



This work has been submitted to NECTAR, the
**Northampton Electronic Collection of Theses and
Research.**

<http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/3723/>

Creator(s): Watley, G.

Title: The cultural currency of Afro-Caribbeans in Northamptonshire c. 1960-1990

Date: 2011

Originally published in: Midland History

Example citation: Watley, G. (2011) The cultural currency of Afro-Caribbeans in Northamptonshire c. 1960-1990. *Midland History: Ethnic Community Histories in the Midlands*. 36(2), pp. 245-261. 0047-729X.

Version of item: Post-print

Note: This is a post-print version. The full article was published in Midland History volume 36, issue 2.

Midland History: <http://maney.co.uk/index.php/journals/mdh/>

Publisher's website: <http://www.maney.co.uk>

No commercial use may be made of this paper.

Post-print of an article appearing in *Midland History: Ethnic Community History in the Midlands (Special Issue)*, Autumn 2011

The cultural currency of Afro-Caribbeans in Northamptonshire c. 1960-1990

George Watley

History Division, School of Social Sciences, University of Northampton

Knowledge Exchange, University of Northampton, Park Campus, Boughton Green Road, Northampton NN2 7AL

george.watley@northampton.ac.uk

Keywords: Caribbean, cultural currency, flight to quality, identity, Northamptonshire, oral history, sound systems, supplementary schools

Abstract

This article addresses how Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans c. 1960-1990 were simultaneously part of the transformation from people of the Caribbean with individual island identities/nationalities into Afro-Caribbean British people whilst helping to shape this ethno-racial development. Oral history has been integral in conducting this research, with past Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA) interviews from 2002-2005 being a great asset to the interviews conducted by the author in 2009-2010.

Economic concepts involving monetary currencies and flight to quality will be used to show how these monetary philosophies can help historians understand how culture and its manifestations are forms, and have systems, of exchange. These monetary concepts will also be used to create an understanding of cultural currency, as well as the frameworks for analysing how acquiring strong cultural currencies often leads to exchanging them for other strong cultural currencies. Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbean organisations and individuals' usage of their historical and developed cultural currencies in obtaining greater ethno-racial pride will be illuminated in this article.

Theoretical frameworks of currency and flight to quality

How can understanding theoretical frameworks of monetary currency and financial flight to quality rationale augment understanding the role cultural currency plays in the creation and development of culture? ¹ Cultural currency revolves around performances constrained by cultural meaning and identity. ² Another interpretation dovetails monetary currency with

¹ Acknowledgements are given to Professor Jon Stobart and Dr. Julia Bush for their support in helping me produce this work, as well as Marika Sherwood and Matthew Callender for their suggestions. Any correspondence should be made by e-mail at george.watley@northampton.ac.uk

² A. Arno, 'Cobo and tabua in Fiji: Two forms of cultural currency in an economy of sentiment' *American Ethnologist* vol. 32, issue 1 (2005), 46, 46-62

usage of time by creating ‘*dual currency*’ used to support cultural resilience.³ Furthermore, cultural currency has been linked to being an, ‘... *intellectual rather than a material property ... defined by social relationships and obligations.*’⁴ Implied in this meaning is that cultural currency cannot be acquired strictly by monetary means, needing social experiences and contexts in order to be understood and realised.

Cultural currency should be distinguished from cultural capital because the latter focuses primarily on the acquisition and display of cultural manifestations as simultaneous means and mechanisms to gain other types of capital, particularly social and economic capital.⁵ In contrast, cultural currency addresses how people use knowledge to create various, and often simultaneous, types of social cohesion. This article will focus on cultural currency as opposed to cultural capital because cultural currency is about how culture is used rather than acquired.

Taylor states that cultural currency, ‘*describes the information we acquire and then trade – or give away – to start, maintain, and nurture relationships with our fellow humans.*’⁶

Furthermore, Shafer notes that social currency has to be spent in order to be obtained whilst Carruthers identifies cultural currency circulation as a medium of exchange within the contexts of verbal and intellectual expression.⁷ Media enterprise/business contexts also augment the prior interpretations by noting that idea exchange is a form of cultural currency.

⁸ This consensus strongly indicates that cultural currency **must** be shared to be gained.

³ B. Lietaer and S. Demeulenaere, ‘Sustaining Cultural Vitality in a Globalizing World: The Balinese Example’ (unpublished article, 2010), 3

⁴ A. Arno, ‘Cobo and tabua in Fiji: Two forms of cultural currency in an economy of sentiment’ 46

⁵ Bourdieu, *Distinction* (Routledge, 1984); 81, 87, 102

⁶ A. Taylor, ‘Seeking Social Currency’ in www.artsjournal.com (2008); J. Shafer, ‘What’s Really Killing Newspapers: They’re no longer the best providers of social currency’ in www.slate.com (2008)

⁷ J. Shafer, ‘What’s Really Killing Newspapers: They’re no longer the best providers of social currency’ in www.slate.com (2008); B. Carruthers, ‘Cultural Currency’ in www.culturalcurrency.ca/index.html (2010)

⁸ M. Sururr, ‘The cultural entrepreneurship lifestyle’ in www.mediaenterprise.co.uk (2008)

Another cultural currency concept involves sharing knowledge as a mechanism to proclaim status.⁹ Having a defined list of knowledge and/or physical insignia could also be considered forms of cultural currency.¹⁰ To further the understanding of cultural currency, as well as to develop conceptual lucidity, the author's definition of cultural currency is the acquisition and/or use of material items, knowledge, physical insignia and/or status (based on actual and/or honorific use of such) as a means to identify with a particular group or culture and/or to serve as marks of distinction within the group/culture he/she is in or aspires to be accepted into. Within various conceptualisations of cultural currency, cultural symbols are important in the creation of individual senses of self.¹¹ Dovetailing between such symbols and identity should be further analysed to examine how the mechanisms underpinning cultural currency usage reflects distinct identities in situational, individual and collective contexts.

A relatively recent example of currency formation as a reflection of identity transformation is the euro. Sentiment related to this monetary currency, whether pro- or anti-euro, is based on various conceptualisations of national and congregational (i.e. European as opposed to British or German, etc.) identities. National identities clearly manifest themselves in cultural values. Symbols portrayed on monetary currency simultaneously reflect sentiment towards the nation whilst creating and developing social identity through using commonly accepted images on national banknotes and coins.¹²

⁹ S. Howard, 'Stories as Cultural Currency' from Ideo in www.patterns.ideo.com/images/uploads/pdf/PATTERNS_currency_vol1.pdf (2009)

¹⁰ J. Emerson, '101-102 Movies You Must See Before ...', Chicago Sun-Times, 20 April 2006; C. Kwan, 'Towards Asian Currency Stability', *Tokyo Research Institute of Economy, Trade & Industry, IAA (RIETI), February 2004*

¹¹ A. Cline, 'Common Arguments Against Gay Marriage: Moral and Religious Arguments' in about.com (www.atheism.about.com/od/gaymarriage/p/ContraGayMarria.htm), August 2010

¹² Y. van Everdingen and W. van Raaij, 'The Dutch people and the euro: A structural equations analysis relating national identity and economic expectations to attitudes towards the euro', *Journal of Economic Psychology*, vol. 19 (1998), 725, 721-740; D. Routh and C. Burgoyne, 'Being in two minds about a single currency: A UK perspective on the euro' *Journal of Economic Psychology*, vol. 19 (1998), 743, 741,754

However, sentimental cultural attachment to national identity could be linked to individual and collective tendencies to be nostalgic. Also reflected in such sentiment is a general reluctance to embrace cultural changes, especially if such potential transformations are perceived to threaten national identity.¹³ Furthermore, individual concerns of personal mortality could lead to a greater preference for cultural symbols favourable to those perceived as '*mine*' or '*ours*'.¹⁴

National monetary currencies are also symbols for national fitness and autonomy, as well as collective positive self-esteem, national differentiation and continuity.¹⁵ Therefore, national monetary currencies are not merely functional mediums of exchange; they are reflections and manifestations of cultural identity. Cultural currencies and national monetary currencies are similar in that both use inclusive and exclusive identities to create, use and honour specific symbols in order to maintain group cultural status. Furthermore, both currencies can be used to display group strength and solidarity whilst a perceived or actualised threat to either type of currency can correlate with heightened desires to maintain them.

Monetary and cultural currencies are both functions of markets within various but intersecting social dynamics. The economic concept of flight to quality provides another crucial relationship dovetailing monetary and cultural currencies. In investment terminology, '*flight to quality*' is defined by investors becoming risk averse during times of crisis, moving

¹³ Y. van Everdingen and W. van Raaij, 'The Dutch people and the euro: A structural equations analysis relating national identity and economic expectations to attitudes towards the euro', *Journal of Economic Psychology*, vol. 19 (1998), 725

¹⁴ E. Jonas, I. Fritsche and J. Greenberg, 'Currencies as cultural symbols – an existential psychological perspective on reactions of Germans toward the Euro', *Journal of Economic Psychology*, vol. 26 (2005), 144, 129-146

¹⁵ K. Meier Pesti and E. Kirchler, 'Attitudes towards the Euro by national identity and relative national status', *Journal of Economic Psychology*, vol. 24 (2003), 294, 293-299

their money to investments perceived to be safer during times of turbulence.¹⁶ This concept also extends to the art market, where established artists' works are valued more highly in monetary terms vis-à-vis lesser known or regarded artists during economic crises.¹⁷

The links between flight to quality and cultural currency is that both forms of exchange move currencies towards locations where their values are highest, particularly during times of crisis. National monetary currencies are relatively easier to value definitively than cultural currencies. However, both forms of currency reflect actual and/or perceived identity and functionality, with all these being necessary to develop, maintain and (re)construct collective identities.

Brief history of post-War Caribbean settlement in Northamptonshire and Britain

People of Caribbean origin living in Northamptonshire from the 1950s onwards faced many cultural dilemmas as Caribbean, Black and British people due to co-ethnic cultural isolation. Northamptonshire had a total population of nearly 473,000 in 1961, growing to over 578,000 in 1991.¹⁸ Afro-Caribbean people numbered approximately 0.5 percent of the population in 1960 in Northampton town¹⁹ in a total population of approximately 100,000.²⁰ Furthermore, there were no significant numbers of Afro-Caribbean people outside of Northampton then except for some Afro-Caribbean settlement in Wellingborough commencing significantly in

¹⁶ D. Vayanos, 'Flight to Quality, Flight to Liquidity and the Pricing of Risk' (London School of Economics unpublished article, 2004), 1-2, 32; B. Guler and U. Ozlale, 'Is there a flight to quality due to inflation uncertainty?' *Physica A*, vol. 345 (2005), 603-604, 603-607; J. Dale and M. Powell, 'Flight to Quality' (J.M. Finn & Co. Charity Asset Management Newsletter, March 2008), 1-2

¹⁷ M. Kaylan, 'The Art Market's Flight to Quality' *Forbes*, 29 November 2000; J. Goodwin, 'A Flight to Quality And Beyond' *Arts Research UK*, March 2008

¹⁸ Office for National Statistics, '200 years of the Census in Northamptonshire', 2001

¹⁹ Northampton Chronicle and Echo, 'At Home Among Northampton's Coloured People', 1960 (unidentified date)

²⁰ *Ibid*, P. Mawson, 'Northampton: Maturing into a 'Market City'', *Estates Review*, 13 April 2010

the late 1960s. Despite growth in the latter half of the 20th century, Afro-Caribbeans constituted merely 0.8 percent of Northamptonshire's 1991 population.²¹

1961 census statistics for England and Wales record West Indians constituting 0.44 percent in towns of 50-100,000 and 0.70 percent in towns of 100-200,000.²² Northampton's Afro-Caribbean population was fairly typical of general population trends in this timeframe of similar sized towns.

Throughout Britain in the immediate post-War decades, Afro-Caribbeans faced institutional denigration of their culture. This was quintessentially, but certainly not exclusively, reflected in childhood school experiences that devalued not only their abilities, but also their cultural knowledge and value systems. These attitudes served the ultimate purpose of barraging, or strongly attempting to infiltrate psyches of Black children into internalising racist views of their supposed inferiority.²³

Adolescent and adult social experiences of Afro-Caribbeans in Britain in this era were frequently negative as they faced ostracism and bullying in non-ethnically demarcated youth clubs, as well as churches, pubs, nightclubs/dancehalls and other social spaces and places where they interacted or attempted interacting with White British people.²⁴ Such

²¹ Office for National Statistics, '200 years of the Census in Northamptonshire', 2001

²² C. Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain: A Social Geography* (Institute of Race Relations, 1968), 78

²³ F. Benskin, *Black Children And Underachievement In Schools: A Case Study and a Review of the Debate on the Issue of Black Underachievement* (Minerva Press, 1994), 76, 92, 94; B. Coard, *How the West Indian child is made educationally subnormal in the British school system : the scandal of the black child in schools in Britain* (New Beacon Books, 1971), 28-29; M. Taylor, *Caught Between: A Review of Research into the Education of Pupils of West Indian Origin* (Windsor:NFER, 1981), 231

²⁴ B. Bryan, S. Dadzie and S. Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* (Virago, 1985), 131-133, 205; T. Sewell, *Keep on moving: The Windrush legacy: The black experience in Britain from 1948* (Voice Enterprises Ltd., 1998), 62; M. Phillips and T. Phillips, *Windrush: the irresistible rise of multi-racial Britain* (HarperCollins, 1999), 201

experiences led to many Afro-Caribbeans feeling cultural isolation, as well as alienation and bitterness towards Britain, whether born in the UK or the Caribbean.²⁵

Such feelings of isolation and alienation led Afro-Caribbeans in Britain to form organisations to create solidarity particularly in the immediate post-War decades.²⁶ Leading this trend were Black churches, supplementary schools, social/sport clubs, night time music entertainment, whether as house parties known as shebeens or blues, or dancing/musical entertainment organised and frequented by predominantly Afro-Caribbean people.²⁷ Commonalities between juvenile and adult Afro-Caribbean existential conceptualisations of cultural alienation in Britain were predicated on the understanding, however forced upon them, that Afro-Caribbean cultural currency was generally devalued or significantly unappreciated in White British cultural contexts. Within this backdrop, Afro-Caribbean people used and exchanged cultural currencies to transform from people of the Caribbean into Afro-Caribbeans.

Afro-Caribbean cultural currency and identity in the Caribbean

Before commenting on the cultural currency of Afro-Caribbeans in Britain, Caribbean identity as existed in the Caribbean must be understood. Afro-Caribbean as an ethno-racial identity in the Caribbean not only has virtually no meaning, but is a cultural construct created largely in Britain as a result of institutional and social ostracism perpetrated by White British people, as well as being used by Afro-Caribbeans to promote solidarity due to facing such

²⁵ B. Bryan, S. Dadzie and S. Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*, 228-229

²⁶ Ibid, 71-72; A. Sivanandan, 'From Resistance to Rebellion Asian and Afro-Caribbean Struggles in Britain', *Race and Class*, vol.23 (1981), 113; M. Chamberlain, *Family Love in the Diaspora: Migration and the Anglo-Caribbean experience* (Transaction Publishers, 2006), 170-171

²⁷ H. Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience* (Pluto Press, 2002), 98-100; P. Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The cultural politics of race and nation* (Hutchinson, 1987), 210; T. Sewell, *Keep on moving: The Windrush legacy: The black experience in Britain from 1948*, 62;

hostility.²⁸ Furthermore, overt individual island/national Caribbean nationalism was relatively muted in the Commonwealth Caribbean, despite a general confidence and calm feeling of national, as opposed to pan-Caribbean, identity.²⁹

Afro-Caribbean as an ethnicity was initially conceptualised in part by West Indian university students in England immediately after World War II to promote cooperation and unity amongst people in the Caribbean. This simultaneously reflected desires of national independence for their islands/countries of origin whilst facing, '... overt contempt for blacks during the late 1940s and early 1950s.'³⁰ Outside this group, responses to racism led to eliminating differences between Caribbean people whilst creating various Afro-Caribbean informal and formal associations.³¹ Furthermore, people in the Caribbean eventually became well-informed of British social tension with racial connotations from both mass media and personal correspondence with friends and family living in Britain.³²

All of these factors led many Afro-Caribbean people to create this identity. Also developed were novel cultural currencies to manifest this akin to the euro's creation to manifest a pan-European identity to compete with American hegemony.³³ The specific example of Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbean people will be used to examine how various cultural currencies were used, shared and exchanged by them.

²⁸ H. Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience*, 29-30

²⁹ *Ibid*, 175

³⁰ G. Mills, Foreword of L. Braithwaite *Colonial West Indian Students in Britain* (University of The West Indies Press, 2001), x-xi

³¹ P. Edmead, *The divisive decade: A history of Caribbean immigration to Birmingham in the 1950s*, 33-34

³² E. Thomas-Hope, *Caribbean Migration* (University of the West Indies Press, 2002), 139

³³ L. Wenhao, 'Currency Competition Between Euro and US Dollar' (Business Institute Berlin, 2004), 5, 17; B. O'Rourke, 'Dollar And Euro Compete For Global Trust' (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2005)

Brief overview of research methods

This article is based on Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded research on the Consumer Behaviour of Northamptonshire Caribbean people c.1955-1985. 19 interviews have been conducted by the author and there are approximately 50 interview transcripts of interviews with local Afro-Caribbeans conducted by Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA). These interviews were part of research significantly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. All interviews conducted by the author have been digitally recorded and transcribed, which greatly benefitted the author.

Afro-Caribbean organisationally acquired and exchanged cultural currencies in Northamptonshire

In the 1960 and 1970s, three Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbean organisations commenced their groundbreaking roles at the forefront of transforming cultural currency valuations and exchanges. These organisations were West Indian Parents' Association (WIPA), Matta Fancanta Movement (MFM) and the United Social Club (USC). WIPA commenced its supplementary school upon its founding in 1974. Furthermore, a Northamptonshire Police Authority funded, WIPA-led summer school commenced in 1981 in response to:

... police (getting) nervous in Northamptonshire (after the 1981 Brixton riots) started thinking aahhh, if it's happening there, you know, if it's not long before something may happen here. So, big investment at the Barry Road³⁴ (Primary School), you know, to the supplementary school. (Northamptonshire Police Authority asked), could you do a summer scheme if we identify the children who were not attending supplementary school, but who we felt could be on the edge? ³⁵

³⁴ This school in Northampton was where WIPA first held its supplementary school.

³⁵ M. Walker interviewed by G. Watley, Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA), 18 September 2009, 26

Riots actually occurred in the summer of 1981 in Toxteth (Liverpool), Handsworth (Birmingham) and Chapeltown (Leeds) amongst other locations, making this local police strategy a good one that potentially prevented local riots whilst recognising that, ' ... *West Indian Parents' Association was strong identifiable charitable organisation ...*'³⁶ within 7 years of its founding. This is an example of local Afro-Caribbeans being recognised as contributors to the larger Northamptonshire community whilst being acknowledged as distinct members of it.

The founders of WIPA, including Ivan Bryan, Joseph Dixon and Morcea Walker, borrowed ideas specifically obtained from an Afro-Caribbean Saturday supplementary school in Leeds.

*There was another Saturday school that was going for many years. So we decided ... I drove the minibus. We hired a minibus and we drove up to Leeds on a Saturday. We rung them first obviously and tell them we were coming. So we went up, Mrs. Walker, quite a few of us paid for the minibus and went up there. And that was about Saturday school, you know and that's how we modelled ours after that.*³⁷

WIPA's founding of supplementary schools was in-line with general British Afro-Caribbean trends in that decade of setting up supplementary schools in response to the educational underachievement of their children and low expectations schools and teachers had of Black pupils generally.³⁸ Matching this national movement were local desires to ameliorate this educational underachievement due to recognition that:

*The Black youngsters unfortunately, they weren't doing well in school at all and we were very concerned about it. So that's why we started the Saturday school with Mrs. Walker³⁹ at the helm.*⁴⁰

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ J. Dixon interviewed by G. Watley, Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA), 31 July 2009, 7

³⁸ H. Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience*, 98-99; B. Coard, *How the West Indian child is made educationally subnormal in the British school system*, 28-29, 39; H. Mirza and D. Reay, 'Spaces and Places of Black Educational Desire: Rethinking Black Supplementary Schools as a New Social Movement' *Sociology*, vol. 34 no.3, 527, 521-544

³⁹ M. Walker was a qualified teacher at the time.

⁴⁰ J. Dixon interviewed by G. Watley, 7

WIPA's development was not only part of Black British trends of the era to set up supplementary schools, but also within Afro-Caribbean cultures to prioritise education very highly. This manifest itself in at least some of the motivation to migrate to Britain then, as Afro-Caribbean people frequently migrated to Britain for their children to obtain more and/or better qualifications.⁴¹ Despite desiring to educate Afro-Caribbean people about Black and/or Caribbean culture, WIPA included White children in the supplementary schools and related activities, particularly its summer supplementary school. This was intentionally done to; '... *introduce White children to Blackness indirectly.*'⁴² However, this was not commonplace in supplementary schools elsewhere as Black British supplementary schools generally did not conceptualise including White children.⁴³

Furthermore, the social aspect of WIPA cannot be underestimated. This is best exemplified in their Annual Dinner and Dance commencing in 1975 and continuing to the present despite WIPA's supplementary schools ceasing to exist from the 1990s. During these events, the Queen was toasted in its Annual Dinner and Dance at least to 1987.⁴⁴ This is an indication of seeing themselves as fundamentally British, despite ethno-racial denigration experienced in Britain. Using the accepted cultural currency of toasting the Queen suggests acceptance of being British.

In cultural currency terms, Afro-Caribbean people who participated, or had their children participate, in WIPA's activities, did so initially to gain intra-ethnic cultural currency based

⁴¹ H. Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience*, 48; M. Chamberlain, *Family Love in the Diaspora*, 69, 101; E. Thomas-Hope, *Caribbean Migration*, 160; Y. Channer, *I Am A Promise: the school achievement of British African Caribbeans* (Trentham Books, 1995), 11

⁴² M. Walker interviewed by G. Watley, 24

⁴³ H. Mirza and D. Reay, 'Spaces and Places of Black Educational Desire: Rethinking Black Supplementary Schools as a New Social Movement', 523

⁴⁴ K. Davies, 'Biography of George Inniss – One Man's View' (University of Northampton B.A. essay, 2008)

on simultaneous Black/Afro-Caribbean cultural knowledge acquisition whilst sharing co-ethnic cultural information. The clearest specified intention of using intra-ethnic currency to obtain other cultural currencies was to use the teaching of English and mathematics, key school curriculum subjects, to teach positive aspects of Afro-Caribbean culture. WIPA was:

*... looking for self-esteem, that was the first thing. Be proud of yourself. Know your history. But we were concentrating on maths and English, that was our focus. But using literature that the parents could understand.*⁴⁵

Using books, learning materials and techniques familiar to Afro-Caribbean people was seen as necessary in the sequence towards acquiring larger British cultural currencies, especially related to further educational opportunities for their children. Furthermore, organising supplementary schools was part of a strong desire to be recognised as a distinct community. Such recognition would, at least theoretically, increase the various forms and values of cultural currency Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbean people held. These primary steps sparked the teleology of increasing its value and exchange convertibility and such recognition eventually increased the cultural currency valuations of Caribbean culture.

Matta Fancanta Movement (MFM) was founded by young Afro-Caribbean people in 1977, largely because of their perception that *integration did not work*.⁴⁶ Also, there was a belief, at least of Jabulani that:

*I grew up in an environment which always was reminding me that I don't belong here ... Even though we have integrated a lot but I still see that we are not really accepted.*⁴⁷

⁴⁵ M. Walker interviewed by G. Watley, NBHA, 10

⁴⁶ Northampton Chronicle and Echo, 'Black Squatters Occupy Citadel: Building Faces Demolition', 11 August 1977

⁴⁷ R. Jabulani interviewed by C. Abel, Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA), 20 August 2002, 17-18

These views were informed not only by their local experiences, but also was affected by national trends of significantly higher rates of unemployment for Black young people than for Whites that fuelled numerous Black street protests in the 1970s and 1980s.⁴⁸

Before MFM was founded, many of its eventual leaders congregated at The Racecourse, a large park in Northampton, simultaneously learning about Black and Afro-Caribbean cultures informally whilst desiring a defined space. Meeting as such was partly due to having common interests, as well as heavy ostracism and hostility they faced as Black people, particularly in social and institutional contexts. Furthermore, being ethno-racially isolated led to Weekes Baptiste discovering at the Racecourse:

To my surprise, I found that there was more Black people. It wasn't just me or us as a Black family who lived in Arthur Street in Kingsthorpe (section of Northampton). I realized that there was more Black people. I never saw them, there was probably 2 or 3 at school. Going to The Racecourse; I found that there was an oasis. There was this, there was loads of Black people. Because it was summer, it was hot and they were all out there. And I was like, oh wow! This is fantastic, you know, all my age. Some were Jamaicans, some were Grenadians, some were wherever, but the point is there was more than just my family, me and my brother 'cause there was quite a few of them there and they'd all come out. This was like a meeting place. It was like a place where everybody would go. There was never a club or a house or, you know, some kind of cabin den. It was The Racecourse because it was a lovely hot day. People were playing cricket, playing football and there was about 20 to 30 Black guys my age there.⁴⁹

Baptiste, just like many other Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbean children in that era, were united by socialising that countered their school and individual neighbourhood experiences as the only, or one of a very small number of Black people in those encounters. These interactions were also appreciated because they were able to celebrate their developing Afro-Caribbean existence.

⁴⁸ H. Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience*, 111

⁴⁹ W. Baptiste, interviewed by G. Watley, NBHA, 21-22

Also learned was that the less pleasant incidents of racial discrimination, as well as personal and institutional hostility directed towards Afro-Caribbeans, were regular local occurrences in the 1970s and earlier. Through conversations at the Racecourse:

People would tell you the story about what happened to them and you'd be aware. You'd be aware of certain places. You'd be aware of the behaviour of the police would stop you and I mean I was stopped when I was 14 and the police officer say where did I steal the training shoes that I had in my hand? Coming from the Boys Brigade to play football. And I told me younger brother to go and get me mum. My mum came down and that was squashed.⁵⁰

The personal perceptions of racism intertwined with the general unpleasant nature of many interactions with White British people made these young men aware of the dangers that could negatively affect them. This collective awakening to their overall experiences of racism led these young men to simultaneously organise as Afro-Caribbean people whilst desiring to learn more about Africa and people of African origin.⁵¹

Furthermore, the eventual MFM founders desired physical space to simultaneously reflect their acceptance in the community and their visibility as a clearly defined demographic group. Part of this resulted from feeling ostracised from youth clubs and their recognition that:

We wanted to our own kind of freedom to express ourselves but we didn't have the access to venues. So we wanted to have more chance of doing things even on our (pause) because we like cricket, football and so forth. We used to meet over the Racecourse and you know think about (pause) that was our meeting place, the Racecourse because you see we had nowhere else as youths. And um, it came to a point where we, who were more conscious of this fact, we decided we would, you know, let's sit down let's get something more tangible together and start teaching ourselves

⁵⁰ H. Cohen, interviewed by G. Watley, NBHA, 35

⁵¹ H. Cohen, interviewed by G. Watley, NBHA, 35; R. Jabulani interviewed by C. Abel, NBHA, 13

*more about ourselves, about our history and so forth. Because we had, we have a history which we are to be proud of, as Black people, you see, because our story goes from ancient days, you know.*⁵²

Important, but not exclusive, in underpinning this impetus were their perceptions that schools taught nothing about Black people and/or cultures, as well as failing to be considered for academic opportunities due to institutional prejudices.⁵³

However, MFM was not solely a reflection of local influences, as the key impetus for organising this group coming from a London transplant, Lee Bryant. Bryant was involved in Rastafarianism and political discussions in London and used his knowledge, alongside another transplant Ashley Sinclair, to educate younger 'sleepy and unaware'⁵⁴ co-ethnics about Black cultures and their historical contributions.⁵⁵ Bryant contributed not only books for others to read, but also supplied organisational expertise. His contributions were noted by founding MFM members as fundamentally important in simultaneously developing the local Black cultural and historical knowledge base.⁵⁶ Furthermore Bryant was integral in developing the tactical knowledge necessary to occupy an abandoned building in the town's Sheep Street that would eventually be MFM's headquarters in 1977.

Rastafarianism was also followed by many other MFM members, possibly a majority.⁵⁷

Furthermore, over 80 people in Northampton were estimated to be Rastafarians in the year after MFM's founding.⁵⁸ Its appeal was based on reclaiming African culture as something to

⁵² R. Jabulani interviewed by C. Abel, NBHA, 8

⁵³ R. Jabulani interviewed by C. Abel, NBHA, 9; H. Cohen interviewed by G. Watley, NBHA, 44

⁵⁴ A. Sinclair interviewed by J. Drake, Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA), 8 September 2004, 24

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 27

⁵⁶ H. Cohen interviewed by G. Watley, 46-49; W. Baptiste interviewed by G. Watley, Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA), 29 October 2009, 38; R. Jabulani interviewed by C. Abel, 8-9

⁵⁷ Northampton Chronicle and Echo, 'Rastafarians', 7 June 1978

⁵⁸ Northampton Chronicle and Echo, 'Guarding against Babylon', 9 June 1978

be proud of with the benefit being that people of African origin would have greater self-esteem once this knowledge is obtained. *'To accept (Rastafarianism) is to accept and rejoice in being African. By doing that a sense of identity and confidence can be achieved.'*⁵⁹ This developed ethno-racial identity through Rastafarianism was integral in creating the impetus to found MFM.

After obtaining defined physical space, MFM held numerous parties to raise funds whilst offering educational programmes in printing, arts and computers to give its members employment marketability. Also, Black cultural knowledge was obtained through learning about Black history, visual arts and audio production whilst collectively sharing these cultural experiences.⁶⁰ Not only was MFM successful in promoting Black cultures within five years of its inception,⁶¹ but was also able to obtain over £30000 in funding for employment training in 1983 for unemployed young people.⁶² Furthermore, but seemingly contrasting to Afro-Caribbean development of a *'comfortable'* co-ethnic social space; White people attended MFM parties in the mid-1980s, once press antagonism towards the organisation decreased.⁶³

MFM also are credited for supporting other Afro-Caribbean organisations in Leicester, Derby, Coventry and Bedford, amongst other locales. The sound system interactions between these regionally disparate co-ethnics were initial, if not primary, conduits leading to MFM providing support to their brethren.⁶⁴ Through the Afro-Caribbean British sound system culture, as well as sharing of Black musical influences, particularly of reggae directly from

⁵⁹ Northampton Chronicle and Echo, 'Rastafarians', 7 June 1978

⁶⁰ H. Cohen interviewed by G. Watley, 56-59; W. Baptiste interviewed by G. Watley, 42; A. Sinclair interviewed by J. Drake, 28-29

⁶¹ Northampton Chronicle and Echo, 'Black youth group shows off its culture', 23 August 1982

⁶² Northampton Chronicle and Echo, 'Training plan aids job prospects', 12 January 1983

⁶³ H. Cohen interviewed by G. Watley, 60

⁶⁴ R. Jabulani interviewed by C. Abel, 11

Jamaica in the 1970s-1980s, Afro-Caribbeans across Britain recognised they were a distinct ethnicity despite their regional and local peculiarities. MFM represented Northamptonshire's node in this network.⁶⁵

In cultural currency terms, MFM was a currency movement amongst its members towards valuing Afro-Caribbean and other Black cultures more highly. MFM members desired higher intra-cultural currency valuations, which learning and sharing knowledge about Black cultures gave them. The resulting intra-ethnic currency also was a reflection of group solidarity. Their flight to quality in cultural currency terms as Afro-Caribbean people, as opposed to British, reflected this.

Acquiring greater intra-cultural currency valuation strength through flight to quality rationale led to greater inter-racial cultural currency in terms of being able to exchange the latter once the former was recognised as having more value inter-racially. Obtaining, or failing to obtain these cultural currencies reflected simultaneous recognition of Afro-Caribbean cultural currency value and the gap between actual and desired cultural currencies Afro-Caribbeans had, particularly young people. Such failure to obtain these cultural currencies was best reflected by the relative lack of employment opportunities, especially amongst younger Afro-Caribbeans, in the local and national job markets in the 1970s and 1980s.

The United Social Club (USC) was founded in the early 1960s by Afro-Caribbean people who worked at Long and Hambley, a local rubber factory in the Billing area of Northampton.

⁶⁶ This company was noted by some of its workers for hiring many Afro-Caribbeans due to

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ J. Dixon interviewed by G. Watley, 2; Group interview of United Social Club members by G. Watley, Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA), 4 July 2010

its perceived inability to hire significant numbers of White people.⁶⁷ Some factors contributing to these perceptions were the general poor conditions in the factory, including noxious fumes.⁶⁸ Through this common workplace, eventual USC members, as well as other local Afro-Caribbeans organised trips to the seaside and other venues.⁶⁹ They contributed a shilling per week to a fund⁷⁰ that was used, alongside Northampton Borough Council's assistance, to acquire The Wheatsheaf.⁷¹ This was an abandoned pub that served as USC's first home on Regent Square.⁷²

USC's importance lies in involving Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans in cricket, dominoes and other social events. USC was known across Britain for dominoes, being part of the national domino tournament circuit in which Afro-Caribbeans from London, Manchester, Nottingham, Leeds, Bradford and Birmingham amongst other cities participated, with home and away fixtures organised in addition to national competitions.⁷³ This established and developed links between areas with similar associations.

Regular nightclub type social events specifically utilised Afro-Caribbean music and deejays. These were organised by USC and were often frequented by people outside of the county discovering them by word of mouth. People from London and other places in the Midlands attended such parties.⁷⁴ Caribbean food was an additional staple of these events.⁷⁵ The

⁶⁷ Group interview of United Social Club members by G. Watley

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ J. Dixon interviewed by G. Watley, 2

⁷⁰ A. Bryan interviewed by G. Watley, Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA), 27 September 2009, 6

⁷¹ J. Dixon interviewed by G. Watley, 2

⁷² J. Dixon interviewed by G. Watley, 4; A. Bryan interviewed by G. Watley, 7

⁷³ J. Dixon interviewed by G. Watley, 4; BBC, 'The United Social Club is no more', 11 February 2010

⁷⁴ U. Gravesande interviewed by G. Watley, Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA), 14 July 2009, 18; J. Dixon interviewed by G. Watley, 5

⁷⁵ Ibid, 5-6; A. Bryan interviewed by G. Watley, 31

parties and food served simultaneously to provide funds for USC whilst developing feelings of familiarity that significantly augmented cultural solidarity.

USC parties deserve particular mention because they were organised in large part as a result of police pressure against shebeens and blues.⁷⁶ Afro-Caribbeans in Northamptonshire were similar to other co-ethnics elsewhere in Britain, with the general British trend of that era being that such home based events were organised mainly because Black people were often excluded or banned from local pubs and clubs in the 1970s and before.⁷⁷

Cricket was also important in developing USC's organisational pride, as well as its local profile. USC teams won local cricket championships for many years from the 1960s-1980s.⁷⁸ USC's cricket success was a source of ethno-racial pride, as well as positive intra-ethno-racial esteem, as co-ethnics from other locales are cited as using USC and their cricket success as an example to create similar Afro-Caribbean organisations in Coventry, Birmingham and Nottingham.⁷⁹

In cultural currency terms, USC's contribution was in its ability to develop localised intra-ethnic cultural currency whilst creating links with regionally disparate Afro-Caribbeans in order to create, obtain and share their cultural currency within British contexts. This helped to create distinct cultural identities as British Afro-Caribbeans which dovetailed with co-ethnics in other locales. Related cultural currency was shared through commonly experiencing music and dominoes and not only reflected distinct identities; its usage also reflected cultural strength akin to a monetary currency's exchange value being a simultaneous reflection of its

⁷⁶ A. Bryan interviewed by G. Watley, 32-33; J. Dixon interviewed by G. Watley, 29; H. Cohen interviewed by G. Watley, 47-48; U. Gravesande interviewed by G. Watley, 8-9

⁷⁷ T. Sewell, *Keep on moving: The Windrush legacy: The black experience in Britain from 1948*, 62

⁷⁸ U. Gravesande interviewed by G. Watley, 15-16; J. Dixon interviewed by G. Watley, 3

⁷⁹ U. Gravesande interviewed by G. Watley, 16

strength and acceptance as a medium of exchange. Obtaining intra-ethnic cultural currency strength resulted from the inability of many local Afro-Caribbeans to fully obtain British cultural currencies, especially in the early years of WIPA, MFM and USC.

Afro-Caribbean individual and non-organisational acquisition of cultural currencies in Northamptonshire

Individuals and non-organisational collectives of Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans also acquired and shared cultural currency differently than their organisational contemporaries. A prime example is local sound system entertainment and Northamptonshire's link and contribution to the Afro-Caribbean sound system challenge cup circuit which commenced locally in the 1970s. A sound system was a collection of not only musical selection, but also speakers and amplifiers amongst other equipment. In a sound system competition, usually the one with the most vocal supporters would win. Such support was normally dependent on the loudness of the sound produced in addition to the music played.

Northamptonshire's Count Shelley sound system for example, produced by Horace Cohen, Trevor Hall⁸⁰, Junior Mayhew and Eddie White, competed nationally against sound systems including V-Rocket of Nottingham and others in Derby, Coventry, Oxford and Birmingham.

⁸¹ This sound system originated from London, with half of it purchased by Cohen, Hall, Mayhew, Brock Neville and Eddie White from Count Shelley, Hall's uncle. ⁸² The other half was purchased by a London-based person named Shaka, with an unofficial non-compete

⁸⁰ Trevor Hall changed his name to Ras Jabulani as an adult. He will be referred to as Hall in terms of accounts of his activities as a child/young adult and as Jabulani after he changed his name.

⁸¹ J. White-Gulley interviewed by G. Watley, Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA), 19 October 2009, 22, 25; H. Cohen interviewed by G. Watley, 15

⁸² J. White-Gulley interviewed by G. Watley, 22

agreement between these purchasers that allowed the Northampton-based entertainers to perform in the Midlands and Shaka to do so in the Home Counties and London.⁸³

Similar to USC's domino activities, the local individuals who took part in producing the sound system culture, as well as its partakers, simultaneously created and developed a localised but distinct Afro-Caribbean cultural manifestation whilst using it to become part of more encompassing and general British Afro-Caribbean entertainment. Furthermore, these sound system events helped to:

*... generate a networking friendship throughout the country. And there was more unity in terms of even getting together to fight some of the political issues that was going on in Britain, and the injustice that was going on.*⁸⁴

In other words, these sound systems were not merely about entertainment, but helped to develop social and political networks. Furthermore, these networks helped to create and develop intra-ethnic cultural currency in national contexts reflecting embryonic identities as Afro-Caribbean people.

Contrasting with these entertainment experiences, Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbean acquisition and exchange of intra-ethno-racial cultural currency frequently occurred years if not decades after compulsory education. This enlightenment occurred after growing realisations that Black history was fundamentally omitted from history as taught in English schools and/or that such teaching of history, was significantly inaccurate at best. This led many local Afro-Caribbeans to belatedly feel starved of Black history and created a strong

⁸³ R. Jabulani interviewed by G. Watley, Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA), 10 September 2010

⁸⁴ H. Cohen interviewed by G. Watley, 17-19

impetus to learn more about Black history to gain intra-ethno-racial cultural currency.⁸⁵ Even as late as 2009, there was a recognition that past failures to learn about Black history in British schools led to desiring this greatly. This is best expressed by White-Gulley's recent acknowledgement that, '*With the element of Black history omitted (from school curriculum in her childhood), I starved for it, but now I'm lavishing in it.*'⁸⁶

Historical knowledge obtained in this context, particularly by older adults, generally was not used to obtain other cultural currencies, except for creating relatively recent links with the University of Northampton.⁸⁷ The intentional local Afro-Caribbean link with a university was purposeful in exchanging the intra-ethno-racial currency of Black historical knowledge for inter-racial cultural currency. In short, intra-ethno-racial currency for Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans increased in value because this currency was exchangeable for other cultural currencies.

Individual local Afro-Caribbeans also acquired and exchanged cultural currencies, but in a manner less uniform than the organisations and situations mentioned above. By the 1980s, exclusion of Black people from pubs and nightclubs occurred much less frequently in the county and evidence gleaned from family photos in interviewees' homes, as well as the collection of NBHA interviews indicates that about half of local British born and/or educated local Afro-Caribbean people at this time were in exogamous relationships, almost exclusively with Whites. This is consistent with Afro-Caribbean British statistics indicating between one-

⁸⁵ H. Cohen interviewed by G. Watley, 46; J. White-Gulley interviewed by G. Watley, 32; W. Baptiste interviewed by G. Watley, 33-36; R. Jabulani interviewed by C. Abel, 9; A. Sinclair interviewed by J. Drake, 8

⁸⁶ J. White-Gulley interviewed by G. Watley, Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA), 19 October 2009

⁸⁷ G. Watley, 'Students' use of Northamptonshire Black Association archives as an inspiration to develop oral history as a functional methodology' (History of Education Society UK Conference, 3 December 2009), 2. The author is currently the Lecturer in two Black British History modules at the University of Northampton, the only university offering multiple modules in Black British history. Stirling University and Birkbeck College are the only other British universities offering single modules in this subject.

third and one-half of Afro-Caribbeans were in exogamous marriages and partnerships from the 1980s onward.⁸⁸

Simultaneous elimination of severe social exclusion commencing significantly in the 1980s with high rates of exogamous relationships indicates that intra-ethno-racial currency became relatively less valuable whilst interracial cultural currency that paid homage to Black and/or Afro-Caribbean cultures became relatively more valuable. For example, White people were much more likely to be part of local interracial nightlife organised by Afro-Caribbean people in the 1980s and afterwards than before. Further evidence of interracial cultural currency gaining value at the expense of intra-racial cultural currency is the decline and defunctness of WIPA and MFM by the 1990s, with USC's occurring much later, mainly because of the vestige of past cricket success.

Furthermore, individual local Afro-Caribbeans moving from adolescence to adulthood, in contrast to the gentlemen of MFM, sought in some cases to distance themselves from endogamous co-ethnic cultures. These individuals sought to internalise conceptualisations of Britishness by consciously and/or unconsciously rejecting parts of their Afro-Caribbean origin.

Such people sought to become racially invisible through their qualifications and job performance, which is consistent with Fanon's racial epidermal schema. When Lloyd Kelly was asked:

(author) Do you think your identity as a Caribbean person, a Jamaican person, or Black person was getting a bit weaker at that time, as time went on?

⁸⁸ H. Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience*, 17; M. Chamberlain, *Family Love in the Diaspora*, 219

*(Lloyd Kelly) I would have said so. Yeah, it was difficult. Because I was working, I lived in the nurses' home which was dominated by the English way of life really. The English or the Irish way of life and that was dominant really. I think I was busy struggling with trying to exist in a job that was difficult really. That there was no recognition for my point of view (a) as a nurse, a psychiatric nurse and (b) as a Black man as well. Because that was (pause) that was pretty unusual in those days. So I was struggling with doing what I was supposed to be doing. Working me guts off in those days, yeah. (laughs) Yeah, so yeah, it was a struggle.*⁸⁹

Lloyd Kelly visualised success and hard work in employment as a means of dealing with lack of recognition that could occur because of generalised racist attitudes in employment, particularly in his professionally formative years. Another example of desiring racial invisibility derived:

*To not let happen for me to be overlooked, I think, I always wanted to be noticed. 'Cause I felt that I was quite overlooked and I was promoted up to accounts and was quickly a supervisor and then a manager. And I was 14 years at Barclays plc as a Senior Project Manager earning a lot of money with a company car, whatever it was that I used to have before I retrained as a therapist. So I think it did shape the fact that I would always strive ... I think it was a combination of being overlooked at that stage (for a university place as a teenager) knowing that I was good enough. Knowing that there was a danger of what my mum used to say, if you don't work doubly hard, you're not going to achieve and people would overlook you. So I think that was always at the back of my mind and just keep going do the best. Even as an undergraduate, when I eventually did go to university to retrain, I got a first. Always striving to get where I needed to get to.*⁹⁰

Although race and racism were not directly mentioned, both the author and this interviewee knew that racism was the thinly veiled reason for wishing not to be overlooked in employment and having to work significantly harder than White colleagues to achieve similarly.⁹¹ It is not merely striving for employment success; it is feeling the necessity of

⁸⁹ L. Kelly interviewed by G. Watley, 38

⁹⁰ M. James interviewed by G. Watley, 36-37

⁹¹ The author and M. James were both PhD students working out of the same office at the time of the interview. Furthermore they have had multiple conversations on the status of Black people in Britain,

having to work significantly harder than others due to racist attitudes, or perceptions thereof, which manifests itself in the mindset of someone attempting to overcome racism by aspiring to become racially invisible as a Black person through superior job performance. Fanon reinforces this principle by noting that Black people in countries with White majority populations, or countries like South Africa during apartheid, often gravitate towards ethno-racial transparency as a means of dealing with racist social and institutional structures.⁹² Furthermore, this conceptualisation notes Black desire for racial invisibility manifests itself by wishing for others to not see their colour or other racial characteristics, serving as a functional means of dealing with European originated racist value systems.⁹³

In many individuals' cultural currency rationale, flight to quality predicated itself on local Afro-Caribbeans valuing inter-racial cultural currency more than strictly intra-racial cultural currency. The individuals in Northamptonshire who valued their intra-racial cultural currency most highly were significantly more likely to move to either metropolitan areas like London, Birmingham etc. where there greater concentrations of co-ethnics, or to leave Britain permanently in a search for higher cultural currency value in their social interactions. For example, due to his disillusionment with the lack of opportunities for Black people in Britain generally, Trevor Hall became Ras Jabulani, eventually moving permanently to Zimbabwe. This is particularly notable because he became a reggae singer with a distinguishably Jamaican accent antithetical to his Gloucestershire birth.⁹⁴

particularly in employment, before and after the interview. These factors led to the unsaid or implied in the prior quotation.

⁹² F. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Pluto Press, 1986), 112

⁹³ *Ibid*, 116

⁹⁴ Jabulani has performed in England as Ras Jabu. See Ras Jabu interviewed by Slaggy Yout, <http://vimeo.com/4378152>.

For other individuals, cultural currency flight to quality predicated itself on obtaining the dominant culture's cultural currency as a survival mechanism. Becoming 'English' manifest itself by *fitting in and going with the crowd*.⁹⁵ Desires to seek the dominant culture's currency were so extreme in one case that fear of rejection from nightclubs led to learning:

*... the rules of the game. You'd be picked out and any reason they'd have for not letting you in, they would come up with it, or found. You got the wrong shoes on, the wrong shirt or the wrong tie. Sometimes they just simply turned you away, in those days. I would go, I would often go into town. I had me car, but I'd go fully prepared. I'd have every colour shirt, every colour tie. Every shoes in the car. So if they said you can't come in because you got whatever, the wrong sneakers on. I'd go to the car and get changed to get in. Ok! So yeah, I was quite prepared. But yeah, it was a regular occurrence. To me! From, you know, it was a long while ago 'cause I forgotten about those things. But yeah, you'd often get turned away.*⁹⁶

Despite frequent racist rejection, this extreme attempt to obtain White British cultural currency exemplifies Bourdieu's theory of hyper-identification with the dominant culture due to being a cultural outsider.⁹⁷ Kelly's forgetting about these experiences results from seeing himself as fully British. However, his actions then powerfully recognised his significantly strong desire to identify with the dominant culture.

Conclusion

Northamptonshire's mid- to late-20th century Afro-Caribbean population was fairly typical of Britain as measured by percentage of population. However, the cultural currencies acquired and exchanged by them reflected a myriad of circumstances and forces affecting the value of such multiple but intersecting currencies. Cultural currencies, unlike their monetary counterparts, **must** be shared to have value. Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans significantly shared their cultures in large part to demonstrate ethno-racial pride. Such cultural currencies

⁹⁵ L. Kelly interviewed by G. Watley, 12

⁹⁶ L. Kelly interviewed by G. Watley, 15

⁹⁷ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 95

were often used to obtain regional and national cultural currencies that helped them become a genuine part of local and national communities. West Indian Parents' Association, Matta Fancanta Movement and the United Social Club were local organisations that all sought in various ways to use intra-ethnic cultural currency as a means of acquiring and utilizing other cultural currencies. All three organisations used strong intra-racial cultural currency in exchange for these other cultural currencies.

Amongst individuals however, there was a split in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly amongst younger Afro-Caribbeans. This schism was between those desiring intra-ethno-racial currency and those aspiring to full integration into British society. The former reflected, in large part, difficulty in finding employment, as well as general social hostility towards younger Black people, particularly males. Afro-Caribbean desires for full integration were reflected by desires to disappear ethno-racially by immersing into learning, obtaining qualifications and working harder to succeed in employment because of institutional and organisational racial prejudice. Those valuing intra-racial cultural currency highest exercised cultural currency flight to quality by gravitating towards obtaining and sharing intra-ethnic cultural currency. This reflected an inability to obtain fundamental acceptance as British people. In contrast, those Afro-Caribbeans exercising cultural currency flight to quality by primarily seeking racial indistinguishability did so primarily by seeking White British cultures and social spaces, as well as qualifications and potential employment, which reflected desires to be invisible as Black people.

Despite individual and organisational differences in acquiring and sharing cultural currencies, Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans used rationale of cultural exchange akin to economic models of monetary trading in order to do so in various social contexts. Differences in

manifestation between cultural currency usage and exchange primarily rested on personal and collective perceptions of various cultural currency valuations as these currencies' valuations fluctuated over time.

This article has addressed how a relatively isolated ethnic group used variously integrated but sometimes disparate cultural currencies. It is suggested that future research should examine the usage and sharing of cultural currencies by Afro-Caribbeans elsewhere in Britain, as well as other ethnic groups nationally and internationally. Such research would help to determine and analyse the extent of which various cultural currencies are integrated and/or disparate.