks in terms of police-state techniques' (1969: 168). Pre-disorder pacification entailed 'sending large numbers of spies, police agents, and informers into the ghettos. Young people are especially prized recruits for these growing police espionage networks' (Allen, 1969: 168; see also Allen, 2005: 5). Police stations were established 'under the guise of "improving community relations" in the ghetto' but instead provided 'a base for surveillance of the surrounding hostile terrain' (Allen, 1969:

168). For Allen, the infiltration and spying on the black population is directly connected to the extensive development of technology for the suppression of riots, and with the everyday brutality of the police (cf. Wynter 1994). Today we know the extent of the federal government's 'Ghetto Informant Program' and 'CONINTELPRO-BLACK HATE', and we can see that the effects of apparent paranoia that suffuse this internal colony analysis were well-founded.

Coming from very different political positions, Clark, Baldwin and Allen nonetheless help us think through some of the affective dynamics of the internal colony thesis. Michael Omi and Howard Winant identify four key aspects of this 'racial formation': (1) 'a dynamic of cultural *domination and resistance*', (2) 'a system of *superexploitation*', (3) the 'institutionalization of *externally based control*', and (4) 'a colonial *geography* emphasizing the territoriality of spatial arrangement of population groups along racial lines' (1986: 48, emphasis in the original). Clearly, for Omi and Winant, the spatial and affective are distinctly entwined. Adding to this fourfold analysis we might also identify the question of 'the public' or 'integration'. There is a shift of position between Clark's identification of social problems that underlay the civil rights integration arguments and Allen's separatist black power approach. For Allen, the US was generating 'colonial' spaces where the police would intervene to maintain what they called public order, but 'the public' imagined in this order did not include the ghettoised population. In fact, there was no 'public' in the internal colony, because the 'public' was a deeply racialised concept. As Baldwin saw, the public was to be defended *against* the 'ghetto' denizens. This was quite distinct from the civil rights argument for inclusion in full *de facto* citizenship, as well as the *de jure* protection of rights. This separatist argument, as we will see, was radicalised by the Black Panthers, who insisted that there could be a greater commonality between the ghettoised 'internal colony' spaces and the sites of anti-colonial resistance than between populations in the US. It was in the spaces of internal *and external* colonisation that commonality was to be found. In other words, the internal colony analysis which cuts across civil rights and black nationalist activism in the late 1960's came to question the very premises of 'integration' and 'the public' of public order (Blauner, 1969: 399).

The Praxis of Patrol

The Black Panther Party adopted the internal colony analysis from the outset. While not specified in their ten-point program, Eldridge Cleaver explained that they started 'with the basic definition: that black people in America are a colonized people in every sense of the term and that white America is an organized imperial force holding black people in colonial bondage' (1968: 13). The Panthers chose the police encounter as their first major intervention. In so doing, they sought to disrupt the effects of policing and to develop their base in the black communities of Oakland, San Francisco and beyond. In California, as in most US states, black youth suffered extensive police harassment, in particular during traffic stops (Murch, 2012: 71). For Huey P. Newton, encounters between the police and black people were suffused with the affects and emotions of colonial dominance. The officer would specifically target black people for more regular

and invasive searches. These interventions were designed to signal the absolute power of the police officer over the subjected, irrespective of whether any transgression was discovered. Newton and Seale understood that these were particularly freighted moments in the colonial subjectification, and as such they could be used to get the attention of the community and 'give them something to identify with' (Newton, 1974: 120).

The idea of the Panther patrols was simple: 'we hoped that by raising encounters to a higher level, by patrolling the police with arms, we would see a change in their behaviour' (Newton, 1974: 120). The Panthers developed a praxis of patrolling the police as they stopped black people on the street or as they searched their homes.

> Out on patrol, we stopped whenever we saw the police questioning a brother or sister. We would walk over with our weapons and observe them from a 'safe' distance so that the police could not say we were interfering with the performance of their duty. We would ask the community members if they were being abused. Most of the time, when a policeman saw us coming, he slipped his book back into his pocket, got into his car and left in a hurry. The citizens who had been stopped were as amazed as the police at our sudden appearance. (Newton, 1974: 120–1)

A normal police stop re-inscribed relations of white supremacy, a moment where power relations are palpable and the risk is imminent. These encounters were individualising – the stopped subject was alone before the police. The patrolled stop turned the affective tables on the police. The aim was firstly to re-constitute the encounter for the black people, for them to begin to experience the encounter differently. 'With weapons in our hands, we were no longer their subjects but their equals' (Newton, 1974: 120). But the Panther patrols also connected each police stop together, rendering them as a network of affective sites. This attention sensitised both police and population to the stops in a new way.

In the affective encounter of the patrolled police stop, channelling Harney and Moten's reading of Fanon, we might say that the aim was not to prevent the encounter but to end the standpoint from which the coloniality of the encounter made sense (Harney and Moten, 2013: 8). The effects of the initial Panther patrols on the police were particularly intense: 'Frightened and confused, the police did not know how to respond, because they had never encountered patrols like this before' (Newton, 1974: 120). They worked initially by disrupting the affective script of the police stop, with its hierarchical relation and immanent threat of lethal police violence. The uncertainty of 'what was to be done' with these armed observers tore the affective fabric of public space by radically shifting the 'legitimate' balance of forces in a traffic stop. The police reacted unpredictably.

> The police, invariably shocked to meet a cadre of disciplined and armed Black men coming to the support of the community, reacted in strange and unpredictable ways. In their fright, some of them became children, cursing and insulting us. We responded in kind, calling them swine and pigs, but never cursing – this could be cause for arrest. . . . It was sometimes hilarious to see their reaction: they had always been cocky and sure of themselves as long as they had weapons to intimidate the unarmed community. When we equalized the situation, their real cowardice was exposed. (Newton, 1974: 122, 123: Seale, 1991)

The conditions of the encounter had been changed by the Panther patrols, rendering it strange and uncomfortable. Forced off script, the police became afraid, angry, nervy,

upset, enraged, and skittish. While breaking the scripts of the police encounter, the effect of the patrols was to increase the atmosphere of violence, which would have grave significance.

For Newton at least, the patrols were never an end in themselves. The aim had always been to recruit new members by showing the sort of thing the Black Panther type of armed insurgency could do. But also, Newton saw the patrol as an opportunity 'to teach the community security against the police . . . We knew that no particular area could be totally defended; only the community could effectively defend and eventually liberate itself' (Newton, 1974: 120–1). The Panthers patrolling the police was not aimed at police reform but at teaching the populace that public space (and the state that might undertake that) was theirs to create. It showed them a way in which they might collectively patrol their own streets, to the exclusion of the white state's forces of order. As Harney and Moten suggest, the Panthers went against 'the law because they were generating law' (2013: 18). They went against the *de facto* law of white supremacy, but not in the name of *de jure* rights. Instead of understanding the patrols as a way of forcing the police to abide by their own rules, the Panthers saw them as a micro-revolutionary move. They created a different social atmosphere where public space was not dominated by the threat of police stops. It was a minor reconstitution of authority and legitimacy, a shift in the atmosphere of public space.

The subsequent criminalisation of the patrols also proved instructive. Newton explains: 'By standing up to the police as equals, even holding them off, and yet remaining within the law, we had demonstrated black pride to the community in a concrete way . . . it created a feeling of solidarity' (Newton, 1974: 145). At the same time, this growing solidarity was understood by the forces of white power which sought to supress this growing feeling. Newton once more: 'We knew how the system operated. If we used the laws in our interest and against theirs, then the power structure would simply change the laws' (Newton, 1974: 146). When State Assemblyman Donald Mulford announced on a phone-in talk-show with Newton and Seale that he would introduce a bill in the California legislature to criminalise the patrols, a different sort of lesson became apparent. Not only did the police, the judges and the prison officers specifically target black people, but the text of the law itself would be changed to protect white power. Any attempt to break the script of encounters with white power would be stamped out. This was not a particularly major revelation to the Panthers, but it proved to be a useful illustration of the internal colonialism analysis more broadly. Newton had explained that their patrol raised the police encounter to a higher level. When Mulford introduced his 'Panther Bill' in the state legislature in Sacramento, Newton and Seale sought to do exactly the same thing. By staging a confrontation outside Sacramento, the Panthers 'raised the encounter to a higher level'. The Mulford bill could be used to teach the (black) people of California and beyond the ways in which constitutionally guaranteed rights could be abridged to protect white power. Newton was on probation so he stayed back, but Seale and 30 other Panthers travelled to Sacramento. They were all arrested.

Patrolling both the police and the legislature proved highly effective and led the Panthers to be catapulted into the national spotlight. However, as Newton acknowledged, the effect of the patrol could only wane. At the outset this new tactic threw the police off balance. In the armed confrontation there was the claim to a new muscular 'black macho' (Austin, 2006: 51), which was a key style of Panther politics (Davis, 1988: 161; Cleaver,

2001). But as the atmosphere of violence intensified, the police began to normalise to the new affective dynamics. Newton points to the arrests at Sacramento in particular as a key turning point after which the police would increasingly try to disarm the Panthers. The police 'took it to mean that the Party was only a front with weapons, that we would not defend ourselves' (Newton, 1974: 150). If the guns were not a threat but only decoration, then they became a further sign of their castration in the colonial police encounter. The gun had to generate sufficient uncertainty in the minds of the police for it to destabilise the power they emanated. As the police grew confident, the presence of the Panthers' weapons would no longer shake them in the same way. The police attuned, and so the Panthers had to either escalate the atmosphere of violence or find new strategies. They turned instead to the intracommunal spaces of activism, with increasingly distinctive interventions. Instead of the intensification of the atmosphere of violence through 'spectacular blackness' (Abugo Ongiri, 2010; Wallace, 2015) and macho confrontation with the police, there was a new intra-communal atmosphere in the breakfast clubs for kids, a new type of community college, drug counselling and healthcare programs. Self-defence, the Panthers seemed to say, could take many forms, and could *feel* very different.

   The aim of this article is not to recuperate the Black Panthers or to provide an assessment of their activities. Instead, I want to insist that their patrols can provide certain resources to think about affective and atmospheric dynamics of a racialised public order of the internal colony. What is important for our purposes here is the way in which the Panthers 'raised the police encounter to another level'. I suggest the patrols sensitised the population to this particularly dangerous encounter *in a new way*. They briefly shifted the affects of the encounter by intensifying the atmosphere of violence. In this very quotidian way, the Panthers showed the relation between the generation and maintenance of public order (through the targeting of suspect populations) and their colony within analysis. The Black Panther street patrols translated the internal colony analysis 'into a concrete form of politics' (Murch, 2012: 71). And when the Panthers turned to a praxis of care, they underlined the way that addiction, education, housing, health *and* public order were all part of the same racialised assemblage.

The Affects and Atmospheres of the Internal Colony

In the period immediately after that discussed here, interest in the internal colony thesis began to dwindle. Analyses of settler colonialism, mass incarceration and structural racism overtook it. At the same time, patterns of policing black urban life also began to shift with increasing professionalisation of police forces, the 'law and order' agenda, the 'war on drugs', 'broken windows' policing and the exponential rise of mass incarceration. In some ways this makes the internal colony analysis seem quite distant today – perhaps even old fashioned. Texts like Ruth Wilson Gilmore's *Golden Gulag* (2007) or Tommie Shelby's *Dark Ghettos* (2016) address the current structures of racial injustice much more directly. At the same time, the influence of Afro-pessimism on parts of BLM means that the broad movement of solidarity built around a differential, but shared, colonial experience is rejected in the name of resistance to anti-blackness (Wilderson, 2020; cf. McCarthy, 2020; Sexton, 2016). However, as Deborah Cohen and Nemoy Lewis (2016) have indicated, the internal colony literature does remain useful. It helps to centre contemporary

'anti-Black police violence as a fulcrum of empire'. Cohen and Lewis point out that the kind of interrogation involved in the internal colony analysis 'seems to be increasingly explicit within BLM's spatial and coalitional practice' (2016; see also Gutiérrez, 2004). Like the Panthers and their version of the internal colony thesis, BLM has drawn a new attention to the everyday encounters of public order. Rather than individualised police dominance, these encounters are brought to a new level. They begin to form a very public chain of events, internationally connected by death and injury, and by protest. In this, a new social atmosphere gradually takes hold where a broad public is sensitised to these encounters. Each police encounter is now shaped by this shifting affective terrain. Attention is conducted to these encounters in a new way. The police complain that they cannot 'do their job properly anymore' because of this new atmosphere, this new attention.

This article argues that re-reading the internal colony literature today with the benefit of contemporary affect theory sharpens our understanding of the stakes of the analysis. So let me take one more step to draw out the internal colony analysis in spatial and affective terms. This final move starts in a very different setting with a much more conservative account of public order. In his Hamlyn Lectures of 1953, Oxford's Professor of Jurisprudence, Sir Carelton Allen, described the public peace as 'an "all-embracing atmosphere" in our whole social life'. He insisted that: 'We could not breathe in any other atmosphere, and we take it for granted as if it were part of the order of nature' (Allen, 1953: 3). In other words, the public peace captures an affective tone of public space in which everyday life can persist. Public peace is an affective shadow embossed on public space. It is the condition of 'peace' and 'calm' that marks public space. But while Allen is correct to identify public order as a generalised atmosphere, he very directly invisibilises those who cannot breathe in the contemporary public order. Allen's observation underscores the normalisation within this affective sense of public space. 'We take it for granted', he says. It fades into the background as we attune to it. As is often the case in these sorts of uncritical pronouncements, the 'we' is doing a lot of work. It stands for a public that grows accustomed to the affective condition of public space. The public that is normalised to the atmospheres of public order so that it is imperceptible to them. The anaesthetic effect of attunement to the public order atmospheres is particularly important because it shows 'the public' that is constructed *through* public order. We can see a hint of this construction of a public in Allen's uncritical 'we' who can take the atmosphere for granted. The public that is produced by public order is that body of people who do *not* need to remain vigilant to the everyday ordering around them. It is that population that can remain anaesthetised to public order.

If 'the public' are those people who can remain anaesthetised, then what is the status of the people that need to remain vigilant to the public order atmosphere? The key affect here is suspicion. In an early essay, Ruth Wilson Gilmore describes the quotidian scene of the multi-racial crowd on a Sunday afternoon at the Venice Beach boardwalk:

> The police allow the Sunday Venice Beach exhibitionists to hang out, but constantly remind them, through high profile presence, busts, arrests 'under suspicion of', random identification checks, and general harassment, that licence to pass can be revoked at any time. The officers, eyeless in mirrored shades, scan waves and waves of black, brown, yellow, red, white young people. (Gilmore, 1993: 74)

In this scene, public order manifests itself as a tension that hovers over the crowd, an ever-present potential that the cloud of suspicion crystallises into a police encounter. Those people who cannot remain anaesthetised to public order atmospheres are a racialised suspect population. They are part of the public but included only through the haze of suspicion. These affects help us diagnose a functional split in the meaning of 'the public' in public order. The suspect population are not *of* the public, but at the same time they are not yet fully excluded from it. They are 'the problem' of public order, the threat from which the public must be kept distinct and protected. This is the split that was being operationalised under the 'broken windows' policing strategy (Tabbi, 2017; Harcourt, 2001). The suspect population is identified by the prevalence of crime in a particular zone, but because that zone is full of a suspect population it is over-policed in a way that generates more crime statistics. In the internal colony analysis, the suspect population is included, but on terms of suspicion, and this is a disorienting experience. Reading Fanon, Sara Ahmed insists:

> racism 'stops' black bodies inhabiting space by extending through objects and others; the familiarity of 'the white world,' as a world we know implicitly, 'disorients' black bodies such that they cease to know where to find things – reduced as they are to things among things. (2006: 111)

There is no 'before' this racialisation, no before the disorientation.

The Venice Beach boardwalk scene is instructive for Gilmore precisely because, instead of confirming a broad peaceable mode of co-existence, she insists that it actually demonstrates an ongoing war (1993: 74). Like the theorisations of the internal colony, two decades earlier, Gilmore insists that social relations in the US are suffused with an affective enmity. Following Audre Lorde's 1986 essay (in Lorde, 2009), Gilmore calls this 'Apartheid USA'. Apartheid, as a particular type of colonial relation, recalls the internal colony thesis. In 'Apartheid USA' Lorde identifies precisely the problem. First listing a decade of dead black people, she then poses the crucial question: 'Eleanor Bumpurs . . . Clifford Glover . . . Randy Evans . . . Yvonne Smallwood . . . Our dead line our dreams, their deaths becoming more and more commonplace. How does a system bent upon our ultimate destruction make the unacceptable gradually tolerable?' (2009: 67). Gilmore characterizes 'Apartheid USA' as a spatialised war, with the police identifying 'who belongs where and who is out of place' (1993: 75). It is the everyday warfare of what passes as peace.

Here we might follow Brady Heiner's (2007) lead and read Foucault's 1976 lecture series at the Collège de France through his encounter with the black power movement in the US (Foucault, 2007). Foucault writes:

> This does not . . . mean that society, the law, and the State are like armistices that put an end to wars. . . . Law is not pacification, for beneath the law, war continues to rage in all the mechanisms of power, even the most regular. War is the motor behind institutions and order. In the smallest of its cogs, peace is waging a secret war. To put it another way, we have to interpret the war that is going on beneath peace; peace itself is a coded war. (Foucault, 2003: 50–1)

Public order does not bring peace to the internal colony. It brings continuing pacification, in the colonial sense of a campaign of subjection that displaces and fractures resistance

(Owens, 2015; Schrader, 2019). The internal colony analysis names precisely this affective structure of 'colonial-war-beneath-peace'. The state apparatus specifically frames its interventions as 'peaceful', but it brings a perpetual pacification.

Conclusion

By way of an ending, we might return to Ruth Wilson Gilmore's description of the Venice Beach boardwalk. Despite the emphasis on perpetual wars of pacification or on the tension and alertness that marks racialised public order; Gilmore's scene also captures the excited, boisterous style of the multiracial crowds as they strut their stuff. Despite the watchful eyes of police suspicion, these crowds transform the atmosphere of this public space. While their 'license to pass can be revoked at any time', these 'young flaneurs' (Gilmore, 1993: 74) seem to crack open the atmosphere of suspicion, and their joyful affects seep through. This is to say that, ultimately, the state apparatus does not get to determine the affective tone of the space. Public order atmospheres are never simply created by one all-powerful actor. They are subtle, shifting and unstable events which emerge as people perform the space together. In this way, the public order atmosphere escapes the police. But the many ways in which this substrate of relation opens modes of resistance is for another article.

At a time when anti-colonial movements were building across the globe, the internal colony analysis identified a parallel racial formation (Omi and Winant, 1986) at the heart of the neo-imperialist super-power. It proposed a spatial and affective analysis of American society, which helped to centre the ways in which racialised suspicion and enmity could be diffused across public space. The internal colony analysis implies that we might understand public order as a sort of background hum, a low frequency vibration of tension in environments and things. Public order is experienced by the suspect population as the beat and thrum of a war machine. At moments of particular intensity, they feel the 'atmosphere of violence' that marked Fanon's (1991) account of colonial space. On the other hand, the rest of the population – the white population – tends to tune this atmosphere out. As Sexton and Martinot (2003: 172) suggest, racist police violence is *ignorable* for the white populace. But for the suspect population, particular objects concentrate and intensify this hum – the police car, a uniform, a gun or truncheon. These signal the atmosphere of public order might be about to concentrate into the intensity of an encounter. Crucially, this background hum of public order is not the same everywhere. It is intensified in particular spaces. The internal colony analysis helped to theorise the differences in atmosphere. The urban spaces of black people were constructed differently on an affective level. In these differences of atmosphere, it was possible to attend to the affective structures of 'the peace' more carefully, and to reflect upon the nature of 'integration'. What passed as peaceful social relations were actually a persistent mode of low-level pacification. In short, there was no justice, precisely because the peace brought only violence.

Acknowledgements

ORCID iD

Illan rua Wall iD https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6095-7571

References

Abugo Ongiri, Amy (2010) *Spectacular Blackness*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Adamson, Morgan (2019) Internal colony as political perspective: Counterinsurgency, extraction and anticolonial legacies of '68 in the United States. *Cultural Politics* 15(3): 343–357.

Ahmed, Sara (2010) Happy objects. In: Gregg, Melissa, and Seigworth, Gregory (eds) *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ahmed, Sara (2014) Not in a mood. *New Formations* 82: 13–28.

Allen, Carelton Kemp (1953) *The Queens Peace*. London: Stevens and Sons Ltd.

Allen, Robert L. (1969) *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytic History*. New York: Doubleday and Co.

Allen, Robert L. (2005) Reassessing the internal (neo) colonialism theory. *The Black Scholar* 35(1): 2–11.

Austin, Algernon (2006) *Achieving Blackness*. New York: New York University Press.

Baldwin, James (1961) *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son*. London: Michael Joseph.

Baldwin, James (1966) A report from occupied territory. *The Nation*, 11 July.

Blauner, Robert (1969) Internal colonialism and ghetto revolt. *Social Problems* 16(4): 393–408.

Burawoy, Michael (1974) Race, class, colonialism. *Social and Economic Studies* 23(4): 521–550.

Carmichael, Stokely and Hamilton, Charles (1967) *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*. New York: Vintage Books.

Casanova, Gonzalez P. (1965) Internal colonialism and national development. *Studies in Comparative International Development* 1: 27–37.

Clark, Kenneth B. (1965) *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*. London: Victor Gollancz.

Cleaver, Eldridge (1968) Revolution in the white mother country & national liberation in the black colony. *The North American Review* 253(4): 13.

Cleaver, Kathleen (2001) Women, power & revolution. In: Cleaver, Kathleen, and Katsiaficas, George N. (eds) *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party*. New York: Routledge.

Cohen, Deborah and Lewis, Nemoy (2016) Anti-blackness and urban geopolitical economy. *Society and Space Open Site*. Available at: https://www.societyandspace.org/articles/anti-blackness-and-urban-geopolitical-economy last viewed (accessed 17 June 2022).

Cornford, Tom (2021) *Theatre Studios: A Political History of Ensemble Theatre-Making*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Davis, Angela Y. (1988) *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*. New York: International Publishers.

Fanon, Frantz (1991) *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press.

Ford, Glen (2017) Tamir Rice and the meaning of 'No Justice – No Peace'. *Black Agenda Report* (17 August). Available at: https://www.blackagendareport.com/tamir_rice_no_justice_no_peace (accessed 17 June 2022).

Foucault, Michel (2003) *Society Must Be Defended*. London: Penguin Books.

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson (1993) Public enemies and private intellectuals: Apartheid USA. *Race & Class* 35(1): 69–78.

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson (2007) *Golden Gulag*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Gutiérrez, Ramón (2004) Internal colonialism: An American theory of race. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 1(2): 281–295.

Harcourt, Bernard (2001) *The Illusion of Order: The False Promise of Broken Windows Policing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Harney, Stefano and Moten, Fred (2013) *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. New York: Minor Compositions.

Heiner, Brady Thomas (2007) Foucault and the Black Panthers. *City* 11(3): 313–356.

Hind, Robert J. (1984) The internal colonial concept. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26(3): 544.

Kelly, Robin (2002) *Freedom Dreams*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Kerner Commission (1967) *Report of The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. Washington, DC.

Lorde, Audre (2009) *I Am Your Sister: Collected and Unpublished Writings of Audre Lorde*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Malcolm X (1990) *Malcolm X Speaks*. New York: Grove Press.

Mawani, Renisa (2019) *Atmospheric pressures: On race and affect*. Annual Lecture, Department of Sociology, York University, 26 February.

McCarthy, Jesse (2020) On Afropessimism. *LA Review of Books*, 20 July.

Murch, Donna (2012) When the Panther travels: Race and the southern diaspora in the history of the BPP, 1964–1972. In: Slate, Nico (ed.) *Black Power Beyond Borders: The Global Dimensions of the Black Power Movement*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Newton, Huey P. (1974) *Revolutionary Suicide*. London: Wildwood House.

Omi, Michael and Winant, Howard (1986) *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1980s*. New York: Routledge.

Owens, Patricia (2015) *The Economy of Force*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, Andreas (2015) *Spatial Justice: Body, Lawscape, Atmosphere*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Pinderhughes, Charles (2011) Toward a new theory of internal colonialism. *Socialism and Democracy* 25(1): 235–256.

Sales, William, Jr. (1994) *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organisation of Afro-American Unity*. Boston: South End Press.

Schrader, Stuart (2019) *Badges without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Seale, Bobby (1991) *Seize the Time: The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton*. Baltimore: Black Classic Press.

Sexton, Jared (2016) The social life of social death: On Afro-pessimism and black optimism. *Tensions Journal* 5 (Fall/Winter): 1–47.

Sexton, Jared and Martinot, Steve (2003) The avant-garde of white supremacy. *Social Identities* 9(2): 169–181.

Shelby, Tommie (2014) Integration, inequality, and imperatives of justice. *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 42(3): 253–285.

Shelby, Tommie (2016) *Dark Ghettos*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Stavenhagen, Rodolfo (1965) Classes, colonialism and acculturation: Essay on a system of inter-ethnic relations in Mesoamerica. *Studies in Comparative International Development* 1(6): 53.

Tabbi, Matt (2017) *I Can't Breathe: A Killing on Bay Street*. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Vitale, Alex (2017) *The End of Policing*. London: Verso.

Wall, Illan rua (2021) *Law and Disorder*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Wallace, Michelle (2015) *Black Macho and the Myth of the Super Woman*. London: Verso.

Wilderson, Frank (2020) *Afropessimism*. New York: Liveright.

Wynter, Sylvia (1994) No humans involved: An open letter to my colleagues. *Forum N.H.I. Knowledge for the 21st Century* 1(1): 41–74.

Illan rua Wall is a Reader at the Warwick Law School and Co-Director of the Warwick Centre for Critical Legal Studies. He is the author of *Law and Disorder: Sovereignty, Protest, Atmosphere* (Routledge, 2021) and *Human Rights and Constituent Power* (Routledge, 2012). His work has been published in journals such as *Theory, Culture & Society, Social and Legal Studies, Legal Studies, Journal of Law, Culture & the Humanities* and *Law & Critique*, where he is also on the editorial committee. He is a founding editor of the blog criticallegalthinking.com.