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# **Identity and consumption practices of Northamptonshire Caribbeans c.1955-1989**

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

George Watley

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## **Declaration**

This thesis is totally the result of my own work conducted within the registration period at the University of Northampton. Furthermore, this thesis is totally my original work and has not been submitted for a degree or diploma at this, or any other, higher education institution.

## Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to delineate and analyse Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption c.1955-1989. Author-collected and other oral histories alongside complementary primary and secondary references dovetail to unearth and analyse aspects of Post-War Caribbean consumption in a British provincial location that have been significantly unexplored previously. Central to the argument is the contention that identity is fundamentally significant in comprehending and analysing Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption. Various conceptualisations of identity facilitated development of consumer materialisations and aspirations. This thesis explores how multiple forms of identity as Caribbean, Black and British people were significant in shaping local Caribbeans' consumption. The succeeding pages address and analyse how these multiple identities influenced consumption and how provincial consumer behaviour was shaped by Caribbeans' relative co-ethnic isolation in Northamptonshire.

Chapter 3 delineates and analyses consumer practices and practicalities of Northamptonshire Caribbeans. Integral within these consumer practices and practicalities are changes in consumption over time, intergenerational differences in consumption, as well as aspects of consumption that could be considered '*typical*' and/or '*atypical*' Northamptonshire Caribbean consumption; all of which are incorporated within this chapter. Chapter 4 connects identity and consumption through enhancing understanding of Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumer networks. These networks interacted with the combination of identities local Caribbeans psychologically felt part of within various Caribbean, Black and British permutations. Furthermore, such identities varied more widely amongst the younger generation than their co-ethnic elders, a concept which is also addressed.

Education and cultural currency are two novel strands through which to analyse connections between consumption and identity. The final two chapters deploy these concepts in an innovative manner creating and developing greater understanding of Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption. Chapter 5 expounds on the concept that education can be used as consumption whilst shaping future consumer behaviour, both ideas significantly under-explored previously. Chapter 6 introduces the theory of cultural currency, the idea that aspects of culture have finite, but changing, values and must be shared to have value similar to monetary currencies having exchange values for other monetary currencies. This chapter demonstrates how Northamptonshire Caribbeans shared aspects of Caribbean culture as cultural currency, fostering co-ethnic strength whilst gaining inter-ethnic respect for Caribbeans.

Through comprehending Caribbean identity, correlations between empirical and social history, local consumption, as well as educational and cultural circumstances that stimulated and inspired Northamptonshire Caribbeans, this thesis distinctively illuminates how local Caribbeans' consumption interacted with various permutations of Afro-Caribbean, Black and/or British identities whilst representing idiosyncratic local nodes within these larger amalgamations.

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Without Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funding, I would not have been able to produce this thesis, which is gratefully acknowledged. I thank my supervisors, Professor Jon Stobart and Dr. Julia Bush for their consistent feedback and support over the past 43 months. I have appreciated their patience for reading through my sometimes 100-plus word sentences, as well as my creative use of the English language that sometimes hindered the development of acceptable historiography. Dr. Paul Bracey and Dr. Matthew McCormack are acknowledged for their feedback as mock viva examiners, useful in helping me polish this work. Also appreciated has been David Watson, Senior Research Degrees Manager. I have asked numerous questions about the procedural aspects of being a PhD student. However, I cannot apologise for this because, to paraphrase from Frantz Fanon, O make me a man who always asks questions.

I must give special thanks to my aunt, Gloria Jordan. She has provided resolute and unwavering support throughout the past 43 months, spiritual and temporal, being my biggest supporter and most astute critic simultaneously. My son Samuel also deserves an acknowledgement for putting up with picking him up late on Sundays, me working when we would rather be doing other things and keeping a smile on my face. My ex-wife Sharon deserves mention for being flexible in child care arrangements when I needed to meet deadlines and to travel for conferences and other research-related activities.

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across schools. Others in the Knowledge Exchange that deserve mention for providing me some insight across disciplines useful to me, as well as being interesting people generally, are Ouarda, Hayley, Lesley, Fiona, Siham, Carmel, Zheng, Monna, Anthony, Bekah, Nadeem, Jelena and Lucy.

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May Green  
Ulric Gravesande  
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This thesis is a result of a journey. Although I am the author of this work, it is an overall result of numerous people assisting along the way, some monumental, some infinitesimal, some in between. However, all those that have assisted me along the way, whether specifically named or not, should take some pride in helping produce this work. I conclude by offering my thoughts about these past three and a half years with one word, *carrera*. This is a Spanish word that can be translated into English with the definitions of both career and run. Run can be translated in terms of scoring a run, as in cricket or baseball, or a short quick visit. The word *carrera* best sums up my feelings about all aspects of

work leading to the production of this thesis because this is a functional document in terms of '*scoring*' a PhD whilst leading (hopefully) to a productive career in the near future. It's been a fine run of time, but like all runs, they must come to an end which this work symbolises. However, this thesis represents a beginning as well, giving me a passport into the fraternity of academia through its completion. Through this end leading to a beginning, one word succinctly symbolises and encapsulates my efforts, progress, hopes and aspirations resulting from this work, *carrera*.

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## Introduction

This thesis will simultaneously illuminate and analyse the identity and consumption practices of Northamptonshire Caribbeans c.1955-1989 through developing greater understandings of how multiple manifestations of Caribbean, Black and/or British identities influenced their consumption. These multiple and often intersecting identities manifest themselves through consumption. Every chapter explores the multitude of identities Northamptonshire Caribbeans had whilst delineating and analysing their interactions with consumer manifestations and desires. Furthermore, Northamptonshire's Afro-Caribbean population was very small, less than one percent throughout this era.<sup>1</sup> This relative co-ethnic isolation provides additional layers for comprehending and analysing how such relative co-ethnic seclusion shaped consumption.

Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA) and its precursor, Northamptonshire Black History Project (NBHP), have supported this thesis through having already recorded interviews and transcripts of local Caribbeans, produced a book detailing Black history in Northamptonshire, as well as having provided significant support in obtaining interviewees and documents detailing various aspects of the Caribbean presence in post-War Northamptonshire. In practical terms, there were approximately 50 NBHP/A conducted extant interviews of local Caribbeans available, many of which have been referred to. Extant 2002-2005 interviews of local Caribbeans, as well as 22 author-conducted interviews, provide the oral history underpinnings for this thesis.<sup>2</sup> 13

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Mayes, 'At Home Among Northampton's Coloured People', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 1960 (unidentified date); Office for National Statistics, '200 years of the Census in Northamptonshire', 2001

<sup>2</sup> These 22 interviews consist of 20 people having been interviewed, with a group interview and one interviewee having been interviewed twice based on a specific theme the second time using Michael McMillan's *The Front Room* as a reference point. Two other people were interviewed with approximately two week gaps in between interviewing sessions. However, these interviews have not been counted separately because the second parts of these interviews were merely extensions of the original interviews rather than related to a different theme.

of the 20 people interviewed had been interviewed in these 2002-2005 interviews. These multiple interviewing opportunities offered numerous opportunities for elaboration on the specifics of their consumption. Furthermore, underlying motivations underpinning their consumer behaviour were obtained, adding additional layers to the initial interviews because these did not specifically focus on consumption. Both sets of interviews are significantly referred to whilst detailing and analysing local Caribbean consumption and correlative identity related influences.

A plethora of research has been conducted on Caribbean identity in Britain or North America as exemplified by Reynolds, Gooden, Gordon, Lam and Smith and Premdas amongst others.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, identity related research connecting Black identities with Black cultures and cultural influences in Britain has been done extensively by Gilroy and Hall amongst others.<sup>4</sup> However, connections between identity and consumption of Caribbeans are currently limited in British provincial contexts, particularly in the decades before 1990 that is the thesis' focus. Also of important mention is that scant attention in prior literature has been given to differences and/or similarities in **cross-regional** consumption of specific minority ethnic groups in Britain. This thesis will provide enlightenment in this regard by providing examples of how provincial

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<sup>3</sup> Tracey Reynolds, 'Caribbean families, social capital and young people's diasporic identities', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 85 (2006), p.1087; Tracey Reynolds, 'Friendship Networks, Social Capital and Ethnic Identity: Researching the Perspectives of Caribbean Young People in Britain', *Journal of Youth Studies*, 10 (2007), p.383; Amoaba Gooden, 'Community Organizing by African Caribbean People in Toronto, Ontario', *Journal of Black Studies*, 38 (2008), p.413; Gloria Gordon, 'Transforming Thinking Amongst British African Caribbeans as an Academically Based Community Service Contribution', *Journal of Transformative Education*, 4 (2006), p.226; Virginia Lam and Gordon Smith, 'African and Caribbean adolescents in Britain: ethnic identity and Britishness', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 32 (2009), p.1248; Ralph Premdas, 'Diaspora and its discontents: A Caribbean fragment in Toronto on quest of cultural recognition and political empowerment', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 27 (2004), p.544

<sup>4</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. xi; Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The cultural politics of race and nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), p.155; Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), p.235; Stuart Hall, 'Who Needs 'Identity?'' in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. by Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London: Sage Publications, 1996), p.4

consumption differed from metropolitan contemporaries whilst developing localised distinct consumption niches vis-à-vis metropolitan co-ethnics.

Goulbourne asserts that Caribbean as an ethnicity was created in post-War Britain in large part because of numerous racist experiences people of Caribbean origin had in Britain.<sup>5</sup> This thesis will support Goulbourne's assertion to some extent by illuminating how this provincial group of Caribbeans were a node in larger national networks of Caribbeans as expressed through, and resulting from, their consumption. However, connections between Goulbourne's argument and local Caribbeans will be nuanced because there were positive experiences of cross-ethnic consumption amongst local Caribbeans and Whites that provides asynchronous components to Goulbourne's argument. Furthermore, the author's Caribbean familial background offers various nuances to Goulbourne's assertion in contemporary contexts. Being part of the local Caribbean community before research commenced influenced the author's interactions with research participants and various aspects of thesis analysis, making him mostly a perceptual insider in terms of how the local community viewed him. Being American-born and living an overwhelming majority of his life in America also influenced this thesis in terms of being, or potentially perceived as, an outsider in comparison to the local Caribbean community. Chapter 2 significantly addresses the author's positionality and multiple dimensions of how it simultaneously influenced the research and the resulting historiography. Understanding the author's positionality vis-à-vis local Caribbeans allows for future historians to appreciate and analyse such positionality-related influences.

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<sup>5</sup> Harry Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience* (Kingston, Jamaica: Arawak Publications, 2002), pp.29-30

The consumer practices and practicalities of Northamptonshire Caribbeans were simultaneously part of, whilst being somewhat distinct from, larger national and international social and cultural networks. Chapter 3 delineates and analyses practices and practicalities surrounding local Caribbean consumer behaviour and resulting manifestations through using ‘*typical*’ and ‘*atypical*’ typologies to analyse consumption based on the similarities and differences between Northamptonshire Caribbeans, local non-Caribbeans, as well as co-ethnics outside the county. Furthermore, generational differences in consumption, as well as changes in consumption over time will be mentioned. The similarities and differences discussed in this chapter are all integrally linked to the central concept that identity and consumption are connected.

Chapter 4 provides significant insight into how social and consumer networks of local Caribbeans were influenced by national and international connections. Northamptonshire Caribbeans’ development of distinct consumption within various contexts of being Black and/or Caribbean in Britain will be comprehensively understood through these chapters. Similar themes of change over time, as well as generational differences in consumption will be addressed in this chapter through understanding the role consumer networks played in the consumption of Northamptonshire Caribbeans whilst analysing how concepts of identity influenced consumer networks, as well as roles individuals and groups played when they interacted with such networks.

Connections between compulsory schooling/education and consumption are extremely limited in academic literature, with the notable exception of Bourdieu’s recognition that educational attainment frequently correlates with numerous aspects of future consumer behaviour.<sup>6</sup> Through chapter 5, the

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<sup>6</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: The Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1984), pp.23, 80-81; Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason on the Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p.19

boundaries of Bourdieu's assertions will be transcended through comprehending and analysing connections between experiencing ethno-centric schooling and consumption. Compulsory schooling/education was frequently mentioned as a reference point of resistance by many Northamptonshire Caribbeans. Chapter 5 will develop understanding of the plethora of dimensions connecting compulsory schooling/education, identity and consumption.

Chapter 6 addresses another theme connecting identity and consumption, cultural currency. Cultural currency, the concept that culture must be shared to have value, was used by local Caribbeans to simultaneously develop positive ethnic identity as Caribbean people, as well as sharing various aspects of their cultures that worked towards Caribbean people being seen as cultural contributors to Northamptonshire generally through consumption. Chapter 6 addresses how local Caribbeans purposely developed and shared cultural currency in order to develop from people of the Caribbean into Caribbean and/or Black British people as analysed through various aspects of consumption connecting cultural currency they used with the identities local Caribbeans intersected within. Through analysing the cultural currency of Northamptonshire Caribbeans, a greater understanding of the myriad of social and cultural influences that underpinned many aspects of their consumption will be obtained. Furthermore, the concept will be developed that many aspects of cultural currency were used as means of resisting ethnically-based discrimination which combined with evolving ethnic identities displayed through various aspects of consumption.

Some local Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumer behaviour dissented from resisting discrimination through promotion of positive ethnic identities as Black and/or Caribbean people. This was reflected by such individuals desiring consumer manifestations that highly appreciated British identity and perceived

it as more valuable. This thesis addresses various aspects of such dissent, adding another layer to comprehending the complexity of Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption, particularly for people of Caribbean origin born locally or elsewhere in Britain. Furthermore, significant dimensions of movements toward Caribbean and/or Black cultural manifestations being shared with local non-Caribbeans, particularly Whites, will be illuminated and analysed. This thesis will reveal, in contrast to Bourdieu's assertion that cultural outsiders face a choice between hyper-identification with dominant cultures or their original sub-culture<sup>7</sup>, Northamptonshire Caribbeans generally neither hyper-identified with dominant White British cultures nor Black and/or Caribbean cultures, British-based or otherwise.

Northamptonshire Caribbeans' identity related foci provide building blocks for greater understanding and analysis of multiple and often intersecting identities they had, as reflected through their consumption. Current knowledge of Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumer behaviour and connections with identity are extremely limited, which this thesis will ameliorate. Furthermore, iconoclast interpretations of consumption are offered through the final two chapters on education and cultural currencies. Interpretative analyses made in these latter chapters provide novel prisms through which consumption can be examined through. More generally, provincial Caribbeans in Britain have been overwhelmingly ignored as historical subjects in their own right vis-à-vis metropolitan contemporaries. This historiography will simultaneously delineate and analyse the consumption of Northamptonshire Caribbeans, placing them within various local, national and international nodes whilst offering novel interpretations on such consumption.

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<sup>7</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p.95

## Chapter 1: Literature review

### Introduction

Prior literature examining post-1945 Caribbean migration to, as well as experiences in, Britain almost exclusively involved researching Caribbean people who lived in large metropolitan areas, particularly involving their experiences of social and employment discrimination. Caribbean people's consumption in the immediate post-War decades, particularly in non-metropolitan areas, has not been analysed or addressed in any great detail. Exceptions to this are McMillan's visual conceptualisations of the West Indian front room that could be applied to Black British people generally, non-consumerist statistical information applicable to West Indians generally, or empirical research specific to Jamaicans emigrating to Britain in the early to mid-1960s.<sup>1</sup> The history of people of African origin, the Caribbean diaspora, as well as related conceptualisations of home, identity and diaspora which numerous ethnic groups shared in varying degrees with Afro-Caribbean British people, should be analysed in more significant detail. Also notable is that there is no identifiable literature on how provincial Caribbean people interacted with their urban contemporaries, especially in terms of their consumer behaviour and influences. Consumer behaviour of Caribbean people in this era, particularly of non-metropolitan Caribbean British people, is an area currently significantly under-researched. In more general British ethnic minority contexts, connections between ethnicity and consumption have been made for south Asians in the UK in terms of their food shopping in the immediate post-War decades, as well as the effects of cultural roots on Asian Indians' consumer decision making and

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<sup>1</sup> John Hammond, 'The West Indian Front Room: Memories and Impressions of Black British Homes', (London: Geffrye Museum, 18 October 2005 to 19 February 2006); Michael McMillan, 'The West Indian Front Room: Reflections on a Diasporic Phenomenon', *Small Axe*, 13 (2009), p.13; Ceri Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain: A Social Geography* (Oxford: Institute of Race Relations/Oxford University Press, 1968); R.B. Davison, *Black British: Immigrants to England*, (London: Institute of Race Relations/Oxford University Press, 1966)

choice of specific brands.<sup>2</sup> However, literature to date specifically addressing identity-related influences on the consumption of Caribbeans in 1950s-1980s Britain is significantly lacking.

Literature connecting identity and consumption will be further developed in this chapter through eight strands, each linking different facets of identity with consumption in various implicit and explicit ways. The first of the strands is conceptualisations of home, identity and diaspora. Concepts such as hybridity and competing identities will develop an understanding of the numerous intersecting influences perceptions of identity had on Caribbeans in Britain. The second of these strands, experiences of Caribbeans in Britain, notes the multiple facets of actual life experiences Caribbean people had in post-War Britain. The third strand, sense of community, examines literature that analyses multiple permutations of how communities are created. This includes psychological sense of community based on non-geographic borders. The fourth strand, society and social networks, will address how various literature theorises social networks in terms of using them to achieve personal freedom over hegemonic domination. Implicit and explicit in this section is how ethnicity explains and influences the use of social networks alongside consumption in order to overcome hegemony.

The fifth strand is that of strong/weak ties and consumer networks. Diverse social ties will be examined through the work of Grannovetter and others to show how this strand of literature augments comprehension of consumer networks that are offshoots of such strong/weak ties. The sixth strand is gender influences. Literature mentioned in this section addresses concepts facilitating

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<sup>2</sup> Yasmin Sekhon, "From saris to sarongs' ethnicity and intergenerational influences on consumption among Asian Indians in the UK", *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31 (2007), p.160; Jane Hamlett et al, 'Ethnicity and Consumption: South Asian food shopping patterns in Britain, 1947-75', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 8 (2008), p.91

comprehension of the influences of gender on consumer behaviour. The strand of education is the seventh strand. The education history of Black British people in the post-1945 era provides another prism for conceptualising various difficulties Caribbean people generally faced in their British educational experiences, as well as providing frameworks for what prior literature has not addressed in this regard. The final strand is consumer behaviour. Consumer behaviour related literature and frameworks should be understood in order to fully conceptualise the depth and scope of the teleological sequences involving consumer decisions that manifest individually and collectively. Each strand connects ethnicity and consumption implicitly and explicitly, with these being central throughout every succeeding chapter. These strands provide different lenses through which consumption will be analysed throughout the thesis.

### **Conceptualisations of home, identity and diaspora**

Caribbean identity as it existed in the Caribbean should be understood before comprehending the ethnicity of Afro-Caribbeans in Britain. Afro-Caribbean as an ethnic identity in the Caribbean has virtually no meaning and 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 hostility.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, overt individual island/national Caribbean nationalism was relatively muted in the Commonwealth Caribbean, despite a general confidence in national, as opposed to pan-Caribbean, identity.<sup>4</sup>

Afro-Caribbean as an ethnicity was initially conceptualised in part by West Indian university students in England immediately after World War II to

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<sup>3</sup> Harry Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience*, pp.29-30

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p.175

promote cooperation and unity amongst people in the Caribbean. This simultaneously reflected desires for national independence for their islands/countries of origin whilst facing, 'overt contempt for blacks during the late 1940s and early 1950s.'<sup>5</sup> Outside this group, responses to ethnically-based discrimination led to eliminating differences between Caribbean people whilst creating various Afro-Caribbean informal and formal associations.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, people in the Caribbean eventually became well-informed about British social tensions with ethnically discriminatory connotations from both mass media and personal correspondence with friends and family living in Britain.<sup>7</sup>

Also important in the development of Afro-Caribbean ethnic identity in Britain is the context of competing and/or blended essentialist, assimilationist and negotiation-based ethnic influences. Within all these conceptualisations understandings of the, 'inescapable hybridity and intermixture of ideas (within) the history of black Atlantic'<sup>8</sup> have been comprehended in terms of the history underpinning Black British cultures and its links to consumption. Bhabha augments this conceptualisation by noting that hybridity gives rise to new cultures and cultural differences which displace the prior histories which created the cultural offspring, as well as denying the essentialism of the prior originating cultures.<sup>9</sup> Hall's arguments fit neatly within these theoretical frameworks in noting that hybridity and diasporic identities constantly produce and reproduce themselves through transformation and difference.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Gladstone Mills, Foreword in Lloyd Braithwaite's *Colonial West Indian Students in Britain*, (Kingston, Jamaica: University of The West Indies Press, 2001), pp. x-xi

<sup>6</sup> Peter Edmead, *The divisive decade: A history of Caribbean immigration to Birmingham in the 1950s* (Birmingham: Birmingham Library Services, 1999), pp.33-34

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, *Caribbean Migration* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2002), p.139

<sup>8</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness*, p. xi

<sup>9</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Third Space' in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), p.211

<sup>10</sup> Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', p.235

Conceptualisations of potential and/or realized cultural hybridity will be developed in succeeding chapters to analyse the role hybridity played amongst the researched, particularly as it relates to their multiple identities as Black, Caribbean, Afro-Caribbean and British people, as well as realized and/or aspirational gender, class, religious and generational socio-cultural sub-sections intersecting their individual and collective lives. There is a clear recognition that, ' *No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are no more than starting points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind.*'<sup>11</sup> By implication, defining the subjects of this research as Northamptonshire Caribbean people already places them in two categories, with British as a third label. Furthermore, self-definition can play an important role in determining individual and collective labels, even if there is limited agency in auto-designations.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, the theory of double consciousness in conceptualising dilemmas people of African origin faced, and face, in Europe and the Americas should be understood as well.<sup>13</sup> The double consciousness of being Black in European originated and/or dominated social and economic systems was based on, ' *(feeling) twoness ... two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body. These two 'warring ideals', one the impulse to join the mainstream society, the other to reject it and define the world and relate to it entirely from a black perspective.*'<sup>14</sup> Esteemed academics ranging from Paul Gilroy to bell hooks<sup>15</sup> recognise double consciousness as critical to understanding and analysing African diasporic cultural influences, particularly amongst those of African origin living in predominantly Europeanised

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<sup>11</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993), p.407

<sup>12</sup> Miri Song, *Choosing Ethnic Identity* (Malden, Massachusetts, USA: Polity Press with Blackwell Publishing, 1993), p.4

<sup>13</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), p.5

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. xv

<sup>15</sup> Bell hooks purposely does not use capital letters in her name in a declaration of protest against the capitalist system.

countries, whether in continental Europe or other countries with majority populations of European origin like the United States, Canada and Britain.<sup>16</sup> Cultural influences and outward displays of culture could be conceived as multiple manifestations of identities related to this internal conflict, both individual and collective. Implied in hybridity and double consciousness based conceptualisations is the existence of cultural competition between making efforts to alienate historically marginalised groups and reacting to, or sub-consciously affirming, cultural imposition within the context of socio-historical cultural expression. The divergence between these competing contextual historical conceptions, as well as their simultaneous, but seemingly incongruous, convergence needs to be investigated to provide understanding of the role cultural hybridity played in the lives of local Caribbeans.

Black people in modern and post-modern locations where governments and social systems have been controlled by people of European origin have, according to Fanon, inferiority complexes due to internalisation of Black inferiority. Further argued within this concept is that Black people often react to views of their inferiority with a superiority complex or wished to be ethnically anonymous.<sup>17</sup> Fanon's conceptualisation of racialised inferiority internalisation, or what he refers to as a '... *racial epidermal schema* ...' is clearly asserted as affecting Black people.<sup>18</sup> Fanon identifies Black colonised and/or culturally imposed people as being, '...*a triple person; the other, the evanescent other (and the) transparent.*'<sup>19</sup> Expressiveness within Black cultures can be understood by conceptualising the multitude of conflicts within this triplet, singularly and cohesively in individual and collective contexts.

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<sup>16</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness*, p.38; bell hooks, *Yearning: race, gender and cultural politics* (London: Turnaround, 1991), p.34

<sup>17</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), pp.13, 116, 150, 213

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.112

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.112

The role of class and gender in the context of consumer behaviour cannot be ignored, with the latter being fully addressed later in this chapter. The former could be best understood within conceptualisations of potential and/or realized conflicts between class and income improvement aspiration. Being perceived as authentically Black and/or Caribbean could have manifested itself in various ways through the prism of these potentially conflicting dynamics, particularly but not exclusively related to working-class aspirations and efforts towards being middle-class. However racist obstacles to Northamptonshire Caribbean people achieving middle class status could have resulted from the middle-class society Fanon conceptualised as being, ' *rigidified in predetermined forms, ... all evolution, all gains, all progress ... forbidden.* ' <sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the middle-class status sought by many Caribbean people in Britain could be conceptualised akin to Posel's assertion that the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa was a struggle against racism that transcended poverty through becoming wealthier whilst achieving freedom as expressed through consumer acquisition.<sup>21</sup> Black British people between the 1950s-1980s faced some similar economic barriers despite not facing official racialised segregation akin to South Africa or America during this era. Based on Posel's and Fanon's theorisations, the fundamental question needing to be asked in the thesis' context is whether Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans equated material acquisition with freedom and equality for Caribbean/Black people?

British middle-class status conceptualisations in this era did not allow for Black or Caribbean ethnic identities to be included in this social category. Fanon referred to the, ' *middle-class (as) a closed-society in which life has no taste, in which the air is tainted, in which ideas and men are corrupt ... a man who takes*

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<sup>20</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p.224

<sup>21</sup> Deborah Posel, 'Races to consume: revisiting South Africa's history of race, consumption and the struggle for freedom', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33 (2010), p.158

*a stand against this death is revolutionary.*'<sup>22</sup> Although this view of middle class is radical, it does help to understand dilemmas Black people would have felt in Britain if they were, or aspired to be, middle class. Consumption reflecting Fanon's assertion reflects rejection of many contexts of yearning to be middle-class in British paradigms, particularly for Caribbeans wishing to retain Caribbean ethnic identity. In contrast, rejecting Fanon's view of middle class status or aspirations would be reflected by desiring this status at the expense of the death of their ethnic identity as Caribbean people. Fanon's argument will be tested in this thesis, especially in the context of the perception of middle-class amongst Northamptonshire Caribbean people, as well as the shaping of the Caribbean community's perception of middle-class status that incorporated British, Black and Caribbean influences.

Conceptualisations of the Caribbean as a diaspora and imaginary home for people of Caribbean origin and/or ancestry are varied and reflexive. Reynolds refers to British Caribbean, 'young people's desire to ethnically identify themselves as Caribbean (reflecting) a very real concern that they did not feel accepted in British society.'<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, Lam and Smith have concluded that British Caribbean, 'adolescents ranked ethnicity as more important than age, gender or nationality, stereotypes Caribbeans more positively than British and derived more pride from ethnicity than nationality.'<sup>24</sup> Reynolds' and Lam and Smith's conclusions should be assessed in the context of this thesis. If both quotations are applied to their logical conclusion, Caribbean identity would be stronger for those feeling more alienated from Britain and this would manifest in their consumer behaviour. This is particularly notable because ethnic pride has been found to increase amongst Caribbean adolescents as they got older,

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<sup>22</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, pp.224-225

<sup>23</sup> Tracey Reynolds, 'Caribbean families, social capital and young people's diasporic identities', p.1095

<sup>24</sup> Virginia Lam and Gordon Smith, 'African and Caribbean adolescents in Britain: ethnic identity and Britishness', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 32 (2009), p.1248

which occurred at the expense of identifying with British nationality.<sup>25</sup> This could be implied as occurring due to facing increasing negative racialised stereotyping in their movement towards adulthood. Furthermore, it could be implied that greater links with the Caribbean, real in terms of direct family or friend connections or imagined in terms of food, music, clothing and hairstyle fashions etc., could have been reflections of disaffection or dissatisfaction with Britain.

Augmenting the potential linkages between desiring Caribbean identity in countries like Britain to dissatisfaction with their home or country of eventual destination are Goulbourne and Solomos' conclusions that:

*There appears not to be ... a significant fracture with the Caribbean. Rather, the region has become a 'home' of the imagination. (Remarkably) people (emigrating as part of the) outward Caribbean migration in the second half of the last century have maintained (and continued) links ... with the region as a source for collective and personal inspiration and development.*<sup>26</sup>

This imagined home could have resulted from simultaneous expectations that the Caribbean would always be part of Caribbean migrants' identity with a greater degree of this occurring based on the extent of the country of destination failing to accept them. However, Caribbean identity should be understood as being largely transnational based on a culture of migration being an integral

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.1260

<sup>26</sup> Harry Goulbourne and John Solomos, 'The Caribbean Diaspora: Some introductory remarks', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 27 (2004), p.535

characteristic of Caribbean identity.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the Caribbean has been identified by Premdas as being, ' *more deeply and continuously affected by migration than any other region of the world.* ' <sup>28</sup> Arguably, Caribbean identity could be partly defined as deriving from fluid geography, an imagined home identified with based on various degrees of disaffection or affection with the location of migration. Despite affiliation or non-affiliation with the nationality and/or culture of the destination country, ' *few (did) not expect to migrate while still retaining their Caribbean identity (despite) few persons in the Caribbean not having relatives overseas.* ' <sup>29</sup> Caribbean people were and are highly migratory, with Caribbean migrants into Britain being only one strand of fluid physical geography of this ethnic group.

Adding to the fluidity of Caribbeanness is Chamberlain's assertion that Caribbean people experience a plurality of cultural influences leading to parallel systems of interwoven, but different, socio-cultural knowledge.<sup>30</sup> Although from the vantage point of people in the Caribbean specifically, Chamberlain's suggestion carries added weight with Caribbean people in Britain because not only do they have this history as part of their culture, but also have the added experience of living in Britain which would add another layer to such plurality of cultural influences. Permutations of such differing systems of socio-cultural knowledge manifest through Caribbean diasporic identity with Premdas contending:

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<sup>27</sup> Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, *Globalization and the development of a Caribbean migration culture* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.196; Ralph Premdas, 'Diaspora and its discontents: A Caribbean fragment in Toronto in quest of cultural recognition and political empowerment', p.547

<sup>28</sup> Ralph Premdas, 'Diaspora and its discontents: A Caribbean fragment in Toronto in quest of cultural recognition and political empowerment', p.547; Nancy Foner, *Towards a Caribbean perspective on Caribbean migration* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.47

<sup>29</sup> Ralph Premdas, 'Diaspora and its discontents: A Caribbean fragment in Toronto in quest of cultural recognition and political empowerment', p.547

<sup>30</sup> Mary Chamberlain, *Family Love in the Diaspora: Migration and the Anglo-Caribbean Experience* (London: Transaction Publishers/Ian Randle Publishers, 2006), p.72

*(From) outside of the Caribbean ... the Trans-Caribbean identity is most vocally espoused. The Trans-Caribbean identity is the highest form of nationalist fantasy. To some it is an aspiration while to others it is a useful badge to register complaints and make claims in a foreign land. It is as much an excuse for collecting grievances as to provoke counterclaims of cultural hegemony.*<sup>31</sup>

Referring back to Fanon, Caribbean responses to British middle-class cultural hegemony could have been to supplant white British views or superiority/inferiority for Caribbean-centric conceptualisations of supremacy.<sup>32</sup> However, Caribbean ethnic identities should not be viewed in a binary vis-à-vis British and/or Black because ethnic identity can be fluid and time bound: shifting with audience, space and place. This raises possibilities of having multiple resulting ethnic identities.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, 'ethnic identity cannot be considered as fixed, because cultures develop and adapt and, as such, are not autonomous and static features in an individual's life.'<sup>34</sup> First generation Caribbean migrants were Caribbean by birth and upbringing whereas many in the second generation were either British-born or experienced most of their childhood in Britain. Despite their British birth and upbringing, many of this second generation actively **chose** to self-identify as Caribbeans despite generally having limited to no direct experience of the Caribbean. This could be perceived as resulting from an inability to assimilate into aspects of dominant British culture. Chapters 4 to 6 will use the mentioned social networks literature

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<sup>31</sup> Ralph Premdas, 'Diaspora and its discontents: A Caribbean fragment in Toronto in quest of cultural recognition and political empowerment', p.548

<sup>32</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p.5

<sup>33</sup> Tracey Reynolds, 'Caribbean families, social capital and young people's diasporic identities', pp.1097-1099; Miri Song, *Choosing Ethnic Identity*, p.4

<sup>34</sup> James Nazroo and Saffron Karlsen, 'Patterns of identity among ethnic minority people: Diversity and commonality', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 26 (2003), p.904

and concepts to augment analysis of how social networks influence, and are influenced by, consumption.

Transnational identity as discussed earlier should not be viewed independently of the Caribbean. Comprehending ethnic identities requires an understanding that facing ethnically-based discrimination and cultural domination can shape individual and collective identities in intra- and inter-ethnic interactions, reinforcing ethnic identities in the process.<sup>35</sup> Active group solidarity, a key component of ethnic identity construction, increases and/or is much more likely to develop, as well as forming stronger bonds, based on the severity of discrimination experienced, as well as resulting marginalisation and exclusion.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Bradley concludes that, '*... active (ethno-racial) identities are promoted by the experience of discrimination.*'<sup>37</sup> It could be concluded that there are strong links between discrimination and ethnic solidarity. However, trans-Caribbean nationalism is also linked in various degrees to African-American culture, particularly entertainment and reading materials. Young British Caribbean people, 'make connections with the black diaspora in the Caribbean and USA by incorporating hip-hop and reggae dancehall into their everyday lives and in defining group identity.'<sup>38</sup> The connections made between diasporic cultures and identity result from Black British people wishing to experience:

*Expressive culture(s) of the black Atlantic (whose) best feature is an anti-hierarchical tradition of thought (sharing) hatred for the alienation forced upon (black people) by Europeans during the*

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, pp.903-904; Miri Song, *Choosing Ethnic Identity*, p.18

<sup>36</sup> Tracey Reynolds, 'Caribbean families, social capital and young people's diasporic identities', p.1096

<sup>37</sup> Harriet Bradley, *Fractured Identities* (Cambridge, England: Polity, 1996), pp.25-26

<sup>38</sup> Tracey Reynolds, 'Caribbean families, social capital and young people's diasporic identities', p.1099

*process of colonisation. We are bound by our common suffering (despite) its cultural value (being) almost nil.*<sup>39</sup>

Caribbean people in Britain in the post-War era sought out, in large but varying degrees, Black diasporic cultures, particularly when, or because, Black British as a distinct culture was developing. Furthermore, British Caribbean people were part of the process of heavily consuming and borrowing from African-American and Caribbean cultural influences until Black British culture could conspicuously manifest itself. However, this borrowing served a cultural purpose by providing bridges between strictly or traditionally Caribbean and/or African-American cultures and Black British, reflecting hybridization blurring original geneses of creation and displacing prior cultural structures and histories in the process.<sup>40</sup> Gilroy builds on hybridity conceptualisations by noting that, '... the history of the black Atlantic yields a course of lessons as to the instability and mutability of identities which are always unfinished, always being remade.'<sup>41</sup> With Bhabha and Gilroy in mind, understanding Caribbeans in Britain requires conceptualising elements and processes underpinning the birth and development of their significantly hybridized cultural identities.

*'Black expressive cultures affirm while they protest. The assimilation of blacks is not a process of acculturation but of cultural syncretism.'*<sup>42</sup> The teleological sequence from being Caribbean in Britain towards being Black British and/or Afro-Caribbean British requires an understanding of underlying sociological influences. Despite apparent rejections of Black and Caribbean within British national narratives and historical consciousness frameworks, especially from the 1950s-1980s, '... Blacks born, nurtured and schooled in (Britain) are, in

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<sup>39</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness*, pp.79, 111

<sup>40</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Third Space', p.211

<sup>41</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: modernity and double consciousness*, p. xi

<sup>42</sup> Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The cultural politics of race and nation*, p.155

*significant measure, British even as their presence redefines the meaning of the term. The language and structures of racial politics ... prevent(s) this from being seen.*'<sup>43</sup> The next section will introduce in more detail important aspects of the actual life experiences of Caribbeans in Britain and their role in creating and developing ethnic identities.

### **Experiences of Caribbeans in Britain**

Afro-Caribbean identity in Britain was significantly exemplified by church-going experiences in the immediate post-War decades. Many Caribbean people were active churchgoers in the Caribbean and replicated this upon arriving to Britain, largely through attending Black churches. For many, particularly Afro-Caribbean women, attending church and participating in church activities were their only forms of recreation.<sup>44</sup> This was a result of the established churches such as Church of England being '*cold and unwelcoming*' to Caribbean people, as well as Caribbeans wishing to create new social networks at least partially based on their church-going experiences in the Caribbean.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to not being accepted in established churches in Britain, the employment that Caribbean people held was often much lower than their skills and qualifications would have afforded them if not for official and unofficial colour bars. For example, more than half of Caribbean males in the late 1950s, at least in London, had lower status jobs than their skills and experience were suitable for.<sup>46</sup> This led to, '*disappointment and disillusionment of many kinds.*'<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p.155

<sup>44</sup> Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* (London: Virago Press, 1985), pp.130-131

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, pp.131-132; Trevor and Mike Phillips, *Windrush: the irresistible rise of multi-racial Britain* (London: HarperCollins, 1999), p.201

<sup>46</sup> Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: the history of Black people in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p.374

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p.374

Women were not immune from this malaise, as they had similar problems in employment best embodied in the National Health Service where Caribbean nurses were victimised by the deliberate policy to relegate them to lower level and career limiting SEN (State Enrolled Nurse) status as opposed to the career progressing SRN (State Registered Nurse) category.<sup>48</sup> This employment underachievement vis-à-vis skills and qualifications is particularly notable because Caribbean people were directly recruited from the Caribbean, especially for London Transport (LT) and National Health Service (NHS). ‘*Rivers of Blood*’ politician Enoch Powell recruited West Indian nurses to Britain for the NHS whilst a Conservative Health Minister. Also, 3787 Barbadians were recruited by LT from 1956-1968 with LT also recruiting in Jamaica and Trinidad from 1966.<sup>49</sup>

Working in Britain for Caribbean people, despite the general need for labour in immediate decades after World War II, relegated them mostly to jobs that White British people would not do. Supporting this assertion is the 1967 Governmental Political and Economic Planning ***Report on Racial Discrimination***. This report revealed, out of 150 companies, 37 intentionally did not employ Black labour, 27 stated they took ‘*coloured workers*’ as a ‘last resort whilst,’ ... *the most widespread response was that coloured immigrants were employed only where it was impossible to recruit white, British personnel.*<sup>50</sup> Despite this appalling ethnically-based discrimination in British employment, Caribbean people migrated to Britain in the post-War era mainly, but not exclusively, for economic reasons surrounding the continuity of work and employment outlook

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<sup>48</sup> Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*, pp.39-41

<sup>49</sup> Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: the history of Black people in Britain*, p.373; Tony Sewell, *Keep on moving : The Windrush legacy: The black experience in Britain from 1948* (London: Voice Enterprises Ltd., 1998), pp. 21, 29

<sup>50</sup> William Wentworth Daniel, *Racial Discrimination in England: PEP (Political and Economic Planning) Report* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1968), pp.40-42

as opposed to the amount of wages earned.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, Jamaica had a 26.9 percent unemployment rate in 1943 which only reduced to 18.5 percent in 1957.<sup>52</sup> This could explain why nearly 60 percent of Caribbean immigrants to Britain were Jamaican in the post-War era as unemployment in Jamaica was significantly higher than other British Caribbean colonies, including Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and the entire Leeward Islands.<sup>53</sup> In the mid-1950s to early 1960s, emigration to Britain as a percentage of Caribbean colonial populations ranged from 1.2 and 1.3 percent in Trinidad and Tobago and British Guiana (Guyana) respectively, 9.2 percent in Jamaica, 8.1 percent in Barbados to over 13 percent in the Leeward Islands and Dominica.<sup>54</sup> Overall emigration from the Caribbean would have been significantly higher because these statistics do not include migration elsewhere, particularly to North America where many Caribbean people also migrated to; especially the United States before the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act severely restricted Caribbean migration to America.<sup>55</sup>

Migration has always, at least post-Columbus, played simultaneous but major roles in making of the Caribbean and shaping how receptive Caribbean people are to migrating and processes of migration due to conceptualisations of migration being an integral part of Caribbean identity and culture.<sup>56</sup> Migrating from the Caribbean did not create a fracture between the Caribbean people who migrated and their families back home, since Caribbean migrants simultaneously contributed to their countries of migration whilst helping to develop and redefine the Caribbean in real and imagined conceptualisations of

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<sup>51</sup> Ceri Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain: A Social Geography*, p.29; R.B. Davison, *Black British: Immigrants to England*, p.52

<sup>52</sup> Ceri Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain: A Social Geography*, p.24

<sup>53</sup> Ceri Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain: A Social Geography*, p.24; Great Britain Central Office of Information, *Race Relations in Britain* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1972), p.2

<sup>54</sup> Ceri Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain: A Social Geography*, p.15

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p.3; Ruth Glass, *Newcomers: the West Indians in London* (London: Institute of Race Relations/Oxford University Press, 1960), pp.6-7

<sup>56</sup> Harry Goulbourne and John Solomos, 'The Caribbean Diaspora: Some introductory remarks', pp.534-535

the region.<sup>57</sup> These blended identities will be further addressed and analysed in the conceptualisations of home, identity and diaspora section of this chapter.

Maintenance of links to the Caribbean may have been best expressed by the overwhelming majority of first generation Caribbean migrants sending regular remittances back to family in the Caribbean.<sup>58</sup> The largely British-born second generation of Caribbeans on the other hand created links between themselves and the Caribbean through using Caribbean dialect, as well as listening to reggae and in some cases, embracing Rastafarianism. All these developments were largely due to not feeling accepted in British society.<sup>59</sup> Alienation felt by the younger generation of British Caribbean people was more acute largely because the Black youth unemployment rate was over 50 percent in the early 1980s.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, having qualifications was no insulation from discrimination in employment, as the unemployment rate for Afro-Caribbean youth having O-levels was 25 percent versus 9 percent for similarly qualified white males in the early 1980s. Furthermore, the types of employment held by Caribbean people were overwhelmingly unchanged from the initial years of the post-War era when discrimination was more overt.<sup>61</sup>

Home ownership for Caribbeans was double that of the indigenous British population in at least some urban locations.<sup>62</sup> The latter not only was a result of having difficulty in attempting to rent rooms, but also being less likely to obtain

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p.535; Malcolm Cross and H.B. Entzinger; *Lost Illusions: Caribbean Minorities in Britain and The Netherlands* (London: Routledge, 1988)

<sup>58</sup> Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*, p.32; R.B. Davison, *Black British: Immigrants to England*, p.95

<sup>59</sup> Tracey Reynolds, 'Caribbean families, social capital and young people's diasporic identities', p.1095

<sup>60</sup> Simon Field, *The Attitudes of Ethnic Minorities: A Home Office Research and Planning Unit Report* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1984), p.21

<sup>61</sup> Frances Benskin, *Black Children And Underachievement In Schools: A Case Study and a Review of the Debate on the Issue of Black Underachievement* (London: Minerva Press, 1994), p.96

<sup>62</sup> Great Britain Central Office of Information, *Race Relations in Britain*, p.10

council housing.<sup>63</sup> This was even more important for Caribbean people than White British because the former were appalled at the living conditions in Britain, particularly children sharing rooms which virtually did not exist in the Caribbean.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, almost 40 percent of Black households in Britain lived in overcrowded housing versus 11 percent of Whites in the late 1960s.<sup>65</sup>

Britain had a paradoxical attitude towards Caribbean immigrants, simultaneously viewing them as hard-working and taking jobs from White British people but also as lazy and benefit seekers. Another paradox was that Caribbean men sought White women but did not wish to socialise with White people.<sup>66</sup> These paradoxical views were also intertwined with seemingly positive attributes, as Caribbean people were viewed with high esteem within popular stereotypes of Black people being good at sport, music or other forms of entertainment.<sup>67</sup> However, such seemingly positive images were only constructed based on non-threatening conceptualisations of Black people vis-à-vis White cultural dominance and hegemony.<sup>68</sup>

Construction of positive images of Blackness and Caribbeanness in Britain mostly occurred in the homes of Caribbean people, as well as alternative social spaces such as Black-owned or majority frequented places such as social clubs and nightclubs. This occurred as a result of desires to create home and spaces within the Black community as a source of comfort and belonging as well as creating spaces alternative to the ostracism and overt discrimination felt in

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p.11

<sup>64</sup> Tony Sewell, *Keep on moving : The Windrush legacy: The black experience in Britain from 1948*, p.21

<sup>65</sup> Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: the history of Black people in Britain*, p.388

<sup>66</sup> Peter Edmead, *The divisive decade: A history of Caribbean immigration to Birmingham in the 1950s*, pp.40-41; Dilwyn Porter, "'Never-never land': Britain under the Conservatives, 1951-1964" in *From Blitz to Blair : A New History of Britain since 1939*, ed. by Nick Tiratsoo, (Oxford: Phoenix, 1997), pp.117-118

<sup>67</sup> Kenneth Little, 'The Position of Coloured People in Britain', *Phylon*, 15 (1954), p.58

<sup>68</sup> Peter Edmead, *The divisive decade: A history of Caribbean immigration to Birmingham in the 1950s*, p.42

employment, schools and numerous other interactions with White British people.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, any potential inter-island rivalries were virtually eliminated due to White hostility to Caribbean people generally, which helped to create a more cohesive co-ethnic community in the immediate post-War decades.<sup>70</sup>

Cricket was symbolic of British superiority, a perceived game of gentlemen and an,' *important aspect of the mythology of Britishness (and British superiority) in the Caribbean.*'<sup>71</sup> As such, it was no surprise that Caribbean solidarity was solidified when the West Indies' achieved their historic first cricket victory over England at Lords in 1950. This was not only celebrated by West Indians in England, but also provided an arena for equal competition with the English whilst creating an impetus for creating Caribbean cricket clubs in England. Exemplifying this movement was the West Indian Cricket Club in Nottingham founded in the year following this monumental upset.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, many Caribbeans felt that if Black people could beat the English at cricket, they could learn and succeed elsewhere in British life, particularly outside of sport.<sup>73</sup> In addition to positive stereotypes of Black sporting prowess engendered through cricket, the sport represented masculinity as well, which West Indians relished demonstrating when victorious over England in cricket.

In more general terms, Caribbean cohesiveness was partly created due to very low percentages of co-ethnics. The population of Caribbeans in English towns of 50-100,000 was 0.44 percent in 1961 and 0.70 percent in towns of 100-

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<sup>69</sup> Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The cultural politics of race and nation*, p.210; Tony Sewell, *Keep on moving: The Windrush legacy: The black experience in Britain from 1948*, p.62

<sup>70</sup> John Western, *Passage to England, Barbadian Londoners Speak of Home* (London: UCL Press, 1992), p.64; Peter Edmead, *The divisive decade: A history of Caribbean immigration to Birmingham in the 1950s*, p.33; Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*, p.133-134

<sup>71</sup> Trevor and Mike Phillips, *Windrush: the irresistible rise of multi-racial Britain*, p.100

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, pp.100-102

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, pp.101-102

200,000.<sup>74</sup> Northampton's Caribbean population was consistent with these national statistics, estimated at 0.5 percent in 1960, or approximately 500 of a town population of approximately 100,000.<sup>75</sup> County Census statistics for Afro-Caribbean people were not collected before 1991, but would probably have been much lower than this, as there were no significant numbers of Caribbeans reported in any Northamptonshire towns or villages outside of Northampton and Wellingborough pre-1985. Caribbeans' limited numbers as a percentage of the population combined with extensive, but not total, hostility towards Afro-Caribbean people to help create and develop ethnically-based social circles. Intersecting social circles of Caribbeans in post-War Britain are important to understand in terms of how these affected and reflected connections between identity and consumption. The next section will note how literature has multi-dimensionally analysed perceptions of, and desires for, community.

### **Sense of Community**

Sense of community augments understanding of how social networks influence communities from micro- and macro- standpoints. Sense of community has been identified by Sarason as being, ' *central to an individual's psychological well-being*.'<sup>76</sup> Hombrados-Mendieta et al's research on immigrants to Malaga cites Sarason's work as important because he:

*Points out that the basic ingredients of the sense of community are as follows: the perception of being similar to other community members; recognition of the interdependence*

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<sup>74</sup> Ceri Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain: A Social Geography*, p.78

<sup>75</sup> Ian Mayes, 'At Home Among Northampton's Coloured People', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*

<sup>76</sup> Seymour Sarason, *The psychological sense of community: Prospects for a community psychology* (London: Jossey-Bass, 1974); Brian Bishop, Simon Colquhoun and Gemma Johnson, 'Psychological Sense of Community: An Australian Aboriginal Experience', *Journal of Community Psychology*, 34 (2006), p.1

*between members of the community in question; the desire to maintain such interdependence ... and the feeling that one is part of a stable superior social structure on which one depends.*<sup>77</sup>

A properly functioning sense of community requires both individual and group dynamics that foster both importance of the individual in the community, as well as the importance of the community for individuals. This individual/group dynamic is not binary, but requires reciprocity between individuals and the communities of which they are members.<sup>78</sup> Adding a further dimension to sense of community is that members of minority groups, as suggested by Sonn and Fisher, desire to establish places within the dominant community to enable the group to improve itself.<sup>79</sup> Such desires reflect struggles to assert cultural identity as minority group members whilst wishing to have recognition within the larger dominant community.<sup>80</sup>

Important in maintaining and developing sense of community, particularly for immigrants and minority groups, is the need for perceptually safe places where such people can trust social interactions they would have with those within such spaces. Jabareen cites trust and risk avoidance as crucial in places where individuals and groups choose to enjoy their leisure time, as well as spaces representing safety for minority group members.<sup>81</sup> Desire for social risk avoidance can be heightened in circumstances of perceptually greater risk to

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<sup>77</sup> Isabel Hombrados-Mendieta, Luis Gomez-Jacinto and Juan Manuel Dominguez-Fuentes, 'The Impact of immigrants on the sense of community', *Journal of Community Psychology*, 37, (2009), p.671-672

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, pp. 671.672

<sup>79</sup> David Chavis and Grace Perry, 'Sense of Community: Advances in Measurement and Application', *Journal of Community Psychology*, 27 (1999),p.639; Adrian Fisher and Christopher Sonn, Aspiration to community: Community responses to rejection, *Journal of Community Psychology*, 27 (1999), p.715

<sup>80</sup> David Chavis and Grace Perry, 'Sense of Community: Advances in Measurement and Application', p.639; Adrian Fisher and Christopher Sonn, Aspiration to community: Community responses to rejection, p.715

<sup>81</sup> Yosef Jabareen, 'Ethnic groups and the meaning of urban place: The German Colony and Palestinians and Jews in Haifa', *Cities*, 26 (2009), pp.94, 97

safety or security because of membership within a particular social group.<sup>82</sup>

Places chosen and/or created as areas for a given community are reliant on perceptually associated social features within a framework of the tripartite of person, place and process; all augmenting group place attachment creation and development.<sup>83</sup> Such spatial bonds conceptualised by place attachments are also important because they simultaneously symbolise social bonds, shared meanings of such places and correlations with social networks.<sup>84</sup>

Emotional or psychological sense of community also facilitates the creation and development of communities. McMillan and Chavis cite shared emotional connections based on a sense of common history and identification with a given community as being important in creating greater likelihood of forming and developing close personal relationships.<sup>85</sup> Wombacher et al, Obst et al and McMillan's later work concur with these assertions.<sup>86</sup> Shared emotional connections are psychologically important in developing and understanding sense of community across countries and cultures whilst not necessarily being dependent on geographic proximity to develop.<sup>87</sup>

However a sense of community is created and developed within implicit or explicit expressions of hope, at least within a community that is overcoming

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<sup>82</sup> David McMillan, 'Sense of Community' *Journal of Community Psychology* vol.24, (1996), p.317

<sup>83</sup> Leila Scannell and Robert Gifford, 'Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30 (2010), p.2

<sup>84</sup> Leila Scannell and Robert Gifford, 'Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework', pp.2, 5; Marco Lalli, 'Urban-related identity: Theory, measurement, and empirical findings', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 12 (1992)

<sup>85</sup> David Chavis and David McMillan, 'Sense of community: A definition and theory. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 14 (1986), pp.322-323

<sup>86</sup> Patricia Obst, Lucy Zinkiewicz and Sandy Smith, 'Sense of Community in Science Fiction Fandom, Part 1: Understanding Sense of Community in an International Community of Interest', *Journal of Community Psychology*, 30 (2002), p.89; Jorg Wombacher, Stephen Tagg, Thomas Burgi, Jillian MacBryde, 'Measuring Sense of Community in the Military: Cross-Cultural Evidence for the Validity of the Brief Sense of Community Scale and its Underlying Theory', *Journal of Community Psychology*, 38 (2010), p.672; David McMillan, 'Sense of Community' *Journal of Community Psychology* p.322

<sup>87</sup> Jorg Wombacher, Stephen Tagg, Thomas Burgi, Jillian MacBryde, 'Measuring Sense of Community in the Military: Cross-Cultural Evidence for the Validity of the Brief Sense of Community Scale and its Underlying Theory', p.684; Patricia Obst, Lucy Zinkiewicz and Sandy Smith, 'Sense of Community in Science Fiction Fandom, Part 1: Understanding Sense of Community in an International Community of Interest', p.97

perceived or actual threats.<sup>88</sup> If a community is intentionally established, it serves the simultaneous purpose of fostering a sense of community amongst its members whilst accomplishing its implicit or explicit mission of reducing isolation amongst its members whilst creating a place of belonging.<sup>89</sup> This place of belonging can be psychological as opposed to primarily based on geographical proximity, as long as there are conscious dimensions of identifying with the group through commonly accepted items and/or other facets symbolising common interests.<sup>90</sup> Another important facet involving sense of community is fear of shame, especially in contexts of minority groups being perceived as having lower status by majority ethnic and/or social groups. McMillan notes that shame drives people to search for similarities with those also facing such circumstances whilst mentioning that effective communities protect its members from shame in intra-group social exchanges.<sup>91</sup> Also recognised by McMillan was that similarity between group members is an important bonding force for people in social settings where they can ‘*be themselves*’ whilst being free from shame that might occur in interactions with other groups.<sup>92</sup>

All aspects of sense of community conceptualisations connect with consumption because underlying social networks underpin both. McMillan’s conceptualisations of sense of community and related networks are best understood through four key elements, ‘... *Spirit, Trust, Trade and Art ... Sense of Community as a **spirit** of belonging together, a feeling that there is an authority structure that can be **trusted**, an awareness that **trade**, and mutual*

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<sup>88</sup> Sandra Herman, Esther Onaga, Francesca Pernice-Duca, SuMin Oh and Catherine Ferguson, ‘Sense of Community in Clubhouse Programs: Member and Staff Concepts’, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 36 (2005), p.353

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p.355

<sup>90</sup> Patricia Obst, Lucy Zinkiewicz and Sandy Smith, ‘Sense of Community in Science Fiction Fandom, Part 1: Understanding Sense of Community in an International Community of Interest’, p.97

<sup>91</sup> David McMillan, ‘Sense of Community’, pp.321-322

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p.320

*benefit come from being together, and a spirit that comes from shared experience that are preserved as art.*<sup>93</sup> McMillan's four aspects of sense of community are important because spirit, trust, trade and art are all crucially important in comprehending the means, mechanisms and rationale behind consumer networks. Mutual trade in formal and informal senses, as well as additional elements of such a spirit of community can emanate from the shared experiences of music, sport and other forms of leisure as art. The next section will move forward from sense of community in order to illustrate how social networks influences identity.

### **Society and social networks**

*'The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against sovereign powers of society, against the weight of historical heritage ...'*<sup>94</sup>

Although this quotation could theoretically be applied to numerous individuals and ethnic groups worldwide, these words are especially relevant when applied to non-dominant ethnic groups facing discrimination and denigration of their non-hegemonic cultures. People can be physically located in a metropole, but only socially accepted or recognised within situationally limited circumstances. Individual expression can be understood through Simmel's suggestion that, '... *the individual's need for a clearer articulation and for a more unambiguous development of his personality, forces him to select certain groups. And from their combination he gains his maximum of individuality.*'<sup>95</sup> It could be

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p.315

<sup>94</sup> Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p.324

<sup>95</sup> Georg Simmel, *Conflict* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1964), p.156

assumed from Simmel that individuals have freedom to choose many groups within this conceptualisation. However, this is often not the case depending on opposition to an individual's acceptance in a group because of individual characteristics due to being a voluntary or involuntary member of an unacceptable social grouping.

*The Web of Group-Affiliations* was translated from Simmel's actual title in German of, '*Die Kreuzung sozialer Kreise*'.<sup>96</sup> This literally translates from German into English as, '*intersection of social circles*'.<sup>97</sup> Although the translator interpreted this phrase to be, '*almost meaningless*',<sup>98</sup> the intersection of social circles Simmel theorised is very useful in understanding that various social circles individuals are located in have an effect on individual and group formation, development, as well as working towards achieving maximum personal freedom.<sup>99</sup> Simmel's work does not mention nor conceptualise how social circles of exclusion can create individual inclusion in different places and spaces although he acknowledges that, '*Society is a structure which consists of beings who stand outside and inside of it at the same time.*'<sup>100</sup> This conceptualizes multiple, but simultaneous, binary individual and group positionalities without acknowledging the role social exclusion has on categorical group inclusion.

Partially augmenting such linkages between inclusivity/exclusivity within social circles is Goffman's assertion that individuals and groups generally use (self) presentation to perpetuate consensus constructed images largely based on contextual individual and group presentation, simultaneously combining the team character of a secret society with individuals both knowing their roles

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p.156

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p.125

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p.125

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, p.125

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, pp.14-15

within the group/team whilst being reciprocally dependent on each other.<sup>101</sup>

These conceptualisations, if adhered to, serve purposes of developing individual and collective personae conducive to maintenance and development of collective solidarity and group status, at least in some cases.

Although Goffman discusses the role of class, particularly the middle classes, in the separation of contextual presentation roles, his work does not incorporate the roles of race, social discrimination and/or social ostracism in the presentation of individual and collective presentations of self/group. Goffman also does not fully conceptualise the role of hegemony and power in terms of how these can affect individual and collective portrayal of self/group image(s) other than to distinguish between behind the scenes functionality and desiring to look presentable to others.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, Goffman's conceptualisations do not adequately account for the intersections between audience and performer, or more clearly the concept that performers can either become part of a future audience, as well as prior performers and audiences can merge to create future performances or other amalgamated social interactions. Goffman's theories of performing identity, both individual and collective, could be useful in understanding at least some of the ways local Afro-Caribbeans performed their identity, including but not exclusive of performing such identities to include and/or exclude non-co-ethnics.

British Caribbean identity performance in the post-War era could be construed as being significantly influenced by co-ethnic social networks. Reynolds' conceptualisations of social capital acquisition mention assimilationist and counter-hegemonic based rationales for social capital acquisition; the former based on notions of respectability within value systems of cultural hegemony

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<sup>101</sup> Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, (London: Penguin, 1990), pp.88, 108

<sup>102</sup> Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, p.126

whilst the latter centred on communal and mutual support, as well as having shared experiences, particularly concerning issues of ethnically-based discrimination and social exclusion.<sup>103</sup> Extending these conceptualisations into social networks realms implies that ethnic identity performance links with social networks, more specifically being accepted within them due to co-ethnics performing identity together. In addition, Reynolds illustrates how young Caribbean people use social networks through, '*family traditions and values as aspects of collective ethnic identity ... activated as a social resource.*'<sup>104</sup> However, Reynolds does not focus on how intergenerational, intra-familial interactions affect social networks, nor is there any delineated focus on the transnational use of such in earlier eras when travelling and other forms of communication were significantly more expensive and otherwise relatively more difficult than today.

Reynolds' arguments theorise that British Caribbean people, particularly young people of Caribbean origin, have been influenced by being simultaneously intersected in Caribbean, British and Black categories. Such intersections have affected their identities by creating stronger Caribbean identities and resulting social networks because of their experiences in Britain, with stronger Caribbean identities resulting from more frequent experiences of marginalisation, ostracism and discrimination.<sup>105</sup> As these theories relate to social networks, it can be suggested based on Reynolds' arguments that stronger or more severe experiences of marginalisation and discrimination could lead to greater development of co-ethnic social networks in local, national and international contexts. Augmenting this argument is Song's conclusion that experiences of

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<sup>103</sup> Tracey Reynolds, 'Friendship Networks, Social Capital and Ethnic Identity: Researching the Perspectives of Caribbean Young People in Britain', pp.392, 395

<sup>104</sup> Tracey Reynolds, 'Caribbean families, social capital and young people's diasporic identities', p.1088

<sup>105</sup> Tracey Reynolds, 'Caribbean families, social capital and young people's diasporic identities', p.1096

discrimination can result in reinforcement of ethnic identity.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, Song concludes that hyper-identification or assertion of ethnic identity reflects inability to be accepted in wider society because of having an undesirable ethnic identity.<sup>107</sup> However, ethnic identity should not be perceived as absolute and finite, as identity should be regarded as fluid; dependent on variables such as time, place and, to a limited degree, ethnic choice dependent on audience.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, such identities can shift in the same time-frame. For example Parker concludes that some young British Chinese people performed ‘*British*’ identities in public spheres such as school and employment whilst performing ‘*Chinese*’ identities in private spheres.<sup>109</sup>

Moving from the private to the public, Gilroy mentions that Black Britain did not have an avenue to play and listen to Black music until the pirate radio movement in the 1980s. This was best exemplified artistically in reggae singer Shabba Ranks’ mention and critique of the BBC in *Pirates Anthem*.<sup>110</sup> According to Gilroy, the BBC’s denial of Black music in radio, particularly Afro-Caribbean music, led to clubs and record shops being crucially important in developing not only places where Black music could be heard, but also social networks where cultural pathways and communities of sentiment could be created and developed.<sup>111</sup> Gilroy however is primarily concerned with the manifestations of Black British cultures as opposed to the mechanics of social networks created and developed by Black British people. Actualised examples of social network mechanics are necessary to provide a greater understanding of how social networks of Caribbean people were used to develop Black and/or

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<sup>106</sup> Miri Song, *Choosing Ethnic Identity*, p.18

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, pp.18, 33-34;

<sup>108</sup> Miri Song, *Choosing Ethnic Identity*, pp.9, 55; Tracey Reynolds, ‘Caribbean families, social capital and young people’s diasporic identities’, p.1097

<sup>109</sup> Miri Song, *Choosing Ethnic Identity*, pp.59-60; David Parker, *Through Different Eyes: The Cultural Identities of Young Chinese People in Britain* (Aldershot, England: Avebury Press, 1995), p.182

<sup>110</sup> Paul Gilroy, *Small acts: thoughts on the politics of black cultures* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 1993), p.252; Shabba Ranks, *Pirates’ Anthem* (New York: Epic, 1992)

<sup>111</sup> Paul Gilroy, *Small acts: thoughts on the politics of black cultures*, p.252

Caribbean cultures in British contexts. There is extensive literature about house parties, social clubs and other organisations Caribbean people created in Britain in the post-War era, mostly due to rejection from White British establishments and/or desires to recreate to at least some extent Caribbean type entertainment in Britain.<sup>112</sup> Cultural creations like Notting Hill Carnival best exemplify genesis and development of Black British cultures with its identity coming from the Caribbean, but being a product of Black British experiences and influences.<sup>113</sup>

What has not been researched to any significant extent is how British Caribbean people in non-metropolitan locales were either part of these networks and/or developed their own localised social networks. Furthermore, there is no identifiable research on how Caribbean people, particularly but not exclusively outside metropolitan areas, engaged successfully in being part of established organisations such as Working Men's Clubs (WMCs). More generally, there is also extremely limited information and/or analysis on how Afro-Caribbeans in the immediate post-War decades would have used and/or denied their ethnic identity, as well as using social networks to develop such identities, whether Black, Caribbean and/or British. Such identities as manifest through consumption were a reflection of individual and collective interactions with larger social structures of British cultural norms and expectations. Furthermore, such interactions would have been influenced by family and friends, as well as changing cultural identities due to simultaneously being British and Black and/or Afro-Caribbean. The next section on strong/weak ties and consumer networks will introduce another lens through which to view identity and correlative consumption.

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<sup>112</sup> Peter Edmead, *The divisive decade: A history of Caribbean immigration to Birmingham in the 1950s*, pp.33-34; Tony Sewell, *Keep on moving : The Windrush legacy*, p.62; Ambalavaner Sivanandan, 'From Resistance to Rebellion Asian and Afro-Caribbean Struggles in Britain', *Race and Class*, 23 (1981), p.113

<sup>113</sup> Trevor and Mike Phillips, *Windrush: the irresistible rise of multi-racial Britain*, p.284

## Strong/weak ties and consumer networks

Significant knowledge of the consumer networks underpinning consumption can be gleaned through comprehending the multitude of strong and weak social and economic ties of those within such networks. Grannovetter links economics with social networks in his assertion that, 'ongoing structures of social relations, and a sophisticated account of economic action must consider its embeddedness in such structures.'<sup>114</sup> Lee, in more recent research on consumer networks cites Grannovetter in support of his contention that, 'economic transactions are embedded in the structure of a social network (whilst) social structure determines our choice of economic trading partners and how we interact with them.'<sup>115</sup> Through harmonizing the arguments of Grannovetter and Lee, it becomes clearer that consumption has economic and social dimensions. Understanding these economic and social dimensions is important in order to obtain significant comprehension of consumer network underpinnings.

In addition to the social aspects of consumer networks, motivation for actors' actions within such networks should be understood. Of primary importance is Dubuisson-Quellier et al's assertion that individuals and groups, as in actors in networks of consumption, cannot overlook consumerism deriving from, 'the irreducible nature of freedom of choice.'<sup>116</sup> Actors in economic networks should also be recognised as calculating the value of its importance.<sup>117</sup>

DiMaggio recognises that culture shapes both the categories used by actors to

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<sup>114</sup> Mark Grannovetter, 'Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness', *American Journal of Psychology*, 91 (1985), p.481

<sup>115</sup> Seung Hwan (Mark) Lee, 'The Structural Importance of Consumer Networks', (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Western Ontario, 2011), p.84

<sup>116</sup> Sophie Dubuisson-Quellier, Claire Lamine and Ronan Le Velly, 'Citizenship and Consumption: Mobilisation in Alternative Food Systems in France', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 51 (2011), p.307

<sup>117</sup> Michel Callon, 'Actor-network theory – the market test' in *Actor Network Theory and after*, by eds. John Law and John Hassard (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p.183

make decisions and the tactics they use in their social spaces.<sup>118</sup> In addition, actors' intent and relationships between actors are crucial in the establishment, development and functionality of such networks.<sup>119</sup> If these arguments are to be followed, actors within given consumer networks should recognise the importance and value of intentionality and freedom of choice in order for such networks to function within a framework of understanding the culture or cultures of both actors and the networks in which they are operating. However, it must be recognised that freedom of choice in consumer decision making is not absolute because such choices are limited by the money individuals or groups have, as well as de facto or de jure restrictions from particular types of consumption.

Analysing actors' roles through such interactions and social structures also requires knowing whether the ties bonding actors to such networks are weak or strong. It is suggested by Grannovetter that strong ties are generally those between socially and/or culturally similar group members whereas weak ties are those relationships individuals and groups have between themselves and other groups.<sup>120</sup> Also asserted by Grannovetter is that combinations of high levels of emotional intensity of social ties contributes to the strength of interpersonal linkages in the group.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, significant degrees of intimacy, reciprocity and considerable amount of time spent with group members adds to interpersonal connections within the group.<sup>122</sup> Grannovetter further asserts that the strength of weak ties is that they contribute to cohesiveness across social groups whilst being, '*indispensable to individuals' opportunities and to their*

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<sup>118</sup> Paul DiMaggio, 'Nadel's Paradox Revisited: Relational and Cultural Aspects of Organizational Structure' in *Networks and Organizations: Structure, Form and Action*, by eds. Nitin Nohria and Robert Eccles (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1992), p.138

<sup>119</sup> Jonathan Murdoch, 'The Spaces of Actor-Network Theory', *Geoforum*, 29 (1998), p.369; Jim Dolwick, "'The Social" and Beyond: Introduction Actor-Network Theory', *Journal of Maritime Archaeology*, 4 (2009), p.22

<sup>120</sup> Mark Grannovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', *American Journal of Sociology*, 78 (1973), pp.1360-1361

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, pp.1360-1361

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, pp.1360-1361

*integration into communities.*<sup>123</sup> According to Henning and Lieberg, the significance of weak ties linking individuals' integration into communities is that they can symbolise feelings of home and security for people, as well as providing practical and social support.<sup>124</sup> Augmenting the strength of weak ties is Friedkin's argument that the strength of weak ties lies in their number rather than in their efficiency.<sup>125</sup> However, according to Grannovetter, the weakness of strong ties is that, although they contribute to cohesion within groups, such strong ties leads to fragmentation of communities.<sup>126</sup>

Simultaneous strands of strong and weak ties both within individual networks and between various and often diverse networks should be illuminated in order to facilitate a more significant understanding of how networks develop, as well as their decline and death when perceived to be unimportant. Furthermore, strong and weak ties are rarely fixed, with factors and actors outside of the network affecting such ties in positive and/or negative terms.<sup>127</sup> In understanding consumer networks, strong and weak ties should be delineated with simultaneous regard not only to these types of ties, but also factors outside of such ties helping to shape and transform these ties. Furthermore, such outside factors should not be viewed as opposing or working against strong or weak ties because initial outside factors could become part of strong or weak ties within consumer networks. Most specifically, the role of Whites in seemingly and/or stereotypically '*Caribbean*' or '*Afro-Caribbean*' consumer networks could be viewed as an outside factor in these networks, as well as general British consumer influences on such *prima facie* '*Caribbean*' or '*Afro-Caribbean*' consumer networks. Other weak ties could be conceptualised as existing

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid, p.1378

<sup>124</sup> Cecilia Henning and Mats Lieberg, 'Strong Ties or Weak Ties? Neighbourhood Networks in a New Perspective', *Scandinavian Housing & Planning Research*, 13 (1996), p.22

<sup>125</sup> Noah Friedkin, 'Information Flow Through Strong and Weak Ties in Intraorganizational Social Networks', *Social Networks*, 3 (1982), p.285

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p.1378

<sup>127</sup> Michel Callon, 'Actor-network theory – the market test', p.187

between not only other immigrant ethnic minority groups, but also local and non-Northamptonshire suppliers of items and services used and/or partaken by local Caribbeans.

Influences on consumer networks can also be based on the actions of individual actors within such networks. Hirsch has noted that social networks are personal communities, with personal communities reflecting expressions of, and embeddedness in, social networks.<sup>128</sup> Burt asserts that social contagion is a function of social structure whilst being highest between structurally equivalent peers.<sup>129</sup> Hirsch and Burt mainly refer to social networks. However, the social has clear links with consumption, with Lee asserting as such through citing social communication as important in explaining consumer behaviour.<sup>130</sup> Through amalgamating the arguments of Hirsch, Burt and Lee, it can be surmised that there are clear links between social networks and consumption with communication being the key driver synergising them.

Within most networks, be they social or consumer, there are facets of inequality amongst actors. As such, it is implicit that actors in given networks have unequal influence due to unequal means and mechanisms of social communication, as well as the esteem individual players have. Those occupying network broker positions within networks are emblematic of apex individuals holding sway. Network brokers are those individuals having and using weak ties via their advantageous connections across various groups, as well as having the ability to influence the individual network or networks as the case may be.

Lee's recent finding in relation to network brokers is that:

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<sup>128</sup> Barton Hirsch, 'Social Networks and the Coping Process: Creating Personal Communities' in *Social Networks and Social Support*, ed. by Benjamin Gottlieb (London: Sage, 1981), pp.161, 166

<sup>129</sup> Ronald Burt and Gregory Janicik, 'Social Contagion and Social Structure', *Networks in Marketing* (pre-print version of September 1995), ed. by Dawn Iacobucci (London: Sage, 1996), p.2, last accessed on Web on 8 October 2011, <http://faculty.chicagobooth.edu/ronald.burt/research/files/SCSS.pdf>

<sup>130</sup> Seung Hwan (Mark) Lee, 'The Structural Importance of Consumer Networks', p.63

*Brokers of the network, who are structurally located advantageously to span across unconnected individuals or subgroups, are those who will be most influential in the network, as they hold a unique position which allows them to reach others with optimal efficiency ... The importance of occupying a structurally advantageous position for influence in the social network (is highlighted).<sup>131</sup>*

Being able to reach others optimally does not mean that the network broker can impose his or her will. Grannovetter supports this argument in his recognition that individuals' personal experiences are connected to larger social structures without being controlled by a select individual or individuals.<sup>132</sup> Burt augments this assertion somewhat by making a general point that the more highly complex the social structure is, the less likely there will be to have socially contagious ideas and behaviours.<sup>133</sup> However, when analysing network brokers, it must be recognised that they in themselves cannot shape such networks because their powers are those primarily of influencing others rather than imposing their will. However, network brokers are emblematic of what Heimer refers to as '*particularistic*' individuals that develop network ties based on their particularities in terms of their roles in social networks that follow on to serve organisational needs.<sup>134</sup> Also, the dichotomy of influence surrounding such network brokers is important to understand because whilst influencing others

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<sup>131</sup> Seung Hwan (Mark) Lee, 'The Structural Importance of Consumer Networks', p.52

<sup>132</sup> Mark Grannovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', p.1377

<sup>133</sup> Ronald Burt and Gregory Janicik, 'Social Contagion and Social Structure', p.13

<sup>134</sup> Carol Heimer, 'Doing Your Job and Helping Your Friends: Universalistic Norms about Obligations to Particular Other' in *Networks and Organizations: Structure, Form and Action*, ed. by Nitin Nohria and Robert Eccles (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1992), p.144

within such networks, those holding brokering positions in a given network are amongst those most amenable to being influenced.<sup>135</sup>

The influence of influence is not limited to network brokers, as individuals perceiving themselves as having many close friends also are highly susceptible to being influenced.<sup>136</sup> The correlation between having, or perceiving to have, many close friends and being influenced results from such individuals wishing to maintain and develop high-level positions in networks. However, the difference between network brokers and individuals with perceived or actual close friends is that the former usually have much stronger weak ties than the latter whilst the latter are primarily concerned with their strong ties as measured through their status in the network.

Closely linked to both those individuals having or perceiving themselves to have many close friends and consumer networks is the role experiential consumption plays in shaping consumer networks. Van Boven and Gilovich have asserted that experiential consumption such as going to musical events or travelling to an enjoyable destination on holiday makes people happier than strictly material purchases because these types of experiences are generally remembered more positively. Also, experiential consumption is open to increasingly favourable interpretations over time whilst greater happiness derives from such experiential consumption vis-à-vis material consumption.<sup>137</sup> In addition, these findings were consistent across diverse demographics such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, income, residential environment (i.e. urban/suburban/rural) and political affiliation.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, the importance of experiential consumption exists because such experiences are often central to

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<sup>135</sup> Seung Hwan (Mark) Lee, 'The Structural Importance of Consumer Networks', p.54

<sup>136</sup> Ibid

<sup>137</sup> Leaf Van Boven and Thomas Gilovich, 'To Do or to Have? That Is the Question', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85 (2003), pp. 1193, 1199

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, pp.1197-1199

the identity of individuals whilst frequently having great social value, at least greater than material purchasing and acquisition.<sup>139</sup>

Through synthesizing the earlier mentioned references, we can broadly define consumer networks as the interpersonal contacts individuals and groups have in order to purchase items and/or experience acquiring aspects of consuming items and non-physical manifestations of consumption. Analysing consumer networks requires knowledge of how various social circles were used to create, develop and access consumer networks, as well as how identities as Black, Caribbean and/or British people influenced not only the networks local Caribbeans were part of, but also their roles within them. The next section will move from strong and weak ties to gender related literature and its potential influences on consumption.

### **Gender influences**

In order to comprehend the multiple roles gender plays in consumer behaviour, it should be understood that gender is not independent of other social groupings to which men and women belong. More specifically, concepts of gender cannot be constructed or analysed without understanding its intersections with class and ethnicity, as well as the power structures that produce and maintain gender roles and behaviour.<sup>140</sup> Lorde cites de Beauvoir as noting, ' *It is in the knowledge of the genuine conditions of our lives that we must draw our strength to live and our reasons for acting.*'<sup>141</sup> Although both authors recognize intersections between gender and other social constructs, their work does not sufficiently expound on gender intersections and their influence in fully

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid, p.1200

<sup>140</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp.2-3

<sup>141</sup> Audre Lorde, 'The Master's Tools will Never Dismantle the Master's House' in *The Woman Question*, ed. by Mary Evans (London: SAGE Publications, 1994), p.368

conceptualising how women, particularly Afro-Caribbean women are, to paraphrase from de Beauvoir, '*born as females but made into women*'.<sup>142</sup>

Societal '*making*' of women, according to Butler, uses '*intelligible*' versus '*unintelligible*' gender construction to place women within social hierarchies, particularly related to patriarchy.<sup>143</sup> Intelligible genders are based on socialized norms of gender behaviour whilst unintelligible genders are incoherent with such structures. Implied in both is gender performance, particularly related to visible manifestations thereof. De Beauvoir cites fundamental differences between male and female clothing as being indications of transcendence relevant for men whilst women were expected to wear clothes that simultaneously put women on display whilst thwarting any projections of female independence.<sup>144</sup> Making a seemingly contrasting argument however, de Beauvoir asserts that renouncing femininity equates with a partial repudiation of women's humanity whilst feminine non-conformity equates with her sexual and social devaluation.<sup>145</sup>

In terms of construction of masculinity, sports can be important in the framing of masculinity. Sports, according to Veblen, '*... are conceived to foster a habit of mind that is serviceable for the social or industrial purpose.*'<sup>146</sup> Sports, particularly cricket in the decades after the West Indies' historic victory over England at Lords in 1950 served simultaneous purposes of demonstrating equal if not superior Afro-Caribbean masculinity vis-à-vis their White English male counterparts whilst giving both male and female Afro-Caribbean people sense of ethnic pride when beating the English at cricket. It was hoped that such

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<sup>142</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*, p.1; Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (London: Pan Books, 1988), p.543

<sup>143</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*, p.17

<sup>144</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p.543

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, p.692

<sup>146</sup> Thorsten Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1957), p.269

sporting victories would translate into equality for Caribbeans in other areas of British social and industrial life.<sup>147</sup>

Information about other post-War social and sporting contexts is limited to non-existent about Black British male and female social activity other than either in highly segregated spaces or resulting from ostracism by White British people. Most specifically, there has been virtually nothing written about the Black experience, male or female, in established Working Men's Clubs outside of these circumstances, nor about Black British experiences in predominantly White British owned and/or occupied social spaces. More research is needed about how Black British people generally interacted socially in Britain, both inter- and intra-ethnically, as well as how gender influenced such relationships.

In terms of the gender dimensions of religion, significant numbers of Afro-Caribbean women in Britain created and developed their camaraderie in and through Black churches. Despite *Heart of the Race's* citing of women being gender relegated in congregations, Black churches were, 'a source of constancy and stability in unstable times.'<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe note that Black churches were often the **only** form of recreation for Black women in the immediate post-War decades, existing to support them, ameliorate alienation felt in other areas of British life generally, as well as relieving tension.<sup>149</sup> Green, Hebron and Woodward conclude similarly.<sup>150</sup> *Women's Leisure, What Leisure* acknowledges, 'ideologies of class and race also bear upon our social definitions of leisure' whilst noting that its analysis of industrialisation and leisure section, amongst other parts of this book, were almost exclusively based

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<sup>147</sup> Trevor and Mike Phillips, *Windrush: the irresistible rise of multi-racial Britain*, pp.101-102

<sup>148</sup> Eileen Green, Sandra Hebron, Diana Woodward, *Women's Leisure, What Leisure?* (Basingstoke, England, Macmillan Education, 1990), p.75

<sup>149</sup> Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*, pp.131-132

<sup>150</sup> Eileen Green, Sandra Hebron, Diana Woodward, *Women's Leisure, What Leisure?*, pp.75-76

on White British experiences with partial or non-existent information about the lives and experiences of Black women incorporated within it.<sup>151</sup> Lack of information about the leisure habits and practices of Black women unfortunately weakens their analysis. Succeeding chapters will ameliorate this omission.

Gender constructs of Caribbeans in Britain had influences outside of ethnicity which significantly affected both male and female gender construction, particularly colonial and British-based social and educational influences that affected Caribbeans. In terms of transposed values, Freire's concept that oppressed people always have a little piece of themselves **and** their oppressor's value systems within them, can be useful in understand how compulsory school and colonial legacies helped Caribbeans to construct gender relationship and expectations.<sup>152</sup> Freire's theories are relevant because Caribbeans in Britain faced significant oppression in the immediate post-War decades. Also, Freire's theoretical frameworks augments dimensions of how compulsory schooling and other state sponsored education in perpetuating oppression.

Schools and curricula have been cited as results of socio-cultural reproduction, particularly related to ethno-cultural reproduction and all associated hierarchies. These particularly relate to ethnically and socially-based stratification, as well as dominant British social groups wishing to control others, particularly people of non-European origin in British schools.<sup>153</sup> Also, academic literature on specific consumer related rejection of traditional and/or stereotypically Black/Afro-Caribbean cultural products due to rejection of ethnic identity is virtually non-existent. However evidence of such is extensive in the numerous

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid, pp.37, 40, 70

<sup>152</sup> Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Penguin Education, 1972), pp.24, 37

<sup>153</sup> Brian Bullivant, *The Ethnic Encounter in the Secondary School: Ethnocultural Reproduction and Resistance; Theory and Case Studies* (London: The Falmer Press, 1987), p.42; Frances Benskin, *Black Children And Underachievement In Schools: A Case Study and a Review of the Debate on the Issue of Black Underachievement*, p.92; Maureen Stone, *The Education of the Black Child in Britain* (Glasgow, Fontana, 1981), p.251

advertisements in magazines like *Ebony*, as well as others catering for Black audiences in the 1960s-1970s, for skin lightening creams like Ponds and Ambi, as well as almost exclusively featuring Black women with straightened hair and light brown or near white skin whilst women with Afros and/or darker skin were relatively rarely within its pages.

Additional influences on gender construction outside of Afro-Caribbean ethnicity include British societal desires to reduce visible Blackness. This was done in order to perpetuate racialised notions of White superiority and Black inferiority which was to varying degrees internalised by Black people in the immediate post-War decades. This internalised desire to eliminate visible Blackness was best identified by approximately 60 percent of Black children wishing to reject their ethnic identity in the mid-1970s by wishing to change their skin colour, hair and/or eye colour to reflect White British norms or aspirations.<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, Coard gives extensive evidence of Black rejection of ethnic identity and phenotypes amongst Black British school children in the same era.<sup>155</sup> Although Coard does not mention gender specifically in terms of how this might have played out with boys and girls, certain expected gender characteristics, or the refutation thereof, would have differed between males and females. The next section will move from gender concepts to literature on education, and its role in shaping consumer behaviour.

## Education

An important element in developing social structures is education, particularly compulsory education. Despite its role in creating and maintaining social

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<sup>154</sup> Christopher Bagley and Gajendra Verma, *Race and Education Across Cultures* (London: Heinemann, 1975), pp.326-327; Monica Taylor, *Caught Between: A Review of Research into the Education of Pupils of West Indian Origin* (Windsor, England, NFER, 1981), pp.164-165

<sup>155</sup> Bernard Coard, *How the West Indian Child is made educationally subnormal in the British education system: the scandal of the black child in schools in Britain* (London: New Beacon Books, 1971), pp.26-28

cohesion, those being restricted by, or culturally denigrated because of, social status, have the choice of either accepting their lowly status or resisting social oppression. Bourdieu notes, '*education systems ... separate the holders of inherited cultural capital from those who lack it.*'<sup>156</sup> Furthermore, his earlier work asserts:

*The racism of intelligence (as measured in schools and by school systems) is the means through which the members of the dominant class aim to produce a 'theodicy of their own privilege' ... in other words a justification of the social order that they dominate.*'<sup>157</sup>

Intelligence measurement, according to Bourdieu, actually is a modified measurement of cultural capital with such cultural capital used to exclude those without it from progression within education and obtaining educational titles that are necessary to progress in employment whilst marking status transcending the education actually received or obtained.<sup>158</sup> This is best illustrated by the construction and development of socially accepted images for given professions. These images are constructed to exclude those lacking inherited cultural capital with strongly negative correlation between '*higher*' professions and lower social classes and/or members of minority groups.<sup>159</sup>

Educational classification, according to Bourdieu, is a euphemism for social classification and plays out most importantly in terms of the '*scientific racism*' he clearly illustrates in his critique of intelligence measurement.<sup>160</sup> Crucially noted is the fact that the chances of being accepted into French grandes ecoles

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<sup>156</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason On the Theory of Action*, p.20

<sup>157</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology In Question* (London: SAGE Publications, 1993), p.177

<sup>158</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: The Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, pp.25, 102-103

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, pp.25, 102-103

<sup>160</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology In Question*, p.178

was between 15 and 157 times higher for children of senior executives and secondary and higher education teachers vis-à-vis craftsmen and shopkeepers, with rates of acceptance into grandes ecoles for children of peasants and manual workers being less than 10 percent of shopkeepers' and craftsmen' children, or about 150 to 1570 times less likely than children of senior executives and secondary and higher education teachers.<sup>161</sup>

The link between education and consumption behaviour derives from Bourdieu's theory that, '*cultural consumption (is) predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences.*'<sup>162</sup> Social differences are fostered and perpetuated by the education system not only in terms of official testing, but also by reinforcing, '*the social mechanisms of competition.*'<sup>163</sup> Certainly, compulsory and other education is not the only means of perpetuating these mechanisms. However, schools often reproduce societal values, and as such social mechanisms of competition through, and as a result of, education should be analysed in more detail to determine the actual links between education and consumption. Whilst recognising that education can be used as a mechanism of social determination by dominant groups and fashion being a means of displaying such ethno-cultural superiority and/or inferiority, Bourdieu does not address how those subjected to such dominance resist such domination. This particularly relates to their future experiences related to consumer behaviour and realized examples in another cultural context must be analysed to test how relevant and universal Bourdieu's conceptualisations actually are.

Freire provides a slightly different analysis to Bourdieu in conceptualizing that education cannot be neutral. Freire asserts that education can be used to

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<sup>161</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: The Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, p.411

<sup>162</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: The Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, p.7

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, p.346

integrate younger people into modes of conformity perpetuating maintenance of the status quo or used to enable meaningful participation in transforming their social and political worlds.<sup>164</sup> The consumer behaviour linkage to Freire's educational theorisations derives from viewing oppressors as those having power desiring to transform everything into objects of purchasing power with oppression deriving from this dynamic. This equating of material possessions with being a 'full' human being is, according to Freire, a marker of oppression because oppression's main economic characteristic is a 'to be is to have' mentality with oppressors equating having material wealth with being.<sup>165</sup>

Freire's main argument in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is that education can be used to transform the status of the oppressed only if teachers and students both engage with their world and in dialogue with each other, giving rise to opinions, however conflicting, about their world which would be the starting point in changing and improving their conditions.<sup>166</sup> Compulsory education in the immediate post-War decades in England did not incorporate such opinions. However, Freire's arguments are highly theoretical with specific examples needed to test these concepts in actualised circumstances. Chapter 5 specifically will serve to examine Freire's assertions in terms of connecting education with identity and consumption.

Additional linkages between education and consumption in Afro-Caribbean/Black British contexts are asserted in Coard's *How the West Indian Child is made Educationally Subnormal in the British School System*. This literature significantly detailed the extent of factors working against Caribbean children's educational achievement. The factors detailed by Coard related to his identification of British schools as organisational structures and institutions that supported ethnically-based discrimination whilst offering potential solutions to

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<sup>164</sup> Paulo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p.13

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, pp.34-35

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, p.66

ameliorate these substantial educational disparities. Furthermore, Coard called for, ' (*Caribbean people*) to open Black nursery schools and supplementary schools in Britain (with) Black dolls and toys and pictures, and storybooks about great Black men and women, and their achievements and inventions. ' <sup>167</sup>

Coard also clearly noted and analysed the types and extent of forced consumption of educational resources and curricula largely detrimental to the self-esteem and educational development of Afro-Caribbean young people. <sup>168</sup>

As such, Coard's call for educational and cultural transformation amongst Afro-Caribbean people had at least some origins in seeking to revolutionize consumption. Specifically, Coard exhorted Afro-Caribbeans to create supplementary schools where children could consume culturally uplifting educational materials in an environment that fostered educational and positive Afro-Caribbean cultural development through learning.

However, Coard's work primarily focussed on children. Post-compulsory education experiences, particularly related to consumer behaviour were not addressed in Coard's work except for his allusion to British educational experiences leading to internalized racialised denigration of Caribbean people and subsequent loss of identity that could implicitly be construed as affecting consumer behaviour. Supplementary schools were created by Afro-Caribbean people across Britain from the 1970s onward, reflecting conscious desires to transform Afro-Caribbean consumer behaviour by expressing passions to create spaces that fostered promoting positive senses of Blackness whilst also using education to contest White biases and prejudices, particularly in compulsory or other state controlled educational institutions and settings. <sup>169</sup> Furthermore, supplementary schools were part of greater desires of Afro-Caribbean people to

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<sup>167</sup> Bernard Coard, *How the West Indian Child is made educationally subnormal in the British education system*, p.39

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, pp. 26-30

<sup>169</sup> Heidi Mirza and Diane Reay, 'Spaces and Places of Black Educational Desire: Rethinking Black Supplementary Schools as a New Social Movement', *Sociology*, 34 (2000), p.532

learn generally vis-à-vis the general British population, whether formally or informally. For example, Sargant and Channer concluded that ethnic minority groups show higher rates of formal and informal learning than the general population of Britain whilst Channer recognises high-achieving African-Caribbean girls positioning themselves as ‘*anti-school but pro-education.*’<sup>170</sup>

Post-War Afro-Caribbean supplementary schools, as well as supplementary schools generally, did not initiate in Britain at this time. These mid- to late 20<sup>th</sup> century supplementary schools had theoretical commonalities with Socialist Sunday Schools (SSS) in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries because both created and developed counter-hegemonic education.<sup>171</sup> During the key era of growth and development of SSS between 1892 and 1930, they were run by a combination of left-leaning and/or working class based groups ranging from Labour Churches, socialist organisations and Jewish groups; as well as in soup kitchens, lectures and home gatherings organised under the general mantra borrowed from the Chartists, Knowledge is Power!<sup>172</sup> This knowledge leading to power ethos was viewed by those organising SSS as being important in the overall struggle for social change alongside more general calls for increasing the school leaving age, free school meals, as well as campaigns to challenge social inequality and childhood poverty.<sup>173</sup> SSS viewed their schools as an integral part of challenging the hegemony of the upper classes through

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<sup>170</sup> Naomi Sargant, *Lifelong Learning: a brave and proper vision* (Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, 2009), p.282; Yvonne Channer, *I Am A Promise: the school achievement of British African Caribbeans* (Stoke-on-Trent, England: Trentham Books, 1995), p.17; Ruth Chigwada, ‘Not Victims Not Superwomen: The Education of Afro Caribbean girls’, *Spare Rib*, 183 (1987), p.1

<sup>171</sup> Jessica Gerrard, ‘Gender, community and education: cultures of resistance in Socialist Sunday Schools and Black Supplementary Schools’, *Gender and Education*, 23 (2011), p.711; Heidi Mirza and Diane Reay, ‘Spaces and Places of Black Educational Desire: Rethinking Black Supplementary Schools as a New Social Movement’, p.532

<sup>172</sup> Jessica Gerrard, ‘Emancipation, Education & the Working Class: Genealogies of Resistance in Socialist Sunday Schools and Black Saturday Schools’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2011), pp.131, 135-6

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*, p.133

transformative education and strong zeal to incorporate social justice within their teaching.<sup>174</sup>

The counter-hegemony of SSS, similar to Caribbean supplementary schools in the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century, allowed for formulations of oppositional identities that reflected the needs, interests and values of those victimised by educational, socio-cultural and/or political hegemony.<sup>175</sup> Brine and Waller agree with these arguments by concluding that identities can be constructed in resistance to opposition, whilst Bullivant recognises solidarity within a social group can occur due to resistance to cultural dominance.<sup>176</sup> Although both Brine and Waller and Bullivant both were writing about educational issues, neither was concerned with future effects of experiencing socio-cultural dominance in schools, except for the latter noting that minority groups created post-compulsory or non-compulsory education for their specific ethnic groups with Australian Jewish and Greek groups being cited as successfully implementing such education.<sup>177</sup> Furthermore, Maxted recognises that those experiencing, 'unpleasant memories of the formal education system ... are less motivated and far less likely to participate in education and training in later life.'<sup>178</sup> This does not mean people cannot or will not participate in informal learning, particularly if such informal learning is antithetical to such negative formal or compulsory

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid, p.131-136, 140-141

<sup>175</sup> Jessica Gerrard, 'Gender, community and education: cultures of resistance in Socialist Sunday Schools and Black Supplementary Schools', *Gender and Education* (2011) <<http://www.genderandeducation.com/issues/gender-community-and-education-cultures-of-resistance-in-socialist-sunday-schools-and-black-supplementary-schools/>> (accessed 9 January 2012); Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy' in *Between Borders: Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies*, ed. by Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren (New York: Routledge, 1994), p.84

<sup>176</sup> Jacky Brine and Richard Waller, 'Working-class women on an Access course: risk, opportunity and (re)constructing identities', *Gender and Education*, 16 (2004), p.103; Brian Bullivant, *The Ethnic Encounter in the Secondary School: Ethnocultural Reproduction and Resistance; Theory and Case Studies* (London: Falmer, 1987), p.189

<sup>177</sup> Brian Bullivant, *The Ethnic Encounter in the Secondary School: Ethnocultural Reproduction and Resistance; Theory and Case Studies*, p.189

<sup>178</sup> Peter Maxted, *Understanding Barriers to Learning: A guide to research and current thinking* (Sandford, England: Southgate Publishers, 1999), p.24

educational experiences alluded to by Maxted. Informal learning as practised in supplementary schools works counter to Churchill's hegemonic view that schools should be, 'institution(s) of control where basic habits must be instilled ... (having) not necessarily much to do with education.' <sup>179</sup> Implied within such Churchillian concepts are societal desires to replicate socio-cultural value systems, particularly social and ethnic hierarchies that maintain the status quo.

The actualized example of Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans in the post-War decades will provide abilities to test the education theories mentioned; particularly as related to connections between education and consumption. The final section on consumer behaviour will connect the various prior mentioned strands whilst identifying additional literature that provides another prism through which to analyse correlative identity and consumption.

## Consumer Behaviour

In post-War Britain, there were many changes in consumer habits in comparison to the relatively unchanging consumer trends of previous decades. For example, from the 1950s onwards youth groups became more identifiable by their clothing with certain clear fashion trends being adopted by specific groups. <sup>180</sup> Also, by the 1960s, younger people had more disposable income and spent much of this on clothing and music, both having trends that changed rapidly in part due to the availability of trans-Atlantic flights enabling the rapid dissemination of changing trends in both clothing and music. <sup>181</sup> By the 1970s semiotics, that is the use of fashion, '... as a system of signs indicating the

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<sup>179</sup> Ronald Meighan, 'Back to the Future?', *Educational Heretics Press* <<http://edheretics.gn.apc.org/EHT011.htm>> (accessed 13 March 2012)

<sup>180</sup> Elizabeth Ewing, *History of Twentieth Century Fashion* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1992), pp.240-241

<sup>181</sup> Valerie Mendes and Amy de la Haye, *Fashion since 1900* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2010), pp.158, 179-180

*lifestyle and aspirations of the wearer ...*’ was exhibited by many, if not most people during this decade onwards regardless of age.<sup>182</sup>

More generally, Britain was clearly more affluent in the post-War decades with better food, housing, clothing and material items than in any prior era.<sup>183</sup>

However, immigrants amongst other socially disadvantaged groups disproportionately lived in squalor as reflected by 37 percent of British people living in accommodation having no fixed bath on the premises.<sup>184</sup> Furthermore, even as late as 1967 there were still 1.8 million slum houses.<sup>185</sup> More positively, Britain’s greater affluence and acquisition of material items was reflected by a majority of cars and 75-80 percent of furniture sales having been acquired through hire-purchase in the mid-1950s as part of the approximately 4 million hire-purchase agreements entered into annually in this era.<sup>186</sup> In terms of food, rationing gave way in the early 1950s with town centre supermarkets expanding at the expense of corner shops in this era onwards, changing social as well as economic relationships.<sup>187</sup> In social terms, the expansion of supermarkets developed shopping relationships that focused on the transaction rather than the interaction between customer and shopkeeper that was at the hallmark of pre-War shopkeeper-customer relations. As such, loyalty based on the personal service and friendliness provided by local shopkeepers declined, creating relatively anonymous consumers in comparison to the traditional pre-1950s shopkeeper that generally knew his customers socially.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Jacqueline Herald, *Fashions of a Decade*, (London: B.T. Batsford, 1992), p.8

<sup>183</sup> John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1985* (London: Methuen, 1986), p.281

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*, p.288

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, p.288

<sup>186</sup> Institute of Public Affairs, ‘Hire Purchase’, 8 (1954), p.17

<sup>187</sup> Phil Lyon Anne Colquhoun and Dave Kinney, ‘UK food shopping loyalty in the 1950s: the social context of customer loyalty’, *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 28 (2004), p.28

<sup>188</sup> Dawn Nell, Andrew Alexander, Gareth Shaw and Alexander Bailey, ‘Investigating Shopper Narratives of the Supermarket in Early Post-War England, 1945-75’, *Oral History Society*, 37 (2009), p.68 ;Phil Lyon Anne Colquhoun and Dave Kinney, ‘UK food shopping loyalty in the 1950s: the social context of customer loyalty’, p.28

In terms of specific research on minority ethnic consumer behaviour in Britain, Hamlett et al's 'Researching Consumer Landscapes' provides an example of analysing some connections between the ethnicity of south Asians in Britain and their consumption, although ethnicity was not a primary theme of this project.<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, this work was primarily oral history based, with 122 interviews having been conducted.<sup>190</sup> However, the number of south Asians interviewed was not mentioned.<sup>191</sup> In terms of ethnicity, 'Researching Consumer Landscapes' asserts that dual shopping patterns, that is purchasing basic food from local shops whilst more ethnically specialist items were acquired from shops in areas where larger concentrations of co-ethnics lived, were important in the consumer experiences of many south Asians.<sup>192</sup> Despite the richness this project offers in terms of using oral history to shed light on the experiences underpinning consumer behaviour in the post-War era, primary perspectives are from retailing paradigms. Furthermore, there is no mention of the consumer experiences of Caribbeans and/or Black people in Britain, which potentially could have provided additional and/or different dimensions. Other research into more contemporary minority ethnic consumption in Britain has overwhelmingly focused on Asians whilst there is a plethora of literature linking identity and consumption of minority groups outside the UK, particularly North America.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Jane Hamlett et al, 'Ethnicity and Consumption: South Asian food shopping patterns in Britain, 1947-75', *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 8 (2008), p.94

<sup>190</sup> Dawn Nell et al, 'Investigating Shopper Narratives of the Supermarket in Early Post-War England, 1945-75', p.61

<sup>191</sup> Dawn Nell et al, 'Investigating Shopper Narratives of the Supermarket in Early Post-War England, 1945-75', p.68; Jane Hamlett et al, 'Ethnicity and Consumption: South Asian food shopping patterns in Britain, 1947-75', p.94

<sup>192</sup> Jane Hamlett et al, 'Ethnicity and Consumption: South Asian food shopping patterns in Britain, 1947-75', p.101; Jane Hamlett et al, 'Regulating UK supermarkets: an oral-history perspective', *History and Policy*, April 2008, *History and Policy* <[www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-70.html](http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-70.html)> (accessed 3 January 2012)

<sup>193</sup> Yasmin K. Sekhon, 'From saris to sarongs' ethnicity and intergenerational influences on consumptions among Asian Indians in the UK', p.160; Jing Xu, Soyeon Shim, Sherry Lotz and David Almeida, 'Ethnic Identity, Socialization Factors, and Culture-Specific Consumption Behaviour', *Psychology and Marketing*, 21 (2004), p.93; Kittichai Watchravesringkan, 'Exploring antecedents and consequences of consumer ethnocentrism: evidence from Asian immigrants in the US', *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 35 (2011), p.383; Michael Hui, Chankon Kim, Michel Laroche and Annamma Joy, 'Psychometric Properties of an Index Measure

In more general social contexts, including but not exclusive to ethnicity, consumption provides frameworks to, according to Corrigan, '*communicate social meaning.*'<sup>194</sup> Understanding social meaning in this context requires analysis of how individuals and groups actively understood and reflected their personal and social development through their consumption. Miller augments this concept by noting that consumer behaviour primarily derives, '*from active participation in a process of social self-creation directly constitutive of our understanding of ourselves and others.*'<sup>195</sup> Social meanings of consumption can derive from, as well as being an integral element of, self-creation and group development. Various ingredients and interpretations could be evident and important within such social meanings of consumption. In addition, consumer behaviour should be viewed much more complexly than what Dant refers to as the cash nexus, which is, '*the social features of the economic process of exchanging cash for goods or commodities.*'<sup>196</sup> Other non-economic aspects of consumption should be understood and analysed, particularly material culture and the 'quasi-social', interactive relationships people have with objects outside the cash nexus.<sup>197</sup> Dant's conceptualisations however do not mention any specific realised examples of non-cash nexus consumption. This thesis will ameliorate this omission by significantly focussing on identity as a social feature of consumption.

Gilroy, partially supporting Dant's arguments on consumption outside of the cash nexus, mentions that, '*Consumption becomes a procedure of collective*

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of Ethnicity in a Bicultural Environment', *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 14 (1997), p.14; Angela Fontes and Jessie Fan, 'The Effects of Ethnic Identity on Household Budget Allocation to Status Conveying Goods', *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 27 (2006), p.643; Dong Shen and Marsha Dickson, 'Consumer Acceptance of Unethical Clothing Consumption Activities: Influence of Cultural Identification, Ethnicity and Machiavellianism', *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 19 (2001), p.76

<sup>194</sup> Peter Corrigan, *The Sociology of Consumption* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), p.32

<sup>195</sup> Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p.215

<sup>196</sup> Tim Dant, 'Consumption Caught in the Cash Nexus', *Sociology*, 34 (2000), p.655

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, p.655

*affirmation and protest in which a new authentic public sphere is brought into being.*' <sup>198</sup> In other words, social circumstances and collective experiences can shape consumer behaviour, particularly in Black British contexts specifically being referred to by Gilroy. The simultaneous dichotomy of affirmation and protest derives not only from social constructions of consumption, but also combinations of economic and social forms that cannot merely be explained by socio-economic, cash exchange factors. These non-cash nexus factors of consumption are particularly relevant, but not exclusive, to public displays of consumption where individuality and conformity to social groups' norms could be construed as being simultaneously important.

Central to individuality and conformity to social groups' norms involving consumer behaviour is the conceptualisation that it reflects individual and collective taste. However, '*Taste is an acquired disposition to 'differentiate' and 'appreciate'.*' <sup>199</sup> Furthermore, '*revulsion is socially constructed, not naturally acquired.*' <sup>200</sup> These acquisitions and constructions are to at least some extent based on experiences in compulsory and other state controlled education, which will be addressed in significant detail in the final section of this chapter. Understanding acquired social construction of consumer behaviour habits is crucial to analyse individuals and groups having assisted the formation and reformation of acceptable consumption habits.

Consumption acceptable to social groups can be predicated on conceptualisations of their unity, or to use another Simmelian term, sociation. '*Sociation is the form realized ... in which individuals grow together into a unity and within which their interests are realized. And it is on the basis of their*

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<sup>198</sup> Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The cultural politics of race and nation*, p.210

<sup>199</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: The Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, p.466

<sup>200</sup> Peter Corrigan, *The Sociology of Consumption*, p.87

*interests ... that individuals form such unities.*' <sup>201</sup> Such unity within the context of consumer behaviour can be conceptualised clearly when analysing the role taste plays in creating and developing social group unity and demarcation through sociation. Social demarcation through socially accepted views on taste can be displayed to indicate male transcendence via wearing clothing that deliberately indicates status. This is best exemplified in the case of those wearing business suits, those mostly of middle to high social classes. However, an opposing example is the fashionable wearing of zoot-suits: bright-coloured, ostentatious clothing worn by numerous African-American men, as well as American men of Mexican, Filipino and Italian origin in the 1930s and 1940s. <sup>202</sup> The former represent traditional cultural and/or economic hegemony or aspirational groups desiring to replicate such authority, whilst the latter mentioned socio-cultural amalgamations encompass marginalised ethnic groups. The differences between the clothing fashion of socially core vis-à-vis peripheral social and ethnic groups could be understood by analysing the dichotomy of differences due to social influences.

According to Simmel, ' *Fashion is the imitation of a given example and satisfies the demand for social adaptation.* ' <sup>203</sup> Fashion should not be merely conceptualised solely in terms of clothing, as all aspects of consumption have elements of fashion within their purchase and usage. In other words, all modes of consumption which incorporate characteristics of imitation and social adaption, as well as the antithesis thereof, can be defined as fashion. Furthermore, Simmel also argues that fashion serves the purpose of combining ' *attraction of differentiation and change with that of similarity and conformity ... Wherever fashions have existed they have sought to express social*

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<sup>201</sup> Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, p.24

<sup>202</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p.543; Heather Maddan, 'Zooting up: Brighten prom night with flash, dash -- and panache', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 April 2007; Robert Thomas, 'Harold Fox, Who Took Credit for the Zoot Suit, Dies at 86', *New York Times* 1 August 1996

<sup>203</sup> Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, p.296

differences.<sup>204</sup> Miller supports these conceptualisations by noting that, ' *Fashion demands an individual conception of a conventional style.* ' <sup>205</sup> Implied in these statements is that conventional styles derive from a relatively narrow range of styles within any given timeframe. Also, as styles are frequently reflections of group identification, borrowing from different ranges of styles would be discordant with the identity one wishes to portray.<sup>206</sup>

Fashion can also simultaneously provide for inclusion and exclusion whilst providing for expression of social differences.<sup>207</sup> Furthermore, according to Simmel, for fashion to be established, it also needs intra-group unity, as well as at least some inter-group isolation, in order to be created and developed.<sup>208</sup> Furthermore, Simmelian concepts of social marginalisation can facilitate understanding its influences on individual and collective consumer behaviour through fashion. Supporting this argument is Simmel's notion that ' *fashion (is a) valve through which craving for some measure of conspicuousness and individual prominence finds vent, when satisfaction is denied in other fields.* '<sup>209</sup> Although Simmel specifically was referring to women, specific ethnic minorities regardless of gender could also be referred to as seeking and/or manifesting consumption similarly due to dissatisfaction and denial in other areas of life. This dissatisfaction actually did display itself in Britain generally. The creation and development of Notting Hill Carnival in the late 1950s is an exemplar. This carnival resulted from, and reflected elements of, Black disadvantages in Britain such as ethnically disparate unemployment rates and

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<sup>204</sup> Georg Simmel, *Philosophy of Money* (Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2004), p.461

<sup>205</sup> Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, p.174

<sup>206</sup> Best exemplifying this are youth cultures in many locations worldwide. Youth across various cultures follow fashions based on the social groups they are in, or wish to be part of. It would be extremely rare for young people anywhere to mix hip-hop and heavy metal fashions for example. Although there are ranges of styles, it is commonplace to choose clothing within a specific fashion genre as a reflection of identity. Furthermore, mixing and matching from different genres would be generally unacceptable if an individual wishes to be accepted or recognised as being part of a specific social group.

<sup>207</sup> Georg Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, p.461

<sup>208</sup> Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, p.301

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, p.309

institutional injustices such as police harassment and rampant discrimination.<sup>210</sup> What made Notting Hill Carnival a transformative consumption exemplar for Black British people was that this was the original post-War example of how an inventive and pioneering Black British culture was being negotiated and produced as a result of Black British people experiencing significant denigration of Black and Caribbean cultures in most other aspects of their lives in Britain.<sup>211</sup> However, there is almost no information about how Caribbean people in non-metropolitan areas expressed their discontent through consumption.

The role of class cannot be understated in relation to outward manifestations of taste and consumption. According to Veblen, consumption reflects semiotic statements of honorific qualities. In terms of perceptually fashionable items used to demonstrate membership and corresponding individual solidarity within any given group *'no article will pass muster on the strength of material sufficiency alone. In order to completeness and full acceptability to the consumer (items) must also show the honorific element.'*<sup>212</sup> Veblen links items with distinct classes with each class having honorific expectations of consumerism. However, Veblen was primarily concerned with wealthy people in his writing, as would have been implied in the term leisure class. Race and ethnicity in contrast were not areas Veblen was concerned with. Furthermore, markers of honour in one social class/group could be markers of dishonour in another. These conceptualisations need to be addressed to add to, and develop from, Veblen.

Fashion as a function of individual and group satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction in other areas of people's lives can facilitate understanding of how individual and collective identities shape, and are shaped by, consumption. Rutherford

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<sup>210</sup> Trevor and Mike Phillips, *Windrush: the irresistible rise of multi-racial Britain*, p.284

<sup>211</sup> Ibid, p.284

<sup>212</sup> Thorsten Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, p.157

argues that '*cultures and identities can never be wholly separate, homogeneous entities; instead the interrelationships of differences are marked by translation and negotiation.*'<sup>213</sup> It could be concluded from Rutherford that the shaping of identity is fluid, subjective and by implication, totally individually dependent without regard to external forces. However, Frith argues that '*identity (describing) one's place in a dramatized pattern of relationships --- (because) one can never really express oneself 'autonomously'.*'<sup>214</sup> Taken ad infinitum, autonomous behaviour and actions cannot genuinely occur, with individual and collective relationships being merely resulting from deterministic functions. However, Bhabha concludes that identity can be a result of negotiating one's path towards developing identity, particularly when facing hostility. Bhabha acknowledges that '*negotiation is not just some kind of compromise or 'selling out' ... subversion is negotiation; transgression is negotiation ... we negotiate even when we don't know we are negotiating ... in any situation of political opposition or antagonism.*'<sup>215</sup> Bhabha's rationale would imply that any group facing opposition or ostracism negotiates in various ways from initial recognition to total collective equality for its members. Furthermore, when viewed in tandem with various prior mentioned theories of hybridity espoused by Bhabha, Hall, Gilroy et al, not only can hybrid cultures not be reduced to their original elements, but such hybrid cultures are processes and results of constant cultural and social negotiations.

A constant for Caribbean immigrants were remittances, which accounted for approximately 8-15 percent of Jamaican migrants' total income in the early 1960s, or between £7.1 million-£7.8 million pounds per annum between 1961

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<sup>213</sup> Jonathan Rutherford, 'A Place Called Home: Identity and the Cultural Politics of Difference' in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), p.26

<sup>214</sup> Simon Frith, 'Music and Identity' in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. by Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London: Sage Publications, 1996), p.125

<sup>215</sup> Homi Bhabha, 'The Third Space', p.216

and 1963.<sup>216</sup> This money was transmitted to care for family members, saving to eventually buy homes in Jamaica, as well as sending tithes as a way of keeping church membership and resulting social connections.<sup>217</sup> Davison concludes by stating, at least for Jamaicans, ties between British based Jamaicans and Jamaica strengthened in the first few years of arrival in Britain.<sup>218</sup> Such strengthened connections resulted from significant disappointment with employment opportunities and living circumstances in Britain, particularly overcrowded and/or dilapidated housing, as well as the cold, damp weather Britain frequently experiences.<sup>219</sup> Sending of remittances was simultaneously a financial obligation whilst providing for furthering socio-cultural bonds between Jamaica and Jamaican migrants to Britain. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of these migrants planned to live in Britain for a limited time with eventual plans to return to the Caribbean, clearly indicated by over 80 percent of such migrants planning to return to Jamaica after their second year in Britain.<sup>220</sup> This is best exemplified by the ubiquitous and prototypical Caribbean five-year plan of staying in Britain, conceptualised to save enough capital to buy a house or to fund business opportunities upon returning to their countries/islands of origin.<sup>221</sup>

Religion also shaped the consumer behaviour of British Afro-Caribbeans and should be analysed in greater detail with many Afro-Caribbeans attending church in the post-War era for social and spiritual reasons.<sup>222</sup> The consumer behaviour dimension of such church attendance and activity needs to be analysed. For example, tithing, that is giving a certain percentage of income for

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<sup>216</sup> R.B. Davison, *Black British: Immigrants to England*, pp.97, 119

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid*, p.96

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*, p.96

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid*, pp.117-120

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid*, p.107

<sup>221</sup> Peter Edmead, *The divisive decade: A history of Caribbean immigration to Birmingham in the 1950s*, pp.12-14

<sup>222</sup> Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*, p.131,

religious purposes, needs to be understood and contextualised in terms of post-War Afro-Caribbeans in Britain specifically, as well as the how often the prototypical interpretation of tithes being 10 percent of gross income occurred amongst them. For example, the Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA) notes tithing as important in its tenets. This is notable because approximately 75-90 percent of British SDA membership was Black in the 1960s.<sup>223</sup> SDA quotes from Malachi 3:10 to illustrate the importance of tithing, which according to the Church, is done to recognise God's existence, as well as being crucial to receiving spiritual and temporal blessings.<sup>224</sup> SDA are not unique in tithing expectations, as other churches such as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints cite 10 percent tithing simultaneously as a privilege to do as well as honouring God.<sup>225</sup> Tithing could be considered deferred consumption, as well as, according to Veblen, exhibiting conspicuous waste via devout consumption.<sup>226</sup> Despite knowledge of tithing generally, actualized practices involving tithing in Black British churches are less clear, as well as the reasons for doing so, which probably varied depending on the churches and individuals. Furthermore, it is unclear how Caribbean people in locations like Northamptonshire, compared and/or contrasted with their metropolitan contemporaries, which this research will analyse in some detail.

Gilroy's argument of consumption being used by Black British people as a procedure of collective affirmation and protest, it could be argued, was realized in the genesis and development of Black British churches, despite Gilroy

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<sup>223</sup> Herbert Griffiths, 'The Impact of African Caribbean Settlers on the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Britain 1952-2001' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2003), p.9

<sup>224</sup> Seventh Day Adventist Church, 'Stewardship Department: Frequently Asked Questions', <<http://www.adventiststewardship.com/article.php?id=4>> (accessed 2 November 2011)

<sup>225</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 'Gospel Topics: Tithing', <<http://lds.org/ldsorg/v/index.jsp?locale=0&sourceId=e141f73c28d98010VgnVCM1000004d82620a&vgnextoid=bbd508f54922d010VgnVCM1000004d82620aRCRD>> (accessed 2 November 2011)

<sup>226</sup> Thorsten Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, p.119

referring to the Black British nightlife scene in the post-War era.<sup>227</sup> Black British churches were formed largely because of considerable ostracism faced by many Caribbean people in churches having predominantly White memberships. However, the consumer behaviour aspect of membership and participation in Black British churches cannot be underestimated, as these created the basis for creating organisations serving the growing multicultural communities Afro-Caribbean people were living in. An exemplar of this is SDA's nationwide establishment of educational and entertainment facilities and programmes for virtually all ages and their entire community, whether SDA Member or otherwise.<sup>228</sup> Overwhelmingly absent from literature are conceptualisations of Black British membership and activity in non-Black majority churches in Britain, except for briefly mentioning at least some Black people actively participated in non-Black churches.<sup>229</sup> What has not been analysed however is the level of conscious ethnic identity, or purposeful denial thereof, in decision making processes involved in joining non-Black versus predominantly Black churches in Britain.

Consumption is also exemplified by movements towards what is contemporaneously called ethical consumption.<sup>230</sup> Also argued is that consumption has a dialectic of causing environmental and social problems that can only be solved by greater consumption, albeit of a more ethical or sustainable nature.<sup>231</sup> Although contemporaneous lexicon of ethical consumption was not part of consumer behaviour or conscious rationale in the immediate post-War decades in Britain, this does not mean such perspectives

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<sup>227</sup> Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The cultural politics of race and nation*, p. 210

<sup>228</sup> Herbert Griffiths, 'The Impact of African Caribbean Settlers on the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Britain 1952-2001', abstract

<sup>229</sup> *Sharing the Past* (Northampton: Northamptonshire Black History Association, 2008), p.66

<sup>230</sup> Michael Goodman, David Goodman, Michael Redclift, *Situating Consumption, Space and Place* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), p.28; Nick Clarke, 'From Ethical Consumerism to Political Consumption', *Geography Compass*, 2 (2008), p.1877

<sup>231</sup> Michael Goodman, David Goodman, Michael Redclift, 'Situating Consumption, Space and Place', p.29

did not exist. This is best exemplified in this era by numerous conscious social and political links to consumption having been made in terms of Black British entertainment, church and sporting activities, particularly reflecting experiences of being Black in post-War Britain.<sup>232</sup> Furthermore, even ethnicity itself has been defined as deriving from and reflecting '*politicized culture*'.<sup>233</sup>

Understanding the social and political paradigms underpinning consumption rationale can be considered crucial in conceptualising linkages between these and how consumption could have been used in performing and/or contradicting ethnic, as well as gender and class roles, to fulfil social expectations and personal and/or collective aspirations. Consumer behaviour is a crucial conduit through which greater understanding of cultural hybridity and various modes of socio-cultural negotiation can occur. Furthermore, consumer behaviour and identity, or more correctly identities, are linked in multiple but intersecting ways to be developed in succeeding chapters.

## Conclusion

The conceptual strands identified in this chapter are important to facilitate understanding the full range of dimensions influencing the consumption of Northamptonshire Caribbeans. Caribbean people were part of a diaspora but were not ethnically Caribbean until arriving to post-War Britain in significant numbers. Their British-based experiences were influenced by their social interactions, strong and weak ties developed, as well as the education received in Britain. Furthermore, official and unofficial restrictions Caribbeans

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<sup>232</sup> Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*, pp.131-133, 149, 199; Trevor and Mike Phillips, *Windrush: the irresistible rise of multi-racial Britain*, pp.101-102; Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The cultural politics of race and nation*, Hutchinson, pp.202, 210; Paul Gilroy, *Small acts: thoughts on the politics of black cultures*, p.241; Tony Sewell, *Keep on moving: The Windrush legacy*, p.62

<sup>233</sup> Christian Karner, *Ethnicity And Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 2007), p.18

experienced also influenced their consumption. The eight strands mentioned have identified the multi-dimensional influences on the consumption of Caribbeans in Britain.

Central throughout these eight strands, whether implicit or explicit, are themes of identity and its connections with consumption. Fundamental throughout these strands is that variations of identity and consumption permutations are interwoven. This concept will be developed throughout each succeeding chapter. Also, identity is shaped by ethnicity, gender and overall social experiences. Such experiences include shaping identity and consumption because of resistance to significant British opposition to Black people in various social spaces, accommodation and employment. Black people in post-War Britain dealt with this discrimination through, in many cases, significantly shaping their identity around resisting this ethnically-based opposition. However, the identities of Caribbeans in Britain should not be viewed solely as binary and/or reactive in terms of ethnically-based discrimination and the opposition thereto. Succeeding chapters will develop strands from identified literature in order to augment analysing connections between identity and consumption, including how these links changed over time as Northamptonshire Caribbeans grew in numbers, as well as progressed as members of the overall Northamptonshire community.

Although extensive literature has been referred to throughout this chapter, provincial British Afro-Caribbeans have been overwhelmingly under-researched and under-represented in literature and research about Black and/or Afro-Caribbean British people generally. In addition, research on the identity and consumption connections of ethnic minorities in Britain has focussed much more on south Asians than Afro-Caribbeans. This thesis will ameliorate this significant omission. Furthermore, the combination of researching this

significantly under-researched group alongside using the numerous theories and strands of literature noted within this chapter will help facilitate comprehending identity and its diverse connections with consumption. The plethora of theories within this chapter should be tested using actualised examples of this ethnic group against the backdrop of Northamptonshire in order to confirm and/or refute such theories.

Moving on from the literature, acquiring data capturing the plethora of connections between the identity, or more correctly identities, and consumption of Northamptonshire Caribbeans is the next logical step. The following chapter will address how oral history was significant in obtaining information.

Furthermore, the literature strands asserted as important in this chapter will be developed through analysing why oral history as a methodology is significant as both a means of collecting data whilst facilitating analysing identity and consumption connections. The following methodology and methods chapter will delineate practical frameworks through which data was collected, as well as how the researcher influenced and was influenced by his interactions with participants and local Afro-Caribbeans generally.

## Chapter 2: Methodology and Methods

### Introduction

As connections between consumption and identity of Caribbeans in post-War Britain, particularly those living in non-metropolitan areas, have overwhelmingly not been analysed or addressed from academic perspectives, illuminating important aspects of their consumer manifestations is an important addition to the documented history of Caribbeans in Britain. The documented history of local Caribbean consumption is extremely limited because most acquisition and display of consumer items and non-material consumption was done by word-of-mouth, or otherwise unrecorded at the time. When such documentation and recordings were preserved, these were overwhelmingly kept in individuals' attics, closets or other spaces largely hidden away from people other than family or close friends.<sup>1</sup> Because of this, there is a significant gap between the experienced and documented consumer behaviour of Northamptonshire Caribbeans which should be historically narrowed. Reducing this gap requires both informational and expository data that oral history can primarily provide. It is not being claimed that oral history can eliminate this gap solely. However, data acquisition via oral history offers the opportunity for historical contributions to be made by variously positioned individuals in the community being researched.

NBHA's production of **Sharing the Past** in 2008 helped to bridge some of the gaps between the experienced and documented history of Black people. An important part of bridging this gap is the use of oral history when NBHA was Northamptonshire Black History Project (NBHP) in 2002-2005. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by NBHP, helping to shed light on a history

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<sup>1</sup> Karen Davies interviewed by George Watley, 12 October 2009; Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 14 July 2009; Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 7 April 2011

overwhelmingly undocumented before. Furthermore, NBHA were a joint collaborative partner in this author-conducted research, with an important stake in both its findings and dissemination. Important amongst all significant stakeholders is the ethos that oral history would be used as a tool to share previously undocumented history to local and wider audiences. Oral history is important in the context of this research because physical documents and other recordings of local Caribbeans' history were overwhelmingly unrecorded, at least for historical purposes. Furthermore, the author and others have had opportunities to analyse motivations underpinning consumer behaviour. This would be virtually impossible without using oral history.

Within the overarching concept of using oral history methodologically, the three sections of this chapter will illuminate and analyse the dimensions of how oral history has been employed, as well as rationale underpinning the methodology and methods used. The **Methodology** section will address theories underpinning this research ranging from the use of extant interviews to the use of feminist research methods, appropriate for reasons to be delineated despite this research not being about any aspect of feminism. The second section, **Positionality**, elaborates on the various aspects of positionality influencing the author, including interactions with participants and the local Caribbean community generally. The third section, **Methods**, addresses the means and mechanisms used in acquiring and interpreting data, including but not exclusive of interviews. Initially important are the interviews collected by NBHP from 2002-2005, which were used by the author both before conducting interviews and throughout the researching process. The **Methodology** section will address this, as well as other methodologically related issues which should be delineated and analysed to comprehend their relevance for this thesis.

## Methodology

Broadly, contemporary identity and consumption connections have been made, overwhelmingly of non-Caribbean ethnic minority groups in Britain, particularly south Asians. Sekhon asserts that south Asians in Britain, '*construct and negotiate their identity and image through aspects of their consumption; consumption is both a personal and social process.*'<sup>2</sup> Connecting Sekhon's argument with an interpretation that could be more generally applied across ethnicities is Belk's concept that consumption can serve to promote a desired identity through images, styles and acts and conveyed through possessions.<sup>3</sup> These concepts of identity and consumption connections are not monolithic in terms of being totally referential towards the given ethnic minority culture and consumption norms despite Sekhon's recognition that all participants in her research considered themselves Asian first and British second.<sup>4</sup> Sekhon asserts that consumption of Asians in Britain is influenced by using items to display their status in Britain, as well as being employed in making statements that they are equal to White British people.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast to Sekhon, some minority ethnic groups outside of Britain produce identity constructions that alternate between the dominant and minority ethnic group, manifesting such identity through consumption. For example, Ger and Ostergaard argue that Turko-Danish people negotiate identity through clothing, '*with cultural and sub-cultural forces being felt and reflected in their dress.*'<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Yasmin Sekhon, "From saris to sarongs' ethnicity and intergenerational influences on consumption among Asian Indians in the UK", p.163

<sup>3</sup> Russell Belk, 'Possessions and the extended self', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15 (1988), p.139

<sup>4</sup> Yasmin Sekhon, "From saris to sarongs' ethnicity and intergenerational influences on consumption among Asian Indians in the UK", p.163

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.164

<sup>6</sup> Guliz Ger and Per Ostergaard, 'Constructing immigrant identities in consumption: appearance among the Turko-Danes' in *Advances in Consumer Research*, ed. by Joseph Alba and J. Wesley Hutchinson (Provo, Utah, USA: Association for Consumer Research, 1998), vol.25, p.48

Askegaard and Arnould argue somewhat similarly in noting that Greenlandic people living in Denmark produce identity constructions that alternate between Danish and Greenlandic social contexts.<sup>7</sup> When Greenlandic identity is constructed, it revolves around holding on to particular aspects of culture perceived to be connected to their culture of origin.<sup>8</sup> In other identity-consumption contexts, according to Xu et al, co-ethnic friendship amongst minority group members influences ethnic identity and collective culture-specific consumption behaviour.<sup>9</sup> In terms of local Caribbean people, data collected and analysed will address the dimensions of various forms of identity they had and perceived themselves to have, as well as how these forms of identity connected with their consumption. Within this concept, the links between consumption and identification with Britain, the Caribbean, and being Black will be better understood.

More specifically related to data collection, it is not merely the information within interviews that is useful; the skills of interviewers, as well as the historical basis for conducting these interviews are also important in determining the importance of data collected. Shopes refers to interview and interview transcripts like these as extant interviews in terms of their ability to be used for future research. According to Shopes:

*The most useful extant interviews for historians researching a community are likely to be those conducted under the auspices of ongoing history research programs as archival projects for the use of future researchers or by professionally run historical*

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<sup>7</sup> Soren Askegaard and Eric Arnould, 'Consumer acculturation of Greenlandic people in Denmark', in *European Advances in Consumer Research*, ed. by Bernard Dubois, Tina M. Lowrey, and L. J. Shrum, Marc Vanhuele (Provo, Utah, USA: Association for Consumer Research, 1999), p.48

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.48

<sup>9</sup> Jing Xu, Soyeon Shim, Sherry Lutz and David Almeida, 'Ethnic Identity, Socialization Factors, and Culture-Specific Consumption Behaviour', p.93

*organizations as documentation projects. While it is important to assess such interviews in light of their provenance, their strengths are often considerable: typically they are framed around questions drawn from contemporary historiography and include multiple narrators, variously positioned within the community; they tend to range widely over individual narrators' life experiences so as to be of value to users with varying interests (and) they are generally the work of skilled interviewers who are knowledgeable about the subject at hand.*<sup>10</sup>

Clearly and explicitly mentioned by NBHA and the author are that interviews conducted for this research will be made publicly available, with the author's early suggestion to the Association that interview transcripts, as well as selected audio clips, should be easily accessible via NBHA's Web site. This suggestion was approved with the proviso that interviewees would be informally asked for their permission to do so despite NBHA owning the copyright to the audio interview and related transcripts. This proviso was made in the spirit of having clear community support for Association activities, past, present and future. More generally, all participants signed a consent form (Appendix A) stating that their interviews could be used and available publicly as a permanent public reference resource, as well as for research, exhibitions and other educational purposes. Furthermore, the Oral History Roadshow (OHR) to be discussed in more detail in the **Methods** section of this chapter celebrated most participants' narratives alongside their pictures, all of which were viewed unanimously complementary by them. Unlike strictly educational research that often operates under a paradigm of participant anonymity due to frequently working with

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<sup>10</sup> Linda Shopes, 'Oral History and the Study of Communities' in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London: Routledge, 2010), p.264

children or other people perceived as vulnerable<sup>11</sup>, this research is public history that the researcher and participants desire to share with the general public as a way of celebrating the history of Caribbeans in Northamptonshire, and by extension, Britain.

It was the author's intention from the initial months of this research that these interviews would not only be publicly accessible, but lead to future research opportunities, whether for the author and/or others. Furthermore, Northamptonshire Black History Project (NBHP) interviews and other research preceding **Sharing The Past** was developed simultaneously by academic historians and community minded activists, with the former believing that **Sharing The Past**'s groundbreaking exposition of 800 years of Northamptonshire Black British history would lead to future research. This initial research actually led to the present research funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Without AHRC support this research would not have been possible. This reflects NBHA's prior work as the NBHP, but also reflects how others can recognise researching opportunities related to **Sharing The Past**.

This research is viewed as the second fundamental step in Northamptonshire Black British historical research, as well as potentially providing the basis for future academic and community based research. The extant NBHP interviews leading to the production of **Sharing The Past** were conducted mostly by academics and funded sessional workers who were active in the community. This synergy was intentional and viewed as necessary not only to shed light on local Black British history ignored by traditional sources of historical

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<sup>11</sup> British Educational Research Association, 'Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research', 2011, pp.5-7 <<http://www.bera.ac.uk/system/files/BERA%20Ethical%20Guidelines%202011.pdf>> (accessed 27 April 2012)

information (such as schools)<sup>12</sup>, but also to be used by future researchers, academic or otherwise. This intentional combination of academics and non-academics has proved fruitful in providing resources in terms of the interviews, the resulting book, and the organisation of such for future researchers. As such, NBHA's work, including this research, has simultaneously researched local Black British history whilst developing long-term symbiotic documentation projects akin to those Shopes identifies as being most useful to future researchers wishing to research a specific community.

The combined efforts of academics and community members also provided synergy in terms of developing their skills as interviewers. Both groups were knowledgeable in their respective areas of expertise and together added to historical information about the local dimension of Black British history whilst also becoming more knowledgeable about this history generally. These factors have helped to give interviewers greater knowledge of this history, as well as investigative skill used to acquire further local historical information. Skilled, knowledgeable interviewers are important in developing useful extant interviews for future researchers as asserted by Shopes.

NBHA was created in large part to protest institutional and socio-cultural ignoring of historical contributions of local Black people. **Sharing The Past** reflects this ethos by stating:

*Our book introduces you to previously hidden aspects of the past, and to people whose stories may surprise you. This book is*

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<sup>12</sup> John Siblon, *Black is also British: an investigation into the needs and opportunities for developing Black British history within the schools curriculum in Northamptonshire* (Northampton: University College Northampton, 2005), p.53 Note: Although Siblon's work mainly refers to teachers teaching, or more correctly lack of teaching, Black British history, noting that 74 percent of Northamptonshire teachers never or rarely teach this history is indicative of contemporary failure of schools to incorporate Black British history in students' learning. Further evidence of teacher ignorance related to Black British history includes Siblon's findings that, '80% of teachers surveyed suggest that they have 'no knowledge' or 'limited knowledge' of Black British history and 78% say there are no resources on Black British history in schools.'

*dedicated to the pioneering community leaders who have enriched the lives of Northamptonshire settlers from the Caribbean, Africa and the Indian subcontinent and helped to make Northamptonshire a better place.*<sup>13</sup>

If posed as an implied question, this prior quotation would be indirectly answering the question: Why is Black history being ignored locally and is still continuing to be hidden? Furthermore, this question would also apply to larger British perspectives on Black British history which either view Black and British as mutually exclusive or choose to ignore this history for ethnocentric reasons. Answering this implied question is an exercise in producing counter-hegemonic history that Grosvenor asserts can be realised if the effects and exercise of power in producing historical texts is acknowledged and acted upon.<sup>14</sup> Whatever the question or questions that are being implicitly answered by the prior mentioned quotation, such explicit reasons for producing **Sharing The Past** were based on at least some contemporary historiography and historical understanding that Black **British** historical research and understanding is very limited locally and nationally. Recognition of this historical ignorance was important in facilitating the production of this book. Also important is that NBHA's work is shaped around the social and educational failure to teach **all** British people about the historical contributions of Black people to British history.

Another important element of the **Sharing The Past** was that more than a hundred people were interviewed for the book. Of these, approximately half were of Caribbean origin. These people ranged in age from their 20s to 80s, varied greatly in terms of length of time in Northamptonshire and in Britain

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<sup>13</sup> NBHA, *Sharing the Past*, p. i-ii

<sup>14</sup> Ian Grosvenor, *Assimilating Identities*, p.196

generally, their social positions, as well as coming from both areas with significant amounts of Black and Caribbean people in the county, Northampton and Wellingborough. These interviewees held various positions in the community and offered numerous narrations about being Caribbean in Northamptonshire. This proved crucial in terms of offering frameworks recognising diverse perspectives on being Caribbean in Northamptonshire.

These perspectives were also augmented by the rationale that the contributors to **Sharing The Past** could reflect on their entire lives in Britain generally and Northamptonshire specifically. Such interviews ranged widely based on participants' era of birth and upbringing, but also over the decades of their lives which, particularly for older people, helps analysis of the changes in viewpoints during the course of their individual lives, as well as the community of local Caribbean people as a whole. The combination of multiple, variously positioned narrators with interviews based on participants' wide-ranging life experiences make for very useful extant interviews, akin to what Shopes has suggested.

The oral history obtained from the NBHP/NBHA interviews was overwhelmingly the only way most of this data could have been collected. Information about consumer behaviour and leisure would have been extremely limited using documentary sources should this have been the primary method of data acquisition. Even the interviewees themselves clearly mentioned that word-of-mouth was the only way they were informed about local, regional and national events held or attended by large numbers of Caribbean people.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, failing to use oral history in this research would render it impossible to discover and analyse a great range of connections between identity and consumption from the perspectives of individuals and groups of

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<sup>15</sup> Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 27 September 2009; Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 31 July 2009; Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 29 October 2009

local Caribbeans. Also, using oral history facilitates unearthing the motivations underpinning individual and collective decision making. Using oral history in these contexts adds to the historical documentation of local Caribbean post-War consumption, as well as providing a plethora of opportunities to analyse identity and consumption links in the triplicate of single, collective and passage of time perspectives, or any of the three individually. With recording and transcribing of interviews, the author and others can analyse single interviews, groups of interviews, as well as examining any differences or similarities between interviews conducted across years and conducted by different interviewers. In addition, future researchers, whether academic or otherwise, could potentially re-interview prior interviewees, adding another layer to historical analysis of passage of time perspectives.

Somewhat augmenting assertions noted in the preceding paragraph, Frisch argues that oral history is based on providing '*more history*' and '*anti-history*'; the former revealing aspects of history unavailable using traditional documentary sources whilst the latter challenges socio-cultural hegemony in desiring to bypass the academic in order for people to be able to access the '*real*' history ignored by hegemony as represented by academia.<sup>16</sup> Augmenting this concept is Bornat's suggestion that '*anti-history*' as Frisch theorised, was at the heart of oral history origins from the 1960s onwards, at least in the UK.<sup>17</sup> Frisch also asserts that '*more history*' and '*anti-history*' are on opposite poles.<sup>18</sup> However, this is inconsistent with the history unearthed by NBHP/NBHA leading to **Sharing The Past** because the author and NBHA Members and supporters intentionally desired to simultaneously document and share '*more history*' and '*anti-history*'. This was accomplished through providing original

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<sup>16</sup> Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany, New York, USA: State University of New York Press, 1990), p.187; Joanna Bornat, 'Reminiscence and Oral History: Parallel Universes or Shared Endeavour?' in *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp.457-458

<sup>17</sup> Joanna Bornat, 'Reminiscence and Oral History: Parallel Universes or Shared Endeavour?', p.458

<sup>18</sup> Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*, p.187

historical information whilst challenging traditional British views that Black history is not British history. Also included in this challenging of traditional dissemination of British history is the omission of Black people from British historical narratives other than labelling them as historical problems when mentioned. Oral history can provide '*more history*' whilst bequeathing '*anti-history*' to historiography. Also, '*more history*' and '*anti-history*' can be used to counter historical narratives supporting and/or maintaining social and cultural hegemony. Bornat supports this contention by noting that oral historians seeking to employ '*anti-history*' challenge historical orthodoxy by giving voices to negatively stereotyped and/or socially marginalised people.<sup>19</sup> In short, there must be '*more history*' before '*anti-history*' can offer genuine counter-hegemonic historical narratives.

Oral history is different from traditional, documentary-based history according to Portelli because oral history tells us about the meaning of events whilst shedding light on the previously unexplored areas of the daily lives of people outside socially dominant classes.<sup>20</sup> '*Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did.*'<sup>21</sup> As such, oral history is not only a method of acquiring historical information; it can be used methodologically to augment comprehension of life experiences of socially marginalised people, especially in relation, or in contrast to, traditional historical references. This is particularly important for this research because understanding the motivations underpinning consumer behaviour rationale is not only a clearly stated aim of this research, but also provides the *raison d'être* for the education and cultural currency chapters. These chapters are viewed as fundamentally necessary in order to

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<sup>19</sup> Joanna Bornat, 'Reminiscence and Oral History: Parallel Universes or Shared Endeavour?', p.458

<sup>20</sup> Alessandro Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different?' in *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 2010), p.36

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p.36

provide the reader with a much greater understanding of stimuli supporting consumption rationale.

In order to help facilitate participants' abilities and desires to narrate their histories, narrators must have genuine opportunities to tell their stories. Anderson and Jack suggest that the interviewer-interviewee interaction is crucial; the interviewer must not attempt to circumvent narrators' narratives whilst interviewees must be asked, at least initially, open-ended questions so they have opportunities to tell their stories at their own pace and in their own terms.<sup>22</sup> This research has clearly provided participants with many of these opportunities by using simple, open-ended questions in the beginnings of each interview of those having not been interviewed before. However, those participants interviewed prior to author-conducted interviews were given copious opportunities to elaborate on issues they mentioned years earlier. A further benefit of analysing these prior interviews before interviewing some participants was that they could fully understand that the author was knowledgeable about them through having researched participants before interviews. This helped to foster rapport.

In terms of actual interviewing techniques, Minister stereotypes males as desiring to control interview topics by taking to the interview a clearly prepared list of issues or questions to discuss.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, she articulates clear gender-based divisions with suggestions that females are taught from as young as 5 years old to create relationships based on closeness and equality whilst similar aged boys use personal relationships to assert dominance whilst attracting and

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<sup>22</sup> Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jack, 'Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses' in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, ed. by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (London: Routledge, 1991), p.24

<sup>23</sup> Diana Minister, 'A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview' in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, ed. by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (London: Routledge, 1991), p.36

maintaining an audience.<sup>24</sup> Whilst accepting that having written interview lists could be construed as hierarchical attempts to control participants' narration, the desire to do so could be done by male or female academic interviewers particularly keen on exercising their power as university affiliated researchers. Even Minister herself makes the point that another female historian, Kathryn Anderson, noted that her interviews, as well as of other female historians she knew, demonstrated clear preferences for facts and activities with conspicuous absences of traditional, from a feminist standpoint, questions about participants' feelings and attitudes.<sup>25</sup> Because of all the mentioned points, Minister's feminist arguments are undermined despite the logic of her relationships of power arguments, most specifically related to the potentially hierarchical nature of historical research and explicit and implicit means of displaying and manifesting such hierarchical beliefs.

It must be acknowledged that there are gender differences in narratives, albeit generalised. Sherbakova, in her research on Soviet gulag survivors, notes that women tended to furnish much fuller descriptions of everyday life and routines whilst stressing more often the crucial importance of friendships and other human relationships.<sup>26</sup> Men on the other hand tended to be more reserved, more analytical and gave greater detail and elaboration in terms of describing work experiences.<sup>27</sup> Sherbakova synthesises these gender based differences in narration by suggesting that males and females, particularly a husband and wife, should in some cases be interviewed together in order to augment and correct each other's narratives.<sup>28</sup> However, Olson and Shopes suggest that as a person narrates a story, the participant subject becomes an actor in simultaneous, but

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.31

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.35; Kathryn Anderson, Susan Armitage, Dana Jack and Judith Wittner, 'Beginning Where We Are: Feminist Methodology in Oral History', *Oral History Review*, 15 (1987), pp.108-109

<sup>26</sup> Irina Sherbakova, 'The Gulag in Memory' in *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 2010), p.529

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.529

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p.529

divergent roles that do not conform to clear stereotypes or simple generalisations.<sup>29</sup> Also asserted by Olson and Shopes is that imbalances of power in interviews results from affiliations with universities, access to greater resources and the ability to choose topics and potential interviewees, none of these issues being gender specific.<sup>30</sup>

Moving from feminist research methodologies, another important methodological concept is that objectivity should be maintained as much as possible. However, the author has made numerous observations about participants and the local Caribbean community. Such observations have been significantly beneficial to this thesis in terms of analysis, as well as its findings. This supports Kaplan's argument that no human observation can be '*immaculate*' whilst suggesting that observation is active as opposed to being passive, with such assessments deriving from using our eyes, minds and guts to interpret and analyse others and our world.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, observations of participants and the local Caribbean community have also derived from the author's pre- and post- interview interactions with many interviewees as well as through activities in NBHA, BASA and as a Black British History Lecturer at the University of Northampton. Being a participant-observer, as well as having various dimensions of being a simultaneous insider/outsider subjectively augments this research although objectivity is desired to provide balanced historical perspectives for this research.

Included in this historical perspective is recognising the author's insider/outsider status. This will be addressed more specifically in the

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<sup>29</sup> Karen Olson and Linda Shopes, 'Crossing Boundaries, Building Bridges: Doing Oral History among Working-Class Women and Men' in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* ed. by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (London: Routledge, 1991), p.193

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.193

<sup>31</sup> Valerie Yow, 'Do I Like Them Too Much?: Effects of the Oral History Interview on the Interviewer and Vice-Versa' in *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 2010), p.57; Abraham Kaplan, *The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioural Sciences* (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1964), pp.133, 136

succeeding positionality section of this chapter, but also has more direct methodological implications. The author's positionality has shaped both the frameworks of questions asked within themes of this research, as well as of participants more specifically. These influences are subjective, which on a prima facie basis is antithetical to traditional or accepted academic historical research. However, Yow suggests that subjectivity and objectivity are not antithetical, with researchers needing to understand their research related subjectivity whilst simultaneously carrying out the project as objectively as possible with using subjectivity as an advantage.<sup>32</sup> Subjectivity can also be perceived as necessary in order to avoid becoming detached from research participants and communities being researched, which could lead to dull interpretations.<sup>33</sup> Collingwood argues that historians cannot be objective because historical evidence can only be obtained when researchers perceive that problems exist whilst requiring subjectivity in order to comprehend and articulate such predicaments.<sup>34</sup>

The key themes informing the methodological interpretations of this research mainly involve issues of identity; or more correctly multiple manifestations of identity dependent on particular situations and contexts. Although oral history is the primary method of acquiring data for the purposes of this research, the methodology of acquiring this historical information, as well as the interpretation and analysis of such, derives from various disciplines such as feminist geography/history and Caribbean/African diasporic studies in addition to oral historiography, feminist or otherwise. This research should be placed within various paradigms of these disciplines and through

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<sup>32</sup> Valerie Yow, 'Do I Like Them Too Much?: Effects of the Oral History Interview on the Interviewer and Vice-Versa', p.63

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.57; Theodore Rosengarten, 'Stepping Over Cockleburs: Conversations With Ned Cobb in *Telling Lives: The Biographer's Art*, ed. by Marc Pachter (Washington, DC, USA: New Republic Books, 1979), p.113

<sup>34</sup> Robin George Collingwood, *The Philosophy of History* (Austin, Texas, USA: University of Texas Press, 1985), p.137

methodologically employing some of the researching strategies and theories involved in the prior mentioned disciplines; a greater understanding can be obtained by methodologically employing these strategies and theories. Also provided are the significant prisms through which such methodological interpretations are analytically employed.

Another methodological influence involves the researcher's positionality. Positionality not only relates to the actual interviewing process, but also identity, gender and secondary oral history (outside of interviewing/interviews) matters. The succeeding section will delineate the layers and prisms through which the positionality of the author has affected unearthing and analysing the history of participants, as well as the community being researched.

### **Positionality<sup>35</sup>**

Is a researcher an insider or outsider in relation to his/her interviewees and the people and/or community being researched? This question is seemingly binary with a possible initial assumption being that, as a person of Caribbean origin, I would be simply an insider because of this. However, whilst conducting this research, my insider and outsider status was complex and shifted for various reasons. Whilst performing responsibilities and roles resulting from this research, there was a clear recognition that developed in conjunction with the progress of the research that I would not be a universal insider nor a total outsider. Further adding to strands of positionality was the role of the collaborative partner in this research, Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA). Whilst the research progressed, I was co-opted as a committee member of NBHA, blurring insider and outsider positionalities

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<sup>35</sup> For this positionality section, the author will be using first-person, as it is appropriate to do so because of the personal nature of interactions between him and various aspects of the methodological issues addressed vis-à-vis his positionality.

considerably. Dilemmas surrounding positionality, or more correctly positionalities, are integral in relation to how oral historians collect, analyse and disseminate history.

Before commencing research, I lived in Northampton for approximately five years, which provided significant insight into the local community. Through life experiences in Northampton before the research commenced, some insight was obtained about the local Caribbean community. As such, this knowledge was used to gain a greater range of researching opportunities than a total outsider would have had. Furthermore, failing to use this gained knowledge would have been intellectually dishonest. Researcher honesty and integrity should be based on analysing the positionalities, identities and personal considerations of the researcher, as well as what roles these issues play in the research.<sup>36</sup> In my case, having first-hand knowledge as a contemporary local Caribbean person is significantly important because positionality and interpretations of the research were influenced by a multitude of positions related to the community being researched generally, and research participants more specifically. These influences include significant obstacles in obtaining employment opportunities and advancement as an Afro-Caribbean man equal to comparably or lesser qualified White British people, particularly but not exclusively whilst teaching in local schools.<sup>37</sup> Being subjected to such ethnically-based detriments helped me empathise with interviewees, as well as other Northamptonshire Caribbean people. Such empathy results from facing mutually similar historical and current circumstances in local and larger British contexts.

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<sup>36</sup> Tracey Skelton, 'Cross-cultural research: issues of power, positionality and "race"' in *Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers*, ed. by Melanie Limb and Claire Dwyer (London: Arnold, 2001), p.89

<sup>37</sup> The author taught in Northamptonshire schools, one of which hired and promoted White teachers without a first degree whilst the author was relegated to fixed-term contracts despite having two degrees and prior teaching experience. This significantly detrimental experience helped the author to empathise with interviewees whenever discussing racism in Britain.

However, sharing similar ethnicity with interviewees does not necessarily indicate total insiderhood with participants specifically or within the Northamptonshire Caribbean community more generally. Cultures, including sub-cultures, are not monolithic entities because all have internal variation within them.<sup>38</sup> This is particularly notable because I am American-born and lived there virtually all my life before moving permanently to Northampton. Furthermore, although I have familiarity with some Caribbean terminology, this is mostly from a Barbadian perspective from my matrilineal family, as well as multiple childhood travels to Barbados. This differs however from Jamaican perspectives that 14 of my 20 interviewees would be familiar and/or engage with conversationally to varying extents.<sup>39</sup>

Despite these apparent differences, the commonality of being Black in Britain is a transcendental identity. This Black identity works similarly to Simmel's concept of group-affiliations as amalgamations of people uniting super-structurally based and developed according to qualities perceived as '*natural*' like race or being socially aware of group status and engaging in solidaristic activities perceived as necessary to protect collective interests.<sup>40</sup> Also significant in Black British identity is the experience of ethnically-based discrimination in the immediate post-War decades, significantly affecting virtually all Black people in Britain in various forms. This discrimination affected Caribbean people in the sense that they were and are predominantly Black people. Black people in this era were perceived simultaneously as '*problems*' to Britain whilst having no historical basis in the British historical

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<sup>38</sup> John Aguilar, 'Insider Research: an ethnography of a debate' in *Anthropologists at Home in North America*, ed. by Donald Messerschmidt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.25; Sharan Merriam, Juanita Bailey, Ming-Yeh Lee, Youngwha Kee, Gabo Ntseane and Mazanah Muhamad, 'Power and positionality: negotiating insider/outside status within and across cultures', *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 20 (2001), p.411

<sup>39</sup> One interview was a group interview and one interviewee was interviewed twice. This explains why 22 interviews were conducted whilst there were only 20 individual interviewees.

<sup>40</sup> Georg Simmel, *Conflict and The Web of Group Affiliations*, p.135, 172

narrative.<sup>41</sup> Extended and pervasive exclusion of Black people worked against them being considered genuinely British. This attitude existed alongside facing significant denial of housing, employment, social and educational opportunities because of frequently expressed and realised discriminatory views of ethnicity in Britain. These factors augmented the development of Black transcendental identity in Britain, particularly amongst those experiencing and perceiving this most acutely.

Black transcendental identity also derives from structural power imbalances and inequalities due to facing significant local and national discrimination.

Discrimination and responses to it could be considered primary, but infinitely crucial, to relationships of power in which Black people in Britain were frequently unequal. McDowell notes that a small number of crucial relations of power can significantly shape the lives of those fundamentally subordinate to social leviathans.<sup>42</sup> Discrimination against Black people in Britain meets McDowell's small but crucially significant shaping of lives litmus test. The common experience of being Black in Britain serves as a unifying reference point for the researcher and the researched despite some cultural differences between the Afro-Caribbean American researcher and the Afro-Caribbean British interviewees. Common feelings of ethnic solidarity, as well as common experiences of ethnically-based discrimination, contribute significantly to Black transcendental identity, particularly in the context of this research.

Within Black transcendental identity, the concept of mutual reciprocity between researcher and the community, or at least interviewees and NBHA, is both explicit and implicit. Reciprocity can mean either helping people being researched in projected future times of need or can be non-monetary gifts given

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<sup>41</sup> Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, p.26

<sup>42</sup> Linda McDowell, 'Women/Gender/Feminisms: doing feminist geography', *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 21 (1997), p.398

to demonstrate gratefulness for the activities and efforts of the communities being researched, as well as interviewees themselves.<sup>43</sup> However, implicitly and within the context of people-centred history, as well as thanking participants for their support, the researcher understood the importance of reciprocating such efforts by ensuring research findings would be shared in venues where community members, especially inclusive of interviewees, could attend non-academic research dissemination events. This serves to visibly celebrate their collected oral histories whilst appreciating the researcher's role in this historical process. Also, a spirit of authentic reciprocity reduces and/or eliminates the imbalance of power between the researcher and research participants.<sup>44</sup> This was intentional, based on the paradigm of being historically grounded with the community being studied.

Involving the local community in helping to develop research findings whilst sharing such research with local non-academic audiences is part of this people-centred historian's desires to write this history with the community and research participants, at least as much as reasonably possible. As such, conducting this research has been conceptualised based on the mutual construction of history with the people being researched. This fits within ideas of the purpose of history as espoused by Walter Rodney: that history should be written from a people-centred perspective, with the intellectual remaining grounded in the lives of 'ordinary' people.<sup>45</sup> This historical paradigm also has its roots in my educational background and belief that students should learn alongside teachers to construct a greater understanding of **our** world. History in this context can be used to create authentic education, which according to Freire, requires

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<sup>43</sup> Richa Nagar, 'Collaboration Across Borders: Moving Beyond Positionality', *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 24 (2003), p. 361; Elizabeth Chacko, 'Positionality and Praxis: Fieldwork Experiences in Rural India', *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 25 (2004), p.60

<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Chacko, 'Positionality and Praxis: Fieldwork Experiences in Rural India', p.60

<sup>45</sup> Vincent Harding, Robert Hill and William Strickland, Foreword in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* by Walter Rodney (Washington, DC, USA: Howard University Press, 1982), p. xiv

simultaneous learning by teachers and students about their world, inclusive of all implied and inherent frustrations, anxieties and hopes to develop new and/or future common knowledge, as taught formally and/or informally, to achieve greater and fuller humanity, especially in educational contexts.<sup>46</sup>

Fully achieving mutual interviewer/interviewee historical construction whilst using such construction to communally make greater sense of our world through this history requires the researcher to avoid being the, ' *object of arrogant perception*.'<sup>47</sup> This perception can occur because researchers as academics often represent membership in either a higher social class than researched subjects and/or symbolise values and/or culture(s) alien to the community being researched. Furthermore, it was also acknowledged that the researcher should, '... *be humble and be humbled and to recognize ... limitations and ... need for those who (know) better or more*.'<sup>48</sup> This was necessary to avoid the perception of arrogance due to being an academic researcher and an implied representative of established or hegemonic power through university affiliations, with such potential perceptions of arrogance circumvented through demonstrating humility. Furthermore, it was deemed necessary to regularly seek the advice and knowledge of those having closer and/or more direct knowledge of, the history being examined, as doing so would further lessen this negative perception. Collecting oral histories has the potential to lessen this perception of arrogance because the stated expectations of this research were that the voices of the researched would be directly collected whilst understanding and expecting that these interviews would also be used directly in various public, non-academic disseminations of this research like the Oral History Roadshow

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<sup>46</sup> Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p.66

<sup>47</sup> Maria Lugones, 'Playfulness, "world" travelling and loving perception' in *The woman that I am*, ed. by D. Soyini Madison (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p.633; Janice Fournillier, 'Trying to Return Home: A Trinidadian's Experience of Becoming a "Native" Ethnographer', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15 (2009), p. 742

<sup>48</sup> Janice Fournillier, 'Trying to Return Home: A Trinidadian's Experience of Becoming a "Native" Ethnographer', p. 760

which will be elaborated on in more detail later in this chapter. A significant part of this was an understanding that written transcripts of interviews would eventually become available for public consumption. To further eliminate power-based barriers between researcher and interviewee, it was consciously decided to always interview people in spaces most comfortable to them, including their homes. This shifted the balance of power in favour of interviewees, making me as the researcher not only less powerful in comparison, but displaying relative humility by being in an unfamiliar space vis-à-vis interviewees. This humility extends to being somewhat dependent on their hospitality and their ownership of interviewing spaces.

My power vis-à-vis interviewees could be perceived as deriving from being well-educated relative to these participants, as well as being a university lecturer and a former school teacher. Furthermore, being a man could perceive me as being more powerful than my female participants, whilst being younger than my interviewees could enable the perception of my greater power, especially amongst more elderly contributors. Wishing not to manifest such perceptions of power, I purposely wore jeans and casual shirts to every interview. In addition, I wore Timberland boots on a few occasions to interviews, further playing down my image as a university affiliated academic. Beoku-Betts argues that her educated professional, university affiliated status created challenges to establishing trust.<sup>49</sup> However, my similar status never proved to be a hindrance or an obstacle in gaining the trust and support of participants or the larger local Caribbean community, at least visibly.

Furthermore, I purposely used north-eastern African-American non-standard English when my interviewees used their versions of non-standard English.

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<sup>49</sup> Josephine Beoku-Betts, 'When Black Is Not Enough: Doing Field Research among Gullah Women', *NWSA Journal*, 6 (1994), p.419; Robert Labaree, 'The risk of 'going observationalist': negotiating the hidden dilemmas of being an insider participant observer', *Qualitative Research*, 1 (2002), p.111

Although my version of non-standard English, when used, differed from theirs, common understanding of each other's lexicon was virtually always achieved due to internationally known Black cultural influences such as popular music and other widely available audio-visual entertainment. This vernacular use of language helps to develop rapport with participants.<sup>50</sup> Failing to use appropriate vernacular could have rendered the perception of my identity as a Black and/or Caribbean person suspect because of my higher level of education and academic affiliation.<sup>51</sup> Also, intentionally using my version of vernacular was done in order not to be perceived as an '*educated fool*' by them, as some Black people might perceive someone speaking in totally Standard English to be.<sup>52</sup>

Interviewees and the general community being researched also have power despite academics generally not acknowledging this.<sup>53</sup> Participants primarily have power in choosing to be interviewed whilst giving as much or as little information as they wish.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, they can act as positive or negative gatekeepers, helping or hindering the research process as a result. Positive gatekeepers are those people who inform others about the benefits of contributing to the research whilst negative gatekeepers can discourage

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<sup>50</sup> Brackette Williams, 'Skinfolk, Not Kinfolk: Comparative Reflections on the Identity of Participant-Observation in Two Field Situations' in *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, ed. by Diane Wolf (Boulder, Colorado, USA: Westview Press, 1996), p. 75

<sup>51</sup> Brackette Williams, 'Skinfolk, Not Kinfolk: Comparative Reflections on the Identity of Participant-Observation in Two Field Situations', p.75; Lanita Jacobs-Huey, 'The Natives Are Gazing and Talking Back: Reviewing the Problematics of Positionality, Voice, and Accountability among "Native" Anthropologists', *American Anthropologist*, 104 (2002), p.795; Linda Nelson, 'Hands in the Chit'lins: Notes on Native Anthropological Research among African American Women' in *Unrelated Kin: Race and Gender in Women's Personal Narratives*, ed. by Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis and Michele Foster (London: Routledge, 1996), p.185

<sup>52</sup> Lanita Jacobs-Huey, 'The Natives Are Gazing and Talking Back: Reviewing the Problematics of Positionality, Voice, and Accountability among "Native" Anthropologists', p.795; Helan Page, 'Dialogic Principles of Interactive Learning in the Ethnographic Relationship', *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 44 (1988), p. 171; John Langston Gwaltney, *Drylongso: A Self-Portrait of Black America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), p.16; Gloria Naylor, *Mama Day* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1988), p.8

<sup>53</sup> Roberta Sands and Michal Krumer-Nevo, 'Interview Shocks and Shockwaves', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12 (2006), p.955

<sup>54</sup> Karen Olson and Linda Shopes, 'Crossing Boundaries, Building Bridges: Doing Oral History among Working-Class Women and Men', p.196

potential interviewees by expressing detrimental opinions about the research and/or the researcher.

Gatekeepers can assist research by using and restricting their personal contacts in and for the research. If researchers have personal contacts with such assisting or positive gatekeepers, access to others is much easier to negotiate and/or obtain.<sup>55</sup> June White-Gulley was a significantly important gatekeeper in my research, enabling me to directly obtain additional interviews than I otherwise would have done because of her extensive connections in the local Caribbean community. Furthermore, this relationship was acknowledged as being mutually beneficial, most specifically when she approached me in tears after the last session of the module in December 2009, thanking me for taking on the responsibility of lecturing in the Black British History modules at the University of Northampton because of fear of discontinuation without my efforts.<sup>56</sup>

Manifestations of power relations should not primarily be viewed as binary, as the roles I have as academic researcher and university lecturer can be viewed positively by participants. This discernment of power creates the perception that their voices are important because a university affiliated academic believes that their life histories are important. Furthermore, more politically and socially motivated people could view my perceived power as a university affiliated historian as symbiotic with their desires to use their life histories to become

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<sup>55</sup> Carla Reeves, 'A difficult negotiation: fieldwork relations with gatekeepers', *Qualitative Research*, 10 (2010), p.318; Karen Duke, 'Getting Beyond the "Official Line": Reflections on Dilemmas of Access, Knowledge and Power in Researching Policy Networks', *Journal of Social Policy*, 31 (2002), p.44; Lesley Wilkes, 'Metropolitan Researchers Undertaking Rural Research: Benefits and Pitfalls', *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 7 (1999), p.184

<sup>56</sup> The prior lecturer of the Black British History modules at the University of Northampton, Dr. Julia Bush, had retired from lecturing from July 2009 and there was some mention within NBHA that because of this impending retirement, such modules might have been discontinued. However, the author taught these modules after Dr. Bush's retirement, which was greatly appreciated by many members of NBHA.

individually and collectively empowered through academic and/or public recognition of their historical contributions.<sup>57</sup>

The mutual view of the researcher and almost all, if not all interviewees, is that many aspects of this research are counter-narratives to traditional history as taught in British schools. This local and larger British historical ignorance about Black British people runs synonymous with relative lack of social, political and economic power that Black people had, and have, in Britain vis-à-vis Whites. This research, as well as other NBHA research and publications, has and does function within the paradigm of using Black British history to raise the status of Black people in Britain, particularly in local contexts. Furthermore, this historiography about Northamptonshire Caribbeans is a narrative running counter to the belief that Black is not British, whether by omission of Black history in Britain or through denigrating Caribbean cultures in school curricula. Counter-narratives, according to critical race theory perspectives, are necessary to interrupt and disrupt cultural hegemony and traditional historiography supported by dominant socio-cultural groups.<sup>58</sup>

Critical race theory, as recently defined by the educationalist H. Richard Milner IV, states:

*Race and racism are so ingrained in the fabric of society that they become normalized. Individuals from various racial and ethnic backgrounds may find it difficult to even recognize the salience, permanence, effects, and outcomes of racism because*

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<sup>57</sup> Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, *The Oral History Reader*, (London: Routledge, 2006), p. x

<sup>58</sup> H. Richard Milner IV, 'Race, Culture, and Researcher Positionality: Working Through Dangers Seen, Unseen, and Unforeseen', *Educational Researcher*, 36 (2007), p.392

*race and racism are so deeply rooted and embedded in our ways and systems of knowing and experiencing life.*<sup>59</sup>

Critical race theory is a relevant paradigm within the research because race as a concept links with Northamptonshire Caribbeans' ethnic identities as Black and/or Caribbean people.<sup>60</sup> Commonalities of facing similar experiences of ethnically-based oppression were within life experiences of interviewees and me. Furthermore, such implied and/or stated mutual understandings derive at least partly from participants' expectations that a fellow Black person as researcher would understand their circumstances and burdens because of being Black in a majority White populated country.<sup>61</sup>

Being an insider enabled formulation of insightful questions to ask interviewees. Such insight allows for eliciting responses reflecting genuine voices of the researched, including ethnically-based factors underpinning their consumer behaviour. Also, being significantly co-ethnic in the community of the researched led to having relatively considerable knowledge regarding the structures of oppression Caribbean people faced. Such insider understandings can be used to obtain privileged knowledge cultural outsiders would find difficult to acquire.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, due to perceived cultural proximity to people and communities being studied, insiders benefit from being able to acquire information more easily than outsiders, as well as researched people being more likely to perceive the insider-researcher as being trustworthy, with greater

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<sup>59</sup> H. Richard Milner IV, 'Race, Culture, and Researcher Positionality: Working Through Dangers Seen, Unseen, and Unforeseen', p.390; Gloria Ladson-Billings, 'Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education?', *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11 (1998), p.9

<sup>60</sup> The author asserts that ethnicity is often confused as 'race'. Although critical race theory has been referred to, its interpretation by the author is that ethnicity can substitute for 'race' as a word in terms of using this theory to help understand the role ethnicity plays for the purposes of understanding Northamptonshire Caribbeans specifically, or any ethnic group generally.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Hawkins, 'Outsider in: Race, Attraction and Research in New Orleans', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16 (2010), p.253

<sup>62</sup> Fabienne Darling-Wolf, 'On the Possibility of Communicating: Feminism and Social Position', *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 28 (2004), p.33

openness to the researcher resulting.<sup>63</sup> Researching benefits derived from being a relative insider without, '... *the restricting expectations of others (and/or) overidentification ...*'<sup>64</sup> with the studied community that complete insiders could have.

However, having outsider status can also be an asset in obtaining fuller explanations vis-à-vis insiders.<sup>65</sup> I had this advantage as well because, as an American researcher investigating co-ethnic British people, this allowed for asking questions probably eliciting greater responses vis-à-vis hypothetical indigenous-insiders. The terminology of indigenous-insider derives from Banks' four categories of insider/outsider variations; including indigenous-insiders categorised as, '... *endors(ing) the unique values, perspectives, behaviours, beliefs, and knowledge of his or her indigenous community (and) who can speak with authority about it.*'<sup>66</sup> Another category of insiderness/outsiderness noted by Banks are indigenous-outsiders that, although perceived to be part of the cultural group, experienced significant levels of cultural assimilation with an external and/or oppositional culture.<sup>67</sup> The remaining two categories of Banks' insider/outsider variations are external-outsiders that reject his/her original culture to adopt another one, as well as external-outsiders who are totally socialised in a different culture to the one he/she is researching.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ayca Ergun and Aykan Erdemir, 'Negotiating Insider and Outsider Identities in the Field: "Insider" in a Foreign Land; "Outsider" in One's Own Land', *Field Methods*, 22 (2010), p.18

<sup>64</sup> Diana Wolf, 'Situating feminist dilemmas in fieldwork' in *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, ed. by Diane Wolf (Boulder, Colorado, USA: Westview Press, 1996), p.15

<sup>65</sup> Sharan Merriam et al., 'Power and positionality: negotiating insider/outside status within and across cultures', p.410

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p.412; James Banks, 'The lives and values of researchers: Implications for educating citizens in a multicultural society', *Educational Researcher*, 27 (1998), p.7

<sup>67</sup> Sharan Merriam et al., 'Power and positionality: negotiating insider/outside status within and across cultures', p.412; James Banks, 'The lives and values of researchers: Implications for educating citizens in a multicultural society', p.7

<sup>68</sup> Sharan Merriam et al., 'Power and positionality: negotiating insider/outside status within and across cultures', p.412; James Banks, 'The lives and values of researchers: Implications for educating citizens in a multicultural society', p.7

Having lived in the community being researched for approximately 5 years before commencing this study, as well as continuing to do so, I was not an external-outsider. Furthermore, I was not an indigenous-insider due to spending approximately eight years of my 40 in Northamptonshire by the time interviewing concluded. However, I fit somewhat in the indigenous-outsider category due to being Afro-Caribbean but having lived almost exclusively in the New York City metropolitan area before arriving to Northamptonshire. Also, I am partly external-insider because of my greater involvement in the local community, especially with Northamptonshire Black History Association (NBHA), a joint partner in this research. Through various activities in NBHA, as well as being Chair of Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA), I have included myself as being Black in British contexts, adopting this identity as a reflection of migration being a perpetual departure where, '... *you can't go home again. Why? Because you are home ...*'<sup>69</sup> Northamptonshire is home for me despite multiple, and often conflicting views of being simultaneously insider/outside. Because of all these factors, I straddle between being an indigenous-outsider and external-insider although this is more of an academic than functional argument because being Black is primarily and overwhelmingly a mutually transcendental identity of insiderness for me and my interviewees. Any outsider categories I might have been placed in vis-à-vis some or most participants were secondary to being Black and/or Caribbean.

Transcendental Black/Afro-Caribbean identity developed during this research through mutual construction of history with such construction based primarily on including voices of the '*common person*' in collecting these histories. Doing so ensured that participants' voices were genuinely recognised as authentically theirs in the common narrative of local history within national perspectives of Black British history. This required us as mutual co-constructors of history to be

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<sup>69</sup> Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, culture, identity* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.42

focussed on creating inclusive history centred on the experiences of people outside of newsmakers and celebrities. Through doing so, the common man and woman could celebrate his/her contributions to history via their challenges, triumphs and foibles.

People-centred historiography, following from Rodney's people-centred perspectives of history mentioned earlier, should be authentically inclusive of participants' voices due to the researcher being grounded with the so-called 'ordinary' people crucial to unearthing this history. This required the direction of the eventual historiography towards simultaneously portraying the researched with authentic voices clearly recognisable as theirs whilst also using various insider and outsider insights of the researcher to capture their historical experiences as both they would see themselves **and** how others would view their life events from non-Northamptonshire and/or British Caribbean perspectives. Being concurrently insider and outsider was seemingly impossible on a prima facie basis, but simultaneous insider/outsider status is perceived by researchers as being important in both our relationships with participants, as well as in analysing research findings.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, such interweaving of insider/outsider distinctions can be complex and shifting.<sup>71</sup> Positionality can be context dependent based on time, place and social position within the same and/or different times and places during the research.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Elizabeth Chacko, 'Positionality and Praxis: Fieldwork Experiences in Rural India', p.54; Sharan Merriam et al., 'Power and positionality: negotiating insider/outside status within and across cultures', p.411; Carla Reeves, 'A difficult negotiation: fieldwork relations with gatekeepers', p.323; Robert Labaree, 'The risk of 'going observationalist': negotiating the hidden dilemmas of being an insider participant observer', p.101-102; Cynthia Deutsch, 'The Behavioral Scientists: Insider and Outsider', *Journal of Social Issues*, 37 (1981), p.174

<sup>71</sup> Susan Armitage and Sherna Berger Gluck, 'Reflections on Women's Oral History: An Exchange' in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. by Robert Perks and Alastair Thomson (London: Routledge, 1998), p.77

<sup>72</sup> Ayca Ergun and Aykan Erdemir, 'Negotiating Insider and Outsider Identities in the Field: "Insider" in a Foreign Land; "Outsider" in One's Own Land', p.34; Janice Fournillier, 'Trying to Return Home: A Trinidadian's Experience of Becoming a "Native" Ethnographer', p. 742-743; Robina Mohammad, "'Insiders" and/or "outsiders": positionality, theory and praxis' in *Qualitative Methods for Geographers*, ed. by Melanie Limb and Claire Dwyer (London: Arnold, 2001), p.112; Gurchathen Sanghera and Suruchi Thapar-Bjorkert, 'Methodological dilemmas: gatekeepers and positionality in Bradford', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31 (2008), p.558

Despite various perceptions and/or realities of being concurrently insider/outsider, the concept of participants being involved in, as opposed to being detached from research, derives from alternative or feminist geographical research methods concerned with the role power plays in researching social manifestations of participants and communities being researched.<sup>73</sup> Although initially termed '*feminist*', such research methods are primarily concerned with unequal power relations shaping social behaviour and interactions, of which manifestations of ethnicity would fit. Research methods within the paradigm of feminist geography allow the researcher to be directly involved with the sense of commitment research subjects would have with the research, as well as for researcher acknowledgement and discussion of his/her values and attitudes.<sup>74</sup> Such an acknowledgement could also include the researcher situating him/herself within the parameters of the research whilst making known his/her position in relation to the research.<sup>75</sup> Also, positions and relationships with researched subjects, as well as value systems amongst researchers, should not be masked.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, there is an expectation within this paradigm that the researcher will be shaped by the research environment, with such shaping being valued by the researcher.<sup>77</sup>

Feminist historiography addresses similar issues of desiring to understand social imbalances in power that manifest in gender **and** ethnically-based

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<sup>73</sup> Linda McDowell, 'Women/Gender/Feminisms: doing feminist geography', p.382; Cindi Katz, 'Playing the field: questions of fieldwork in geography', *Professional Geographer*, 46 (1994), p.69; Gillian Rose, 'Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics', *Progress in Human Geography*, 21 (1997), pp.309-310

<sup>74</sup> Linda McDowell, 'Women/Gender/Feminisms: doing feminist geography', p.389

<sup>75</sup> Gillian Rose, 'Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics', p.308; Doreen Mattingly and Karen Falconer Al-Hindi, 'Should women count? A context for the debate', *Professional Geographer*, 47 (1995), pp.28-29

<sup>76</sup> Linda McDowell, 'Polyphony and pedagogic authority', *Area*, 26 (1994), p.244; Cindi Katz, 'All the world is staged: intellectuals and the projects of ethnography', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 10 (1992), p.499

<sup>77</sup> Linda McDowell, 'Women/Gender/Feminisms: doing feminist geography', p.389

relationships.<sup>78</sup> Such understandings include reflexivity about researchers' gender, ethnicity, class, educational and other personal factors related to the research and communities being researched dovetailing with their feminist geography contemporaries.<sup>79</sup> Also noted within feminist historiography is that the concept of community as a dynamic group focussed on a common struggle and through common bonds of interest and solidarity.<sup>80</sup> Further similarities between feminist historiography and feminist geography are that feminist historians support concepts of researchers using their work for empowering social change, countering perceptions of masculine-centred research methods focussed on hierarchical structures as well as including the relatively powerless and voiceless in various forms of historical narratives.<sup>81</sup> Additional synergies between these two feminist disciplines are that both allow for enabling, collaborating and including people as narrators of history and contributors to historical interpretations.<sup>82</sup>

Using feminist research methods is not exclusive to women or being a woman. Although the feminist oral historian Kristina Minister suggests that only women should interview women in order to fully capture their narrations<sup>83</sup>, Gluck and Armitage give the opinion that men could, at least in some cases, apply feminist

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<sup>78</sup> Karen Olson and Linda Shopes, 'Crossing Boundaries, Building Bridges: Doing Oral History among Working-Class Women and Men', pp.189-191

<sup>79</sup> Susan Armitage and Sherna Berger Gluck, 'Reflections on Women's Oral History: An Exchange', p.74-76; Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jack, 'Learning to Listen', p.19; Kristina Minister, 'A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview', p.38; Katherine Borland, '"That's Not What I Said": Interpretative Conflict in Oral Narrative Research' in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, ed. by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (London: Routledge, 1991), p.72; Judith Stacey, 'Can there Be a Feminist Ethnography?' in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, ed. by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (London: Routledge, 1991), p.112

<sup>80</sup> Rina Benmayor, 'Testimony, Action Research, and Empowerment: Puerto Rican Women and Popular Education' in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, ed. by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (London: Routledge, 1991), p.165

<sup>81</sup> Kristina Minister, 'A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview', pp.3, 31; Rina Benmayor, 'Testimony, Action Research, and Empowerment: Puerto Rican Women and Popular Education', p.159; Susan Armitage and Sherna Berger Gluck, 'Reflections on Women's Oral History: An Exchange', p.75; Karen Olson and Linda Shopes, 'Crossing Boundaries, Building Bridges: Doing Oral History among Working-Class Women and Men', p.201

<sup>82</sup> Kathryn Minister, 'A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview', p.34; Katherine Borland, '"That's Not What I Said": Interpretative Conflict in Oral Narrative Research', p.69-71, 74

<sup>83</sup> Kathryn Minister, 'A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview', p.35

methodological principles more easily than some women who at least could possibly be more bound by ethnicity, class, gender and sexual orientation paradigms and biases.<sup>84</sup> The feminist methodological themes of including participants in the research process and research findings, as well as examining relationships of power in social manifestations, all fit within how my positionality dovetailed in this research. Furthermore, collaborating and constructing research with the community being researched, as well as understanding the researcher has been shaped by, and helped to shape, the community being researched, all resonate in conjunction with my own similar historical and educational principles.

Before conducting interviews, I deliberately intended to become a participant-observer. This was desired in order to observe the people involved in NBHA, as well as learning about the Northamptonshire Caribbean community in greater detail. Particularly important in participant-observation is the discovery of communally acceptable limits to conversation, as well as collectively acceptable norms, routines, and practices that affirm group identity.<sup>85</sup> Through being a participant-observation of NBHA, I wished to transform the perception of me towards becoming perceived as an insider even if this could not be achieved fully due to being American and not being involved actively with the local Caribbean community before conducting this research. Attempting to diminish outsider status before conducting interviews can enable potential participants to simultaneously understand the researcher's preparation in terms of the people being investigated whilst recognising the potential for increased voice and power to the community that the participants would gain through research findings and dissemination.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, being a participant-observer

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<sup>84</sup> Susan Armitage and Sherna Berger Gluck, 'Reflections on Women's Oral History: An Exchange', p.77

<sup>85</sup> Paul Lichterman, 'What Do Movements Mean? The Value of Participant-Observation', *Qualitative Sociology*, 21 (1998), p.405, 408

<sup>86</sup> Alan Wieder, 'Testimony as Oral History: Lessons from South Africa', *Educational Researcher*, 33 (2004), p.26

facilitates gaining trust because the researcher actively participates in the community being researched, with resulting significant elements of trust being earned. This earned trust can be integral in genuinely capturing the voices of narrators and the community being researched.<sup>87</sup>

The benefits of being a participant-observer included learning the norms and culture of the community being researched and how social movements operate internally.<sup>88</sup> A further benefit of participant-observation was that the activist paradigm of NBHA was deliberate in creating active projections of identities as a means of dissenting from state institutional and/or larger British social constructions of their identities. Identities developing through dissenting activism can result in them having more intense and fundamental meanings.<sup>89</sup> Recognition that NBHA had at least some dimensions of being an activist organisation became apparent during the progress of this research. This activism became evident through listening to NBHA members, observing Association meetings and growing to gradually participate in various conversations within these meetings once my knowledge of local and national Black British history increased. Also through participant-observation, I was shaped by NBHA because I not only discovered how fundamentally Black history was generally ignored in British schools historically, but wished to do something to combat this as a result of discovering this fundamental historical ignorance. Such desires to counter this severely lacking historical knowledge were further fuelled by my Northampton-born son starting primary school at the same time this research commenced.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p.25-26

<sup>88</sup> Paul Lichterman, 'What Do Movements Mean? The Value of Participant-Observation', p.408, 416; Janice Fournillier, 'Trying to Return Home: A Trinidadian's Experience of Becoming a "Native" Ethnographer', p. 754

<sup>89</sup> Paul Lichterman, 'What Do Movements Mean? The Value of Participant-Observation', p.402

Initial assumptions and expectations were that the researching experience would be mostly divorced from my prior career teaching in local secondary schools. However, these seemingly divergent experiences quickly and repeatedly dovetailed. Becoming a Lecturer in Black British History at the University of Northampton during the development of this research helped to form my opinions both as a researcher and local/national community member, as well as causing me to recognise the significant and overwhelming underdevelopment of Black and Black British history generally in Britain. This includes, but not exclusive of, discovering in the timeframe of this research that only three of 133 universities in Britain have history modules specifically dedicated to Black British history.<sup>90</sup> This lack of teaching Black British history in British universities is part of larger UK-wide attitudes in academia that, according to Pilkington, are emblematic of, '... *the sheer weight of Whiteness in the academy, a phenomenon characteristic, arguably of all institutions in British society.*'<sup>91</sup> All these factors fuelled participant-observation linking with the research by simultaneously informing knowledge about the neglect of Black British history in British education and my desires to use history to combat the disease of ignorance that manifests itself in ethnically-based discrimination working to the detriment of Black people in Britain.

A prime example supporting my prior mentioned belief of the current neglect of Black history in British schools is when, in my Black British History module in September 2010, students were asked, 'What did you learn about Black British history in your prior education?' All 29 students stated that they learned nothing about Black British history, except in some cases about slavery and the slave trade in their compulsory and 6<sup>th</sup> form school experiences. Students taking

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<sup>90</sup> George Watley, 'Students' use of Northamptonshire Black History Association archives as an inspiration to recognise, include and develop oral history', (unpublished paper, *History of Education Society UK*, Sheffield, England, 6 December 2009)

<sup>91</sup> Andrew Pilkington, *Institutional Racism in the Academy: a case study*, (Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books, 2011), p.138

my Black British History module in 2011 also unanimously articulated having similar experiences after being asked the same question. Other recognitions of British socio-cultural failure to learn about Black British history derive from criticism of the police in failing to incorporate such history in their training and only relatively recent and belated acknowledgement of British African and Caribbean heritage.<sup>92</sup> Further failures to recognise the history of Black people in Britain extend to academia, media and film.<sup>93</sup>

The local Caribbean community is not generally expected to be concerned with the future academic dissemination of this research. There have not been any inquiries made in this area amongst interviewees or members of the local Caribbean community. Participants and community members are primarily concerned with the public, non-academic dissemination of this research. These concerns are similar to other marginalized and/or discriminated groups wishing their collected stories/histories to be used towards the teleology of potentially improving their collective social position.<sup>94</sup> The perceived low social position of Caribbean people in Britain derives from the combination of overall denial of Black British history in commonly accepted or taught British historiography and narratives. These perceptions connect with the personal experiences of the researcher. Furthermore, common understandings of ethnically-based discrimination facilitated empathy rather than mere sympathy with participants and local Caribbeans generally. Such empathy also provides insights for greater

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<sup>92</sup> Sandra Jackson-Opoku, 'A light on black London; The city's long-hidden African and Caribbean heritage begins to emerge. Climb on a minibus and appreciate the sacrifice, the music, the past', *Los Angeles Times*, 30 December 2007; History & Policy, 'Met police training still ignores Black history' (2006) <[http://www.historyandpolicy.org/docs/met\\_police\\_training.pdf](http://www.historyandpolicy.org/docs/met_police_training.pdf)> (accessed 14 March 2012)

<sup>93</sup> Stephen Bourne, *Black in the British Frame: The Black Experience in British Film and Television* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005) p. xiv

<sup>94</sup> Sharan Merriam et al., 'Power and positionality: negotiating insider/outside status within and across cultures', p.414; Richa Nagar, 'Collaboration Across Borders: Moving Beyond Positionality', p.361 ; Lanita Jacobs-Huey, 'The Natives Are Gazing and Talking Back: Reviewing the Problematics of Positionality, Voice, and Accountability among "Native" Anthropologists', p.795

comprehension of the importance and emphasis many of the interviewees placed on having this history simultaneously being unearthed and eventually made easily accessible to the general public. Furthermore, having such local experiences enabled me to be knowledgeable of, and familiar with, local places, employers and numerous public and private spaces commonly known to, and mentioned by, interviewees.

In summation, the combination of genuine empathy with research participants because of common ethnicity **and** at least some common general experiences primarily based on being Black in Britain greatly facilitated and augmented this oral history research. The position of being an external-insider provided some advantages vis-à-vis hypothetical indigenous-insiders in terms of asking more probing questions. Another advantage of being an external-insider derived from being able to generate more detailed responses from interviewees than indigenous-insiders would, due to the latter's assumed, but unstated, knowledge in conversations with fellow indigenous-insiders. This would be reflected by the unsaid or, as Reynolds mentions, the value of '*taken for granted*' elements of co-ethnic friendships/relationships based on common understandings.<sup>95</sup> This is not to say that the unsaid never existed whilst interviewing. However, quickly recognising outsidership both in terms of me as the interviewer, as well as the recognising the role of the audio recorder during interviews, helped interviewer and interviewee to remember that history was being recorded as opposed to having merely a friendly conversation.<sup>96</sup>

Tapping into appropriate, simultaneous insider **and** outsider status is crucial for an oral history researcher in order to obtain and disseminate the history of

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<sup>95</sup> Tracey Reynolds, 'Friendship Networks, Social Capital and Ethnic Identity: Researching the Perspectives of Caribbean Young People in Britain', p.386-387

<sup>96</sup> Acknowledging the audio recorder was something that occurred in virtually every interview at some point when interviewees did not state the unsaid, or what would have been elaborated on in more detail if the author had been a total outsider.

communities being researched, especially through including their voices. Oral history practitioners should be able to understand the dynamics of insiderness and outsiderhood in order to use either, or both, to facilitate what researchers wish to learn from interviewees and communities being researched. Also, but no less important, oral historians should flexibly but rigorously use the combination of being insider and outsider to unearth and disseminate history whenever faced with this seemingly binary duality. The next methods section moves from these concepts by addressing the practicalities of data collection through recording participants' narratives.

## Methods

In terms of the actual methods used to acquire data, the author chose to become a participant-observer before commencing the interview process. Some advantages of being a participant-observer are in understanding the processes of relationships, as well as becoming bonded with the community being researched.<sup>97</sup> Also, being a participant-observer within these concepts reflects intentional recognition that a reciprocal relationship between the researcher and participant should occur in order to obtain much fuller data from interviewees, as well as the overall community being researched.<sup>98</sup> Participant-observation relates to insiderness in the sense that it would be used to recognise that genuine insiderness is a process of achievement rather than granted to the researcher without question or result of positive observations of the researcher by potential participants, as well as the larger community being researched.<sup>99</sup> For these reasons, participant-observation was seen as the first step in both understanding

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<sup>97</sup> Elaine Bauer, 'Sources and Means of Mixing: The Growth of Mixed African-Caribbean and White British Families in London', *Oral History Society*, 37 (2009), p.77; Janice Fournillier, 'Trying to Return Home: A Trinidadian's Experience of Becoming a "Native" Ethnographer', p. 742

<sup>98</sup> Kathryn Haynes, 'Other lives in accounting: Critical reflections on oral history methodology in action', *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 21 (2010), p.224

<sup>99</sup> Robert Labaree, 'The risk of 'going observationalist': negotiating the hidden dilemmas of being an insider participant observer', p.102

local Caribbeans, as well as integral in facilitating the researcher's ability to earn the trust of potential interviewees amongst others involved in NBHA and Caribbean people more generally in Northamptonshire.

The initial plan was to be a participant-observer for 9 months, having planned to do so until interviewing commenced. However, being a participant-observer occurred and evolved throughout the project's lifespan, something unforeseen. The initial decision to become a participant-observer was a conscious one because the author's knowledge of the local and national Caribbean community needed to increase before conducting interviews. Also, trust between the researcher and the local community, including but not exclusive of NBHA, needed to be fostered. Time spent as a participant-observer proved to be fundamental in the development of this trust and mutual respect. Being a participant-observer in this context was exhibited by actively attending meetings and offering support to the Association during this time. These initial observations were unrecorded as because reflections made about individuals and NBHA at this time were not perceived as integral to this thesis. In retrospect however, it would have been useful to have recorded notes about observations made during this initial stage as this might have provided more and/or different insights into the local Caribbean community that might have proven useful from an analytical perspective. Also potentially useful would have been audio recordings of the author after NBHA meetings and other interactions with Northamptonshire Caribbeans unknown to the author before research commenced. In hindsight, such notes and audio recordings would have been made.

Despite recognition of lacking recording of initial participant-observations, the initial nine months doing so was useful in terms of the author being perceived as a genuine, trustworthy insider in the eyes of NBHA and potential interviewees.

This profile was developed through distributing promotional materials, giving support during a confidential organisational matter, as well as being part of the editorial team of an NBHA publication produced in 2010.<sup>100</sup> Through being a participant-observer, the author became accepted quickly by NBHA, being co-opted as a committee member within six months of commencing research.<sup>101</sup> An added but somewhat unforeseen consequence of this approach was that the author became more integrated and involved in the local Caribbean community, something that grew throughout this project.

Interviewees were initially sought by using prior contacts known to members of NBHA, as well as in one case, a participant sought the author out so that she could be one of the first people interviewed. This effort was made by this participant to demarcate her position as an important member of the local Black community and NBHA. More generally, as NBHA was a collaborative partner in this project, it was recognised very early that limiting Association-related potential participants would have been foolish and potentially detrimental to obtaining interviewees. Underlining this was NBHA's Heritage Lottery Funded research on Matta Fancanta Movement (MFM) that ended unsuccessfully in 2009 because of various disagreements which led important MFM members not to participate, rendering this project unviable.<sup>102</sup> In order to avoid a similar fate, the author recognised that important gatekeepers needed to be identified and interacted with successfully in order to receive their support. The people-centred perspective of the author enabled this process to occur because being grounded with the community being researched would enable a mutual construction of history facilitated by participants, the local Caribbean community, as well as the author. This intentional mutual construction of

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<sup>100</sup> NBHA, *Black British History: Selected Studies* (Northampton: NBHA, 2010), p.2

<sup>101</sup> NBHA, Committee Meeting Minutes, 2 April 2009, p.4

<sup>102</sup> The specific disagreements and tension leading to the project's failure are in a confidential report the author was not privy to.

history assisted the project not only in terms of obtaining a greater number of interviewees, but also facilitated progress through some participants and others in the local Caribbean community giving, lending and/or directing the author towards documents that augmented some findings. This concept of mutual construction of history is consistent with Olesen's assertion that participants support the research process through helping to construct meanings and data to be used by the researcher.<sup>103</sup>

In addition to author-conducted interviews, over a hundred recorded and transcribed NBHP/NBHA interviews, approximately half of Northamptonshire Caribbeans, were available to the author. All these interviews were read and many have been referred to in succeeding chapters. These extant interviews were useful for pre-interview research of participants, as well providing greater insights into the local Caribbean community. In terms of author conducted interviews, all 22<sup>104</sup> have been digitally recorded and fully transcribed, save one due to the quality of the recording being too poor for a full transcription. Furthermore, Nvivo was contemplated to be used for data analysis. However, after speaking with colleagues across various disciplines, it was decided that using Nvivo for this research would not have been time-effective because the amount of time needed to learn and use this software would have outweighed its potential benefits. However, it is acknowledged that using Nvivo would be more appropriate for larger scale projects involving significantly more interviews and/or multiple interviewers. For example, Nell et al's 1945-1975 supermarket narratives used Nvivo for 68 of 122 interviews conducted.<sup>105</sup>

Although no explanation was offered for failing to use Nvivo for the remaining

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<sup>103</sup> Virginia Olesen, 'Feminisms and models in qualitative research' in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p.158; Kathryn Haynes, 'Other lives in accounting' p.224

<sup>104</sup> 20 participants were interviewed individually, as well as there being one group interview and a participant having been interviewed subsequently specifically using Michael McMillan's *The Front Room* as ephemera.

<sup>105</sup> Dawn Nell, Andrew Alexander, Gareth Shaw and Adrian Bailey, 'Investigating Shopper Narratives of the Supermarket in Early Post-War England, 1945-75', pp.62, 68

54 interviews, using this software for slightly over half the interviews conducted indicates that Nvivo takes a significant amount of time to employ as an analytical tool. This is also particularly notable because were four main researchers in this project, including the esteemed Professor Gareth Shaw.<sup>106</sup> In comparison, smaller scale oral history research using similar numbers of interviewees to the author did not use Nvivo or any other coding software.<sup>107</sup> Data analysis in these contexts was highly reliant on re-reading transcripts and/or re-listening to recorded interviews to identify key themes.<sup>108</sup>

Themes and patterns within interviews were identified and analysed based on frequent re-reading transcripts, as well as to a lesser extent re-listening to the recorded interviews. Through this analysis, recurrent themes surfaced and subjective strands of connections between identity and consumption became evident. For example, themes involving compulsory and non-compulsory education emerged prominently throughout nearly every interview. Connections between education and consumption were unforeseen before interviewing, as well as notable because various other aspects of consumption were focussed upon during the interviews. Recognising these links led to conceptualising the **Compulsory schooling and educational alternatives** chapter, as well as development of a chapter on **Cultural currencies** that is heavily infused with education themes.

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid, p.61

<sup>107</sup> Jo Stanley, 'We Were Skivvies/We Had a Ball': Shame and Interwar Ships, *Oral History Society*, 38 (2010), p.66; Jennifer Clary-Lemon, 'We're not ethnic, we're Irish!': Oral histories and the discursive construction of immigrant identity', *Discourse and Society*, 21 (2010), pp.1, 13; Violetta Hiondiou, 'What do starving people eat? The Case of Greece through oral history', *Continuity and Change*, 26 (2011), p.115; Karen Flynn, "'I'm Glad That Someone Is Telling the Nursing Story': Writing Black Canadian Women's History', *Journal of Black Studies*, 38 (2008), p.455

<sup>108</sup> Jo Stanley, 'We Were Skivvies/We Had a Ball', p.66; Jennifer Clary-Lemon, 'We're not ethnic, we're Irish!', p.13; Violetta Hiondiou, 'What do starving people eat?', pp.115-116; Karen Flynn, "'I'm Glad That Someone Is Telling the Nursing Story'", p.455

Despite not using Nvivo or other similar software full transcription was necessary in order to perform systematic analysis of data, including identifying important words and phrases across interviews through numerous searches of interview transcripts. Also, full transcription was perceived by the author and NBHA as significantly important in sharing participants' histories with the general public. This desire is similar to Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert's recognition that participants wanted research findings to be accessible.<sup>109</sup> Because of this mutual understanding, there was a clear expectation that interviews in written transcript and audio form would be publicly available. Participants were clearly informed that their interviews in audio and transcribed forms would eventually be available publicly, and they agreed to this when consent forms were signed. Furthermore, many interviewees expressed opinions that their collected narratives should be publicly available, from which the author inferred that many participants would have been disappointed if their oral histories were not publicly available.<sup>110</sup> This desire of interviewees to be publicly recognised for their contributions to oral history projects is not unique, as Nell et al also recognised that their participants expressed similar inclinations whilst offering their narratives about post-War supermarket shopping.<sup>111</sup>

As for the actual sample of participants deriving directly or indirectly from the NBHA network, 16 Northamptonshire Caribbeans were interviewed. Furthermore, the one group interview conducted also had participants that were all well-known to the Association, including one person that had been

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<sup>109</sup> Gurchathen Sanghera and Suruchi Thapar-Bjorkert, 'Methodological dilemmas: gatekeepers and positionality in Bradford', p.553

<sup>110</sup> Although the author never asked participants what would happen if their oral histories were not made publicly available, he has inferred that many interviewees would have been very disappointed if this occurred. This inference is based on numerous interactions the author had with many participants, especially including those interviewees that were committee members of NBHA. Public dissemination of this research, as well as any local aspect of Black British history known to NBHA, was expected to be disseminated. It is acknowledged that this was unsaid, but this unsaid rationale was so powerful, asking this question would have labelled the author as a clear outsider with all the negative baggage associated with this status.

<sup>111</sup> Dawn Nell et al, 'Investigating Shopper Narratives of the Supermarket in Early Post-War England, 1945-75', p.66

interviewed previously. However, to achieve as representative a sample of participants as possible, efforts were made to capture voices outside the NBHA network. Advertisements were placed in shops and community venues in Northampton and Wellingborough which many Caribbeans frequented. This endeavour helped to obtain two participants, one having been discovered after the author conducted an event to disseminate preliminary research findings. This event was the Oral History Roadshow conducted between March and June 2011, and presented a challenge to the research that will be elaborated on in more detail later in this section. The remaining two interviewees derived from direct and indirect contacts the author had with these participants before being interviewed. Of these, one participant shared adjacent desks with the author at university whilst the other interviewee was discovered after a conversation with a friend of a PhD student that worked in the same office as the author. The combination of these two interviewees not being part of the NBHA network, having connections directly or indirectly with the author as a result of researching for a PhD, as well as not being part of the NBHA network, provide different and often dissenting voices vis-à-vis many or most participants within the NBHA network.

It was desired by the author to capture more non-NBHA voices and this research has been somewhat limited by the inability to obtain more historical accounts of people outside the NBHA nexus. It was disappointing that more participants outside the NBHA nexus were not interviewed and it can only be tentatively concluded that this occurred because NBHA-based participants may have more active Black and/or Caribbean identities than co-ethnic non-participants. Exemplifying non-participation of non-NBHA-based local Caribbeans is the author's attempt to interview children of participants having lived in the county during the era being researched. The author spoke with a son each of two participants in the homes of these interviewees immediately after

each interview, asking both men to be interviewed based partly on aspects of these conversations being of interest. Despite being of a similar age, gender and ethnicity to the author, both men declined to be interviewed without further comment. Such refusal to be interviewed reflects the inherent self-selectivity of any oral history research that significantly lessens the possibility of achieving a fully representative sample due to participants having to opt-in to being interviewed. Due to participants having to opt-in to being interviewed, as well as other aspects of self-selectivity hindering a full representation of local Caribbeans, no claims are being made of the research sample being totally representative of Northamptonshire Caribbeans. Furthermore, the pool of potential interviewees was limited due to potential participants having to be Caribbeans that lived in Northamptonshire from the 1950s-1980s **and** from 2009-2011, or for such potential participants living in the county pre-1980s having visited Northamptonshire during the research timeframe if they relocated afterwards.

In terms of attempting to address potential imbalances in the project, an even gender balance was sought in terms of interviewees. This was almost achieved with 11 men and 9 women being interviewed, as well as a group interview of mostly men having been conducted in a Working Men's Club. A perfect gender balance had been achieved when interviews had been scheduled to conclude in July 2010. However, the author was informed by an important gatekeeper that two participants in the prior NBHA project were available on short notice to be interviewed, as they lived overseas. This short notice was only two days and resulted from them visiting Northamptonshire during September 2010. The resulting gender imbalance was outweighed by the ability to obtain more data, particularly from local Caribbeans having permanently left Northamptonshire, as well as Britain totally, for Jamaica and Zimbabwe. These two interviews enabled the project to include voices of the '*losers*' antithetical to Hionidou's

assertion that non-representativeness in oral history research occurs because of only interviewing survivors, '*winners*' both in terms of surviving the historical era and up to the date of the interview.<sup>112</sup> These two mentioned interviewees were '*losers*' in the context of not surviving permanently in Northamptonshire to the day of the interview although could be considered '*winners*' in terms of maintaining their ethnic identities through their permanent residential departure from Northamptonshire. Furthermore, interviewing participants living outside of the county works toward eliminating the problem Gluck and Armitage note in terms of most oral history narrators having or developing successful '*coping strategies*' whilst non-narrators possibly did not demonstrate this ability.<sup>113</sup> Voices of the Northamptonshire Caribbean '*losers*' offer different perspectives to the overwhelming majority of interviewees having most or all their life experiences in Northamptonshire, as well as including the narratives of those unable or unwilling to cope with permanently living as an ethnic minority person in the county and Britain.

In terms of interview length, total interview time for all interviews was 33 hours and 39 minutes with an average interview time of slightly under one hour and 32 minutes. The duration of individual interviews ranged from 35 minutes to three hours and three minutes. Male interviewees' interview time deviated more narrowly than the interview time for women, ranging from one hour and five minutes to two hours exactly for men whilst interview time for women ranged from 35 minutes to three hours and three minutes. Despite gender differences in the deviation of interview times amongst men and women, mean interview time for men and women was virtually identical, one hour and 31 minutes for men and one hour and 30 minutes for women. The single group interview lasted one hour and 50 minutes. 13 of 22 interviews were conducted in participants' homes

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<sup>112</sup> Violetta Hiondiou, 'What do starving people eat?', p.116

<sup>113</sup> Susan Armitage and Sherna Berger Gluck, 'Reflections on Women's Oral History: An Exchange', p.79

whilst three were conducted in pubs/Working Men's Clubs, two in offices of the University of Northampton familiar with the author and four in offices of local Black organisations familiar to interviewees and/or the author. In addition, a cross-section of interviewees originating from, or having parentage of, different Caribbean islands was sought. 14 of 20 interviewees were Jamaican, with additional interviewees originating from Antigua, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Grenada, as well as two from Barbados. The Jamaican sample appears disproportionately large and could be construed as conflating Jamaican with Caribbean. However, as Jamaicans represented approximately 60 percent of Caribbean migration to Britain between 1961-1991, 70 percent of interviewees being of Jamaican origin is statistically reasonable, particularly for an acknowledged non-representative sample.<sup>114</sup>

Within concepts of multi-faceted attempts to achieve a representative sample, even if not fully achieved, the author's people-centred historical perspective suggested that capturing the full essence of local Caribbean voices desiring to be heard would be important. This was reflected by seeking to include as many of the diverse aspects of the local Caribbean community as possible from those having lived in Northamptonshire during the era being researched. The people-centred historian perspective of the author was exemplified through directing the Oral History Roadshow (OHR) from March to June of 2011. The OHR travelled to various venues across Northamptonshire, including schools, libraries and other publicly accessible venues across the county. Its objectives were to enable the general public to learn more about local dimensions of this aspect of Black British history whilst interviewees would see the visibility of their contributions to the community at large. However, sharing some preliminary research findings had several unforeseen consequences.

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<sup>114</sup> David Owen, 'A profile of Caribbean households and families in Great Britain' in *Caribbean Families in Britain and the Trans-Atlantic World*, ed. by Harry Goulbourne and Mary Chamberlain (London: Macmillan, 2001), p.66

As a result of the OHR, many members of the local community recognised that Wellingborough was underrepresented in this historical presentation. This shortcoming was not surprising to the author, as it had been recognised beforehand. However, only two participants from Wellingborough had been interviewed before the OHR despite people in the town's Caribbean community knowing about this research through NBHA's quarterly newsletter, advertisements being placed by the author in select local shops, as well as influential Caribbeans in Wellingborough sharing this knowledge with their co-ethnic townsfolk. During the OHR pre-launch on 10 March 2011, Frank Whitehead experienced this Roadshow, triggering memories of 1950s Wellingborough which he eloquently shared with the audience. This introduced Whitehead as a potential participant and was interviewed less than one month later. It is surprising that Whitehead was not discovered earlier because he is the uncle of Angela Ghavami, NBHA's then Association Manager and someone the author had been in regular contact with for many months before the OHR's launch. Furthermore, Norma Watson, the other interviewee from Wellingborough post-OHR launch, desired to be interviewed only after recognising the lack of Wellingborough representation in the OHR. This is also surprising because Watson was on the OHR planning committee from its inception in September 2010. Without the OHR, these two participants would not have been interviewed. Acknowledging links between presenting findings and perceptions of lacking genuine community representation renders it beneficial if some form of preliminary findings can be given to the general public for any oral history/community oriented research project, as sometimes people do not see their lack of representation until witnessing it directly in terms of their voices being perceptually absent in historical presentations. The culmination of the OHR reflects the author's position as a people-centred historian because the Roadshow facilitated research participants' and the

general community's involvement in, and partial shaping of, the research and its findings.

Also shaping the author's research analysis is pre- and post-interview communication the author had with eight of 20 interviewees. This communication ranged from informal conversations whilst in the town centre of Northampton on numerous occasions to e-mail and face-to-face contact the author had with these participants as either a member of NBHA or about Black history generally. Through these interactions, the author became friendly with many participants and felt a more integrated part of the local Caribbean community.

In addition to actual interviews, books, advertisements and other printed materials were used during interviews to help trigger the memories of participants. These were discovered afterwards based on reading and analysing interview transcripts. Such books, advertisements and other printed materials used during interviews ranged from 1973 Northampton Chronicle and Echo advertisements for Bob Marley and The Wailers concerts to Bernard Coard's **How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Sub-Normal in the British Education System**. Using the advert and Coard's book in this way enabled interviewees to freely mention why these documents and related history surrounding them were important historically. Also important to mention is that the discovery process through using these documents was not solely author-led because some interviewees directed towards and/or gave the author documents they found interesting and relevant, and these were used by the author. Exemplifying participant-led, author-used printed materials was **New Ethnic**, a magazine produced by local Caribbeans in September 1980. **New Ethnic** was used by the author to augment research analysis. Overall, using this magazine to trigger the memories of participants supplements their vibrant historical

accounts. Simultaneously using such printed materials alongside interviews augmented and illuminated participants' historical accounts more than either of these components alone.

The author's positionality alongside recognising the benefits and limitations of using oral history has helped to shaped research methods employed. Being a relative insider enabled acquisition of more data in comparison to an outsider. Also, it was clearly understood that some voices within the Caribbean community would be unheard and unrecorded due to self-selectivity, location of potential participants during the era of interviewing, and other factors beyond the author's control. Furthermore, NBHP/NBHA extant interviews, as well as **Sharing the Past**, have augmented research methods and methodology by enabling the author to understand much more about local Caribbeans generally, and participants more specifically, than if such information had not existed. A totally representative sample could not be achieved. However, constructing and disseminating research findings with the community being researched is important from a methods standpoint. More interviews were obtained in this research because this concept was employed. Furthermore, greater comprehension of perceived lacking voices from an important sub-sector of Caribbeans was achieved; those of Wellingborough co-ethnics. The methods of acquiring data are not claimed to be perfect, but reflect information already available to the author combined with capturing new historical accounts from local Caribbeans that actively chose to share their oral histories.

## Conclusion

The combination of using extant interviews alongside conducting and transcribing interviews for this research provided the primary basis for collecting data. Within acquiring data in this manner, the author's people-centred historical perspective is best exemplified by participants' and researcher's mutual desires to co-construct local Caribbeans' history. Methodologically, this co-construction of history is important because this research is intended to provide both '*more history*' and '*anti-history*' to academic and general audiences. Further augmenting the rationale of providing '*more history*' and '*anti-history*' is the use of feminist research methodologies in this research that aids acquiring and analysing data collected through comprehending how paradigms of power shaped this project and its findings. Such feminist research methodologies shaped the research in non-gender ways, influencing the research from both methodological and methods standpoints.

In terms of the actual methods used, the author-conducted and transcribed interviews, extant interviews from prior NBHP/NBHA non-academic research, as well as author and participant discovered documents; all were used in conjunction to illuminate local Caribbeans' consumption history and its identity related influences. This choice of research methods was based on the author's people-centred historical perspective exemplified by using oral history as the primary means of collecting data. Through interviewing participants, their means, rationale and motivations underpinning their decision making processes became evident. Further adding to the author's people-centred historical perspective is that interviewees, and the community being researched, were able to comment on, and shape, research analysis through public, non-academic dissemination of preliminary research findings.

In terms of linking methodology to methods employed, **Sharing the Past** and NBHP/A interviews provide many useful reference points from which to delve deeper into Northamptonshire Black history, including but not exclusive of the interviews and other historical information collected by local academics and community based historians. As Black history generally relates to local Caribbeans more specifically, the idea that research leading to NBHA's dissemination of local Black British history was based on people-centred historical research. This was viewed as important in developing notions that the rich local history of Black and Caribbean people, if unearthed and shared with the larger community, would lead to greater recognition of Black and/or Caribbean people as genuine, full-fledged members of the local community. Furthermore, the author's people-centred historical perspective aims to provide '*more history*' and '*anti-history*' as a means of countering traditional historical paradigms that often perceive Black people as historical problems, even if implicitly through exclusion from national historical narratives.

In terms of positionality, the author is simultaneous insider and outsider, both of which are relevant in this research. Being a simultaneous insider in terms of ethnicity and outsider in terms of nationality combines interviewees' general feelings of being comfortable with a co-ethnic person interviewing/researching them and their community whilst outsider status enabled more insightful queries in comparison to insiders. Despite this dichotomy, the concept of being, or perceiving each other to be, Black is a transcendental identity. This mutually but implicitly agreed upon transcendental Black identity facilitated feelings of familiarity between the author and participants, as well as between the author and NBHA. What the following chapters represent are mutual efforts between researcher and community to provide both '*more history*' and '*anti-history*' to academic and non-academic audiences. The aim of this effort is to provide greater access by Black people to cultural power through narrative. Grosvenor

asserts that such counter-narratives are necessary if Black people in Britain are to successfully challenge hegemony.<sup>115</sup>

Oral history is the chosen primary method of acquiring data because this method allows for the exposition of historical facts and occurrences alongside allowing for participants to explain in significant detail rationale for, and insight into, their historical actions. In addition, using oral history allows for participants to make comments on historical documents and books, adding to historical perspectives outside traditional, academic paradigms. The next four chapters use a combination of oral history alongside various sources of information in order to unearth and analyse connections between Northamptonshire Caribbeans' identity and consumption history.

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<sup>115</sup> Ian Grosvenor, *Assimilating Identities*, p.196

## Chapter 3: Consumption practices and practicalities

### Introduction

Although knowledge of many aspects of Caribbean consumer behaviour specifically, as well as Black people generally, in post-War Britain has been written about by Gilroy, Fryer, Phillips et al, perspectives within their works were virtually exclusively from large urban/metropolitan vantage points. As such, the consumer practices and practicalities of provincial Caribbeans and/or Black people in Britain generally have been ignored and/or considerably under-researched, something which this chapter will ameliorate by using the example of Northamptonshire Caribbeans. Consumer practices will refer to exactly what goods and services were acquired whilst consumer practicalities will refer to where and how such practices were actually manifested. Consumer practices and practicalities correlate with numerous aspects of identity that will be addressed to some degree within this chapter whilst being developed in subsequent chapters more fully and specifically. Various means of acquiring and using goods and services will be clearly demarcated in this chapter in order to develop frameworks of functional consumer behaviour analysed in subsequent chapters.

Northamptonshire Caribbean consumer practices and practicalities in their varied and various forms will be, for the purposes of this chapter, divided into three categories: strictly or overwhelmingly '*typical*' local Afro-Caribbean consumer experiences, integration with '*typical*' Northamptonshire consumer experiences and '*atypical*' Afro-Caribbean and/or Northamptonshire consumer experiences. The litmus test for '*typicality*' is the facets of consumerism, material or otherwise, many people in the given social/geographical grouping would either have participated in or been familiar with. '*Atypicality*' in contrast would be components of consumer manifestations only limited numbers of

people in the given social/geographical grouping would either have participated in or been familiar with.

Categories surrounding '*typicality*' and '*atypicality*' are not mutually exclusive, nor fixed in terms of timeframes amongst individuals and/or groups. However, this chapter will significantly augment the understanding of the specifics of actualised purchasing and acquisition of consumer goods and leisure whilst developing an understanding of how '*typicality*' and '*atypicality*' of consumer behaviour reflected various permutations of individual and collective identities. Such connections between identity and consumer behaviour reflect local Caribbeans' combination of celebrating and/or rejecting their identities as Black, Caribbean and/or British people through consumption. Ideas involving identity link with concepts of community, or more correctly communities, local Caribbeans were part of. This chapter will provide empirical bases connecting with identity that subsequent chapters will develop in significantly greater analytical detail. Through dividing consumer behaviour in these three categories, it will be illuminated that despite some similarities and generalities that can be gleaned from these provincial Caribbeans in Britain, local co-ethnics exercised varied choices from a plethora of consumer options based in large part around ethnic, national and localised identities.

The section on '*typical*' Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbean consumer experiences will refer to practices and/or understandings many if not most co-ethnics would have had and/or exhibited **as Afro-Caribbeans**. For example, McMillan's *The Front Room* finely illustrates many consumer items common to Caribbeans in Britain in the post-War era, which this chapter employs to demonstrate how local consumer manifestations were similar and/or different to

national trends symbolised in this work.<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that *The Front Room* will be the only literature referred to in this section of the chapter, but there is not another identifiable reference that specifically delineates and comments on the consumer items purchased by Caribbeans in their homes, as well as the rationale behind their acquisition and display. As such, McMillan's work facilitates an understanding of exactly what at least some 'typical' Caribbean practical domestic consumer manifestations actually were. In addition, general British trends of consumption such as fashion, music and other consumer trends will also be mentioned to determine some key aspects of Afro-Caribbean consumption whilst recognising local Caribbean integration within county-wide and general British consumer trends, practices and exhibitions.

'Typical' Northamptonshire consumer experiences will refer to local consumption experiences many local Caribbeans had alongside their non-Afro-Caribbean contemporaries in Northamptonshire, or at least aspects of consumption both groups would have been familiar with. These will be defined and delineated in relation to how Caribbean people acquired goods and services that reflected living in Northamptonshire, such as, but not exclusive to using local shops, pubs, nightclubs and other establishments similar to experiences many non-Caribbean people had in the same period. Furthermore, where local statistics are lacking, selected **General Household Surveys** of the 1970s-1980s will be referred to in order to understand some aspects of general consumption that could be applied locally. This will provide a base for determining at least some similarities between local Caribbean consumption and leisure vis-à-vis the larger Northamptonshire population. Through the various references and

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<sup>1</sup> Michael McMillan, *The Front Room: Migrant Aesthetics in the Home* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2009). McMillan's combination of photography and commentary has been well regarded by academics and others, including Caribbean people. The latter particularly had vivid memories triggered by this book, although this is acknowledged to be anecdotal by the author. However, this book is the most recent and finest embodiment of Caribbean (and other migrant) home based consumerism, and as such will be referred to when appropriate in this chapter.

vantage points detailed earlier, this section will reflect the level of integration, or lack thereof as appropriate, Afro-Caribbean people experienced in the county as expressed through their consumption. The combination of these typical Northamptonshire experiences will help to illuminate how much of the identity of local Caribbean people was linked to Northamptonshire residence. Although it is acknowledged that the first section will include elements of integration of Caribbeans into British and/or Northamptonshire modes of consumption, the difference between these two sections is that '*typical*' Northamptonshire consumer experiences incorporates elements of consumption familiar to most, if not all, people from Northamptonshire in this era whilst the first section on '*typical*' local Caribbean consumer experiences addresses some elements of consumption that reflected dual or multiple identities that in combination would have been unfamiliar to local non-Caribbeans.

'*Atypical*' Afro-Caribbean and/or Northamptonshire consumer experiences will refer to consumer occurrences that were unique to select individuals particularly because their individual experiences were significantly different than most local Afro-Caribbeans and/or others living in Northamptonshire.<sup>2</sup> Simmelian concepts of individual freedom, as mentioned in chapter 1, will develop understanding of '*atypical*' consumer experiences through realised examples.<sup>3</sup> Although this section is significantly shorter than the others due to having less available information in this regard from participants and other references, individuals' exercise of iconoclast consumer behaviour deserves significant mention in order to recognise multi-faceted dimensions of local Caribbean

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<sup>2</sup> Clearly this work researched people, as well as the community, that are both Afro-Caribbean **and** from Northamptonshire. However, this section will address consumer experiences that are relatively unique to either the ethno-racial and/or their geographical grouping, mostly of the former that this writing is focussed on.

<sup>3</sup> Georg Simmel, *Conflict and The Web of Group Affiliations*, p.125; This reference was referred to in chapter 1, most specifically related to the intersection of social circles an individual can be part of, with the greater amount of social circles one can, or is, part of, equates to the maximum, or greater, individual freedom one can achieve by being part of many, varied groups. This freedom, for the purpose of this chapter, is from either being perceived totally stereotypically as Caribbeans or being from Northamptonshire.

consumer practices that sometimes deviated from what could be termed representative and/or stereotypical Caribbean, and most specifically Northamptonshire Caribbean, consumer practices.

### ***'Typical' local Afro-Caribbean consumer experiences***

From the 1950s onwards, home ownership was noted by interviewees as crucial in simultaneously pulling Afro-Caribbean people to Northamptonshire, as well as holding those already having local connections. An example of this recognition is when comparing Northamptonshire to other parts of Britain, '... *in certain areas of, in other cities the lads go for flats and things like that. But in Northampton 97% own their house. (All my) friends, the parents own their own house.*'<sup>4</sup> Generally, home ownership by Caribbeans in Britain, as measured in the 1991 Census, noted that 46.4 percent of Caribbean people lived in owner occupied housing whilst 43.9 percent lived in flats in the same year.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, 63.7 percent of Caribbean people in 1991 lived in London and the South East, a region having generally much higher property prices than Northamptonshire then, as it does currently.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of the correlation between home ownership and social class generally in Britain, in 1983 56 percent of skilled manual workers and 27 percent of unskilled manual workers were owner-occupiers.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the overall proportion of owner-occupied housing in Britain according to the British Census was 42.3 percent for England and Wales in 1961, rising to 51.6 percent in the 1971 **General Household Survey**.<sup>8</sup> Burnett cites roughly similar

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<sup>4</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 7 November 2009

<sup>5</sup> David Owen, 'A Profile of Caribbean households and families in Great Britain', p.74, 78

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p.72

<sup>7</sup> John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1985*, p.282

<sup>8</sup> Social Survey Division, *The General Household Survey: Introductory Report* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1973), p.92

statistics in citing the home ownership rate as 47 percent in 1966 and 63 percent in 1983.<sup>9</sup> Amidst general national trends of home ownership in this era, it is notable that Northamptonshire Caribbeans overwhelmingly were owner-occupiers because they, with very few exceptions, were part of the skilled manual and unskilled labouring classes. More specifically, virtually all participants owned their own homes, save one who left Britain permanently in his mid 20s.<sup>10</sup>

The cost of housing in Northamptonshire, and more importantly, home ownership was significantly less expensive than many regions in Britain, particularly Greater London where most local Caribbeans came from unless arriving directly from the Caribbean.<sup>11</sup> Other examples of Afro-Caribbean home ownership and aspirations to become owner-occupiers being a pull and hold factor towards Northamptonshire include facing difficulty finding a room/flat to rent because of pervasive ethnically-based discrimination against Black people in Britain in acquiring such accommodation, locally and nationally.<sup>12</sup> Also such sub-standard living conditions included renting a bed in rooms with multiple beds because better housing was often unobtainable.<sup>13</sup> Adding to the desire to purchase a home was that, at least in the Caribbean, children sharing rooms was not the norm, nor were other symptoms of over-crowded living environments such as having to cook, eat and sleep all in one room.<sup>14</sup> For Caribbeans in Britain, owning a home was not only practically beneficial, it was also valuable

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<sup>9</sup> John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1985*, p.282

<sup>10</sup> Ras Jabulani aka Trevor Hall left Northampton permanently to live in Africa in 1982 as a 25 year old. Most notably, he never felt as if Northampton and Britain were home despite being born in Gloucestershire.

<sup>11</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley; Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 18 September 2009; Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley, (Northampton: NBHA), 10 September 2009. Note: Only 3 of 20 interviewees did not arrive from either the Caribbean or Greater London and the South East. One was born elsewhere in Britain but experienced virtually all his childhood in Northampton whilst the other two spent significant time in the West Midlands before moving to Northamptonshire. Comparing and contrasting London, as well as other urban areas in Britain, with Northamptonshire will be a regular theme within this work, when appropriate.

<sup>12</sup> Michael McMillan, *The Front Room: Migrant Aesthetics in the Home*, pp. 24-27

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>14</sup> *Sharing The Past*, p.64

in avoiding the indignities of repeatedly being refused rental accommodation that was often crowded and of poor quality.

It is not claimed that home ownership generally in this era was specifically a Caribbean aspiration, as home ownership significantly increased overall in post-War Britain. However, desiring to do so despite, or because of, ethnically-based discrimination in the rental housing and employment markets, makes Caribbean home ownership under these circumstances particularly notable. This is especially so because, at least in 1962, Jamaican women in Britain earned 20 percent less than average earnings for manual workers for females in that year, with Jamaican men having earned 30 percent less than their male working-class counterparts.<sup>15</sup> This is not to conflate Jamaicans with Caribbeans, but these statistics are reasonable to use because Jamaicans represented approximately 56 percent of Caribbean arrivals to Britain between 1961 and 1981, rising to 64.2 percent in 1991.<sup>16</sup> Home ownership and the desire for such amongst interviewees and the general Northamptonshire Caribbean community within the context of decreased earning capacity due to pervasive ethnically-based discrimination in employment, renders the theme of home ownership important in augmenting the understanding of Afro-Caribbean consumer behaviour.

Renting from fellow Black people was not necessarily insulation from poor living conditions and inconveniences of such arrangements. For example, Frank Whitehead of Wellingborough remembered his local experience of renting in 1960:

*We (Frank and his wife) used to rent a room from a bloke named Victor Williams down Whitworth Road. And I was on (working) 6 to 2 in the morning ... So when I get in I used to get coal*

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<sup>15</sup> R.B. Davison, *Black British Immigrants to England*, p.93

<sup>16</sup> David Owen, 'A profile of Caribbean households and families in Great Britain', p.66

*because there was no central heating. I used to go and buy a bag of coal and so on and make the fire. Had to get the place warm until they come in and he and his wife used to come in, and when the place was warm and, they used to ... The fire used to be here. One get a chair put there and there and they put a blanket over leg and sat there and get all the warmth. And we had the little baby and she was cold. So I said, excuse me! I said could you just move away a little bit, that we could get a little bit of warmth. He said no! He said my house, if you don't like it you know what to do!*<sup>17</sup>

Whitehead bought his first home the following year after feeling compelled to do so because of this negative experience with Victor Williams being Black adding to negatively recollecting this event.<sup>18</sup> This was not an isolated experience locally or nationally, as it was often as bad to rent from fellow co-ethnics, if not worse, than from Whites.<sup>19</sup> However, the occurrences of discrimination in actually purchasing a home in Northamptonshire were generally limited to Black people in at least some cases being required to put down 3 to 4 times more for a deposit than Whites.<sup>20</sup>

In terms of the items actually in the home, historical influences on local Caribbean people derived from their or their parents' respect for such visible brands in Britain such as Courts furniture and Guinness stout.<sup>21</sup> In Northampton, Cavendish Woodhouse was noted as a popular furniture shop amongst Caribbeans because it was upmarket and had quality items for sale. At

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<sup>17</sup> Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>21</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley; Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 23 August 2011

least for one local Caribbean person, seeing other Black people walking in this shop regularly indicated that Cavendish Woodhouse sold quality furniture.<sup>22</sup>

In actual homemaking terms, the skill of crocheting, commonly taught to girls in the Caribbean, was ubiquitous in Britain amongst Caribbean people.

Crocheting was used simultaneously to produce homemade items such as place mats and vase holders, as well as being produced to earn money, at least for some Caribbean women.<sup>23</sup> The history of Caribbean women learning crochet derived from schooling in the former British colonies which fundamentally limited them to vocational learning, of which crochet was one of the skills learned.<sup>24</sup> In Northamptonshire, Caribbeans owned crocheted place mats and vase covers, as well as displaying crocheted items in cars.<sup>25</sup> However, it became less popular as the Caribbean-born generation grew older whilst they and their children were more influenced by more-British based styles. Eventually, plastic and cloth place mats replaced crocheted items in the home.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, crocheted items that stood up, such as vase coverings, required starching that was done for hire in London.<sup>27</sup> Travelling to London to obtain this starching was time prohibitive and eventually weakened the resolve to have such types of crocheting in the home.<sup>28</sup>

The ubiquitous paraffin heater as noted by McMillan and others was not a primary source of heating amongst Northamptonshire Caribbeans because of either having central heating in their homes or, as the Frank Whitehead quotation in an earlier paragraph suggests, coal heating being used before central heating became common place. However, at least one Caribbean family

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<sup>22</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley, 23 August 2011

<sup>23</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley, 23 August 2011; NBHP/2003/40; NBHP/2004/151ai

<sup>24</sup> Michael McMillan, *The Front Room: Migrant Aesthetics in the Home*, p.49

<sup>25</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley, 23 August 2011

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

kept their paraffin heater for backup despite having central heating, eventually keeping it in a greenhouse before disposing of it after its lifespan ended.<sup>29</sup> Other items mentioned by McMillan as ubiquitous in the Caribbean home include crochet, glass cabinets and artificial flowers.<sup>30</sup>

Also noted by McMillan were hire-purchase (h/p) and Green Shield Stamps.<sup>31</sup> Shops offering Green Shield Stamps were patronised by local Caribbean people because acquiring these stamps was desirable in order to obtain free goods. This in itself is not unique amongst Caribbeans as many larger shops were part of this scheme, or similar ones that were operated by The Co-operative (Co-op). However, using Green Shield Stamps to acquire Candlewick bedspreads existed simultaneously as a means of individuality amongst Caribbean households and competing with other co-ethnics whilst expressing degrees of similarity as measured by understanding Candlewick as a desirable brand because:

*The Candlewick bedspread and boy did ... That is where we would spend money. And it would go over the bed, but would be well-patterned, you know, the raised pattern, the Candlewick raised pattern. It's like a, you know if, think of a sort of sheen material as the base and then like your pulling threads through but it's wool. And the pattern is like a woollen pattern. And the challenge was who could have the most unusual Candlewick bedspread. So, and the Green Shield stamps used to buy these. This was one of the things about Green Shield stamps, and the other thing I know of, my cultural roots and I still do it is Christmas, I haven't got the Candlewick bedspread but you'd have a special bedspread that would come out at Christmas time.*

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Michael McMillan, *The Front Room: Migrant Aesthetics in the Home*, p.5

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p.5

*It wasn't the every day, you know, bedspread that you had. It was a Candlewick bedspread that was probably lighter colour with red or something on it, along with the dining table covering. So at Christmas time, you know, that would be the time that you might trade in your Green Shield stamps for a new Candlewick bedspread or you would have one especially for Christmas.*<sup>32</sup>

In Northamptonshire, the desirable means of acquiring Candlewick bedspreads was to do so in London despite being able to obtain them in Brierley's amongst other shops because designs found in London would not ordinarily be immediately available in Northampton. Also, Brierley's was not part of the Green Shield Stamp scheme, rendering it impossible to use these stamps there. Furthermore, acquiring Candlewick bedspreads in London was indicative of being a trend setter in this co-ethnic home fashion competition.<sup>33</sup> McMillan does not mention Candlewick bedspreads as a prototypical item in Caribbean households in Britain, so it is acknowledged that more research needs to be done in order to determine the extent of this brand on the home furnishing aspirations and acquisitions of Caribbeans in Britain, Northamptonshire and otherwise.

Another brand ubiquitous amongst Caribbeans but not mentioned by McMillan was Singer, the sewing machine manufacturer. Although Singer was a well-known and popular brand generally in Britain in this era, this brand symbolised self-reliance for Caribbeans. In addition, Singer represented, at least for some, a tool to earn money. Exemplifying this is well-esteemed local educator Morcea Walker's recollection that:

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<sup>32</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley, 23 August 2011

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

(She found it) very peculiar that that is not in there (**The Front Room**) as a picture because a lot of our women who came from the Caribbean were seamstresses. They were dressmakers. And a lot of our people, both in London that I grew up with, and here, weddings! Weddings were the thing. You had your clothes made. You had them made and they were made by seamstresses with Singer sewing machines. In my porch I had a treadle. Now it's an ornament now, but I have a treadle, Singer sewing machine. There a beautiful poem by a lady called Lorna Goodison or Goodison and in part of the poem she said the first words that I read was Singer as I was being breastfed by my mother, you know who was sewing on the sewing machine, yes. So the mother is there breastfeeding and sewing. And so that's the tradition from the Caribbean that was brought over here. And tailors, there were a number of Black tailors. So within a number of the Black homes you would have a hand one, a treadle or eventually an electric sewing machine. So that was another thing that was in homes.<sup>34</sup>

Actually, Walker's recollection of Lorna Goodison is remarkably accurate, as the Jamaica-born poet wrote, 'When I came to know my mother many years later, I knew her as the figure who sat at the first Thing I learned to read: 'SINGER', and she breast-fed my brother while she sewed;'<sup>35</sup> These dovetailing reminiscences between Walker and Goodison clearly indicates that sewing was an important amongst Caribbeans both historically as a means of making and repairing one's clothes, but also, at least for some, a way to earn a living based on a skills that was taught to Caribbean schooled children during the late British

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Renate Papke, *Poems at the Edge of Differences: Mothering in New English Poetry by Women*, Gottingen University, p.126

colonial era. In Northamptonshire, Mr. Fray of Palmerston Road in Northampton was noted as a home-based tailor in the late 1960s/early 1970s at least, whilst Marlene Wilson was also mentioned as a Northampton dressmaker offering her services to make bespoke clothing in the 1970s and early 1980s.<sup>36</sup> Other unnamed Caribbean tailors and dressmakers were recognised in this era as using their skills to earn income, usually in addition to money earned during their regular employment.<sup>37</sup>

Recognising Singer sewing machines as important and iconic in the homes of Caribbeans indicates that there was not always a clear dichotomy between strictly home furnishings and functional items and spaces in the homes of at least some Northamptonshire Caribbeans. This not only manifest in terms of sewing machines, but also in terms of using basements and spare rooms in their homes as spaces of or for businesses such as barbers and hairdressers in addition to the tailor/dressmaker examples mentioned earlier. The important places and people in the local Caribbean hair industry will be discussed more significantly later in this chapter. However, what was important in terms of the homes of Northamptonshire Caribbeans was that there was this, at least sometimes when in existence, dualistic attitude towards their homes that ranged from being places of comfort and happiness whilst being functional in terms of using them to augment earning additional income using their vocational skills.

The stereotypical front room as elaborated on by McMillan did exist amongst local Caribbeans into the early 1980s at least. Although Morcea Walker did not have a Caribbean style front room herself, her experiences visiting the homes of local co-ethnics in the 1970s and 1980s whilst a schoolteacher were that many if not most of the homes of Caribbeans had a front room where children were not

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<sup>36</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley, 18 September 2009; Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley, 7 November 2009

<sup>37</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley, 18 September 2009

allowed unless visitors were present.<sup>38</sup> However, the author should mention that although Walker claimed not to have a stereotypical Caribbean front room, she did have elements of it in her home whilst the author interviewed her. These associated elements include plastic upholstery on the dining room table and chairs, as well as displaying bottles of alcohol behind glass cabinets, particularly but not exclusively of Caribbean produced items like rum. In addition to these front room prototypes, it is also notable that Walker acknowledged the means of exhibiting alcohol remained virtually unchanged from the 1970s although the types of alcohol on display evolved.<sup>39</sup>

In other interviewees' homes, the author recalls seeing similar aspects of '*front room*' type items in most home-based interviews, particularly of those born in the Caribbean. Most interviewees' homes had plastic covers on living room furniture, as well as ornaments clearly of or from the Caribbean, including place mats, wall displays such as velvet scrolls or other types of maps and/or flags of Caribbean countries. The combination of having these items in the home combined with the visibly celebratory display of alcohol in glass cabinets supports Walker's recognition of a Caribbean tradition transported to Britain of always being welcoming to friends and family within the concept of social shame if such objects representative of being able to entertain guests were not visible.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, McMillan augments beliefs surrounding the Caribbean front room tradition by acknowledging that the aesthetics of, and representation in, the front room were part of '*impression management*' symbolising hospitality whilst portraying the respectability of the host and household, particularly but not exclusively to co-ethnics.<sup>41</sup> McMillan's assertions are similar to Goffman's contention that individuals and groups use (self)

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<sup>38</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley, 23 August 2011

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Ibid

<sup>41</sup> Michael McMillan, *The Front Room: Migrant Aesthetics in the Home*, p.43

presentation to maintain and develop collective solidarity through consensus constructed images.<sup>42</sup> Caribbean front rooms locally and nationally were in many ways displays of consensus constructed images of respectability, comfort and hospitality through the semiotics of similar home presentations. Semiotics in these contexts in Britain represents more than the mere collection of items. Rather, the complete semiotic impression management dimension of the Caribbean front room rests on the assemblage of items on display.

Outside of the home, but very important in the lives of Caribbean people in Britain, was the sending of remittances to the Caribbean. Remittances were frequently sent by local Afro-Caribbeans, mirroring national trends in the post-Windrush decades.<sup>43</sup> Both locally and nationally, these funds were sent primarily to repay parents for their passage, supporting them in their old age, as well as for children remaining in the Caribbean.<sup>44</sup> Davison notes that, without being specific, '... *remittances (were) usually sent in cash ...*'<sup>45</sup> Locally, this trend held true with Caribbean people sending remittances in cash via regular or registered post.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, there is one local example of using money earned in national service to give his mother £6 per month in the mid-1950s.<sup>47</sup> The most extreme example of sending remittances by a local Caribbean person was sending £10 per month out of £29 net income to her mother.<sup>48</sup> All interviewees arriving directly from the Caribbean to England as adults, save one, sent remittances back to the Caribbean at least for a few years. Most

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<sup>42</sup> Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, pp.88, 108

<sup>43</sup> R.B. Davison, *Black British Immigrants to England*, pp.95-96

<sup>44</sup> R.B. Davison, *Black British Immigrants to England*, p.96; Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; May Green interviewed by George Watley, 24 September 2009; Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley; Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley, 27 September 2009

<sup>45</sup> R.B. Davison, *Black British Immigrants to England*, p.96

<sup>46</sup> Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley

<sup>47</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>48</sup> Marjorie Bradshaw interviewed by George Watley, 15 October 2009

frequently, remittances by local Caribbeans were sent until either their children were born, or more frequently until parental death.<sup>49</sup>

Sending remittances would have contributed to having lesser expenditure towards other activities such as gambling. In this regard, what is notable is the absence of any local Caribbean people mentioning using bookmakers, whether through illegal bookmakers before the 1961 Betting and Gaming Act, or afterwards through licensed betting shops like Ladbrokes, William Hill, Tote, etc. This is notable because, based on 1973 statistics, more days were spent by British people generally on betting/gambling than going to the cinema and dancing combined.<sup>50</sup> The contrast between these general statistics and local Caribbeans makes the absence of gambling as a consumer theme amongst interviewees typical co-ethnic consumer behaviour in relation to its non-mention. However, the author's personal barber, a British-born man of Guyanese and Trinidadian origin, mentioned on one occasion that his father chose to migrate to Britain in the 1960s instead of Canada because betting was legal in Britain whilst illegal at the time in Canada. Partially supporting this dichotomy between interviewees not personally engaging in betting, or at least not acknowledging doing so, whilst recognising that other co-ethnics were betting are Wellingborough Afro-Caribbean community leader Michael Prescod's thoughts about at least some of his co-ethnics:

*(The) Black man biggest problem, for me the biggest problem that I think I still see ... You know how many Black people go in bookies and spend all their (money) at the bookies, and not one Black man own a blasted horse. Think about that! We spend (an*

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<sup>49</sup> Mike Prescod interviewed by George Watley, (Northampton: NBHA), 19 June 2009; Marjorie Bradshaw interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 15 October 2009; Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley

<sup>50</sup> *The General Household Survey*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1973), p.80

*estimated) something like 26-30 million pounds a year Black, the Afro-Caribbean community, called West Indian, on horse racing and betting and not one of them owns a horse!*<sup>51</sup>

The fact that interviewees did not mention gambling as something they used their money on makes this absence typical amongst local Caribbean people. However, there is limited evidence that suggests at least a few Caribbean people did use bookmakers, although such activity, as Prescod implies, was not respectable more generally amongst Afro-Caribbeans. Prescod's recollection, albeit implied, is of the contrast between some if not many Caribbean people near to the time of the interview vis-à-vis the earlier era of the 1980s and prior which the interview focussed upon. Perceptions of increases in social or otherwise problematic gambling correlating with legalisation and subsequent growth of betting is not isolated to this local remembrance. Kassinove supports this assertion by suggesting a correlation between lengths of time gambling was legal in American states and significantly increased percentages of probable pathological gamblers, increasing threefold between states having made gambling legal less than 10 years vis-à-vis states where it had been available for more than twenty years.<sup>52</sup> Prescod did not mention gambling in terms of the experiences that he or others had in the first years he arrived to Britain in the 1950s, but does note it as a problem, even by implication, as his time in Britain progressed. This is consistent with the proliferation of gambling leading to problematic, pathological gambling that both Prescod and Kassinove allude to.

Furthermore, this quotation implies that going to bookmakers was a non-productive and not even an honorific form of waste, and as such was viewed derisively. The general lack of mentioning gambling amongst interviewees,

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<sup>51</sup> Michael Prescod interviewed by George Watley

<sup>52</sup> Jeffrey Kassinove, 'Development of the Gambling Attitude Scales: Preliminary Findings', *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 54 (1998), p.764

save for the prior quotation, would suggest that frequenting bookmakers was not a '*typical*' consumer behaviour of local Afro-Caribbeans, or at the very least not a '*typically*' esteemed or respected consumer behaviour amongst co-ethnics. It is acknowledged that data collected in this regards is very limited although it is also recognised that future research could unearth the actual extent of using bookmakers and/or other forms of gambling by local Caribbeans, if such existed significantly. It is acknowledged that gambling amongst interviewees could have been underreported due to its lack of respectability. However, in terms of national participation rates for leisure activities in 1973, gambling was more popular than needlework/knitting, social and voluntary work, as well as watching and playing cricket and football.<sup>53</sup> All the mentioned leisure activities were noted as being important in the lives of many interviewees whilst gambling was not. This renders the absence of betting as a theme amongst interviewees in terms of their actual consumer behaviour even more significant vis-à-vis general British leisure trends of the era.

Being able to obtain traditionally Caribbean food was appreciated and occurred relatively early in Caribbean migration into Northamptonshire whilst becoming easier through the 1960s into the 1970s. Most interviewees reported eating Caribbean food such as yams, saltfish, green bananas and roti at least some of the time although the frequency of doing so varied widely amongst individuals and families. Locally, this was manifested through dual eating patterns; eating '*English*' food during the week or on most occasions whilst oxtail stew, rice and peas or other types of Caribbean food was consumed at other times, usually on Sundays. In contrast some participants reported rarely if ever buying or eating '*English*' food at home.<sup>54</sup> However, the disparity of desiring Caribbean food combined with its overall relative ease of acquisition presented cooking

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<sup>53</sup> *The General Household Survey, 1973*, p.80

<sup>54</sup> Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA) 10 July 2009; Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

dilemmas within some families. This circumstance was dealt with ranging from cooking some or mostly Caribbean food to cooking 2 or 3 dishes to satisfy tastes of various family members. Being born in Britain had some influence on the taste for or against particular foods. For example, one interviewee who arrived to Northampton in 1969 as a 6 year old recalled:

*... when of course my mother then had children who were born in England, eating traditional West Indian food didn't get on very well with them. They preferred things like the bangers and mash and the mashed potatoes and the custard. So it was very odd. So when we would cook much later on for my other two (younger) brothers and sisters, step-brothers and sisters, they weren't familiar with the West Indian food and we weren't familiar with the English food. So we would, occasionally cook for both which was very strange.<sup>55</sup>*

Another example of mixing English with Caribbean cuisine in local Afro-Caribbean homes included, after fish and chips on Fridays, having, ' ... *Caribbean punch, which was Guinness with nestles milk, nutmeg and vanilla*'<sup>56</sup> Also, multiple pot cooking existed in at least some households, particularly revolving around British-born children of Caribbean people vis-à-vis their parents and Caribbean-born siblings. Also, a Caribbean couple from different islands would have different tastes that were catered for. In one example, in reference to Caribbean food, British-born children of Caribbean parentage would say, ' *Yuck!*'<sup>57</sup> Because of this, as well as a Jamaican woman being married to a Barbadian man in this example, cooking to satisfy the tastes of everyone in the household meant that the wife:

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<sup>55</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley

<sup>56</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 9 July 2009

<sup>57</sup> Norma Watson interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 7 April 2011

*... did three lots because my husband was from Barbados and sometimes he didn't want my food. (pause) And then there was my son who wouldn't eat neither Barbadian nor Jamaican. And the others would have the English. So it became a standing joke, three pots on.*<sup>58</sup>

Although unclear in this quotation, Barbadian food differs somewhat from Jamaican food. For example, the unofficial national dish of Barbados is cuckoo, corn meal with okra. This is usually accompanied with fried flying fish. Such cuisine is not traditionally Jamaican. Chicken, rice and peas is traditionally Jamaican cuisine for example. Further complicating the division between cuisines of different islands in the Caribbean is that many foods such as yams, oxtail and green bananas were ubiquitous throughout the Caribbean. However, ways of preparing these similar foods often differed greatly. Despite any ambiguities regarding differences between Barbadian and Jamaican food, the idea that one household with partners from two Caribbean islands prepared three different types of ethnic food is notable.

In terms of the timeframe of actually being able to acquire Caribbean food, opportunities for doing so developed once shopkeepers and others saw this market. For example in 1960, Josephine Geddes bought approximately £100 per month in Caribbean food to stock her shop in Northampton's Victoria Road, done in part by taking direct written orders from her customers in order to develop her business.<sup>59</sup> Others in the 1960s who recognised the business potential of selling Caribbean consumer foodstuffs such as yams, saltfish, ackee, green bananas and other traditionally Caribbean items included, in

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid

<sup>59</sup> Ian Mayes, 'At Home Among Northampton's Coloured People'; June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley

Northampton, the Asian shopkeeper ‘*Peter*’ in The Mounts at Clare and Earl Street, as well as Colin ‘*Horsemouth*’ Martin on Whitworth Road.<sup>60</sup> Caribbean food could also be purchased in Wellingborough by then, with George Lamont selling Caribbean food out of his van.<sup>61</sup> An unidentified Afro-Caribbean man was also selling food in Northampton in the 1960s.<sup>62</sup> However, it cannot be confirmed whether this salesman was George Lamont, or another enterprising individual. The use of vans amongst British ethnic minority groups to sell ethnically-based food was not totally unique to Northamptonshire Caribbeans, as Indians in Rochester in this era also used street vans to buy and sell ‘*ethnic foods*’ until local shops eventually opened.<sup>63</sup> However, buying Caribbean food from men selling from vans was something many local Caribbeans either participated in or were familiar with in the 1950s and 1960s, making this ‘*typical*’ in their consumer experiences in this era.

Local shops selling Caribbean food proliferated through the 1960s into the 1970s similarly to the proliferation of Polish shops in Northamptonshire and elsewhere in Britain from approximately 2006 onwards, as the author recalls. In Wellingborough in the 1970s, an unnamed shop on the corner of Newcomen Road and Strode Road was owned by an Indian man and sold Caribbean food.<sup>64</sup> Other Asian owned shops selling Caribbean food in this era were on Cannon Street, as well as another one on the corner of Havelock Street and Herriott’s Lane.<sup>65</sup> Northampton had, in addition to the shops mentioned in the prior section, Joseph Raca, who in the late 1960s-early 1970s had his shop on Sheep

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<sup>60</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley; Alphanso Bryan interviewed by George Watley; Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley

<sup>61</sup> Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley; Norma Watson interviewed by George Watley

<sup>62</sup> Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley

<sup>63</sup> History and Policy, *Regulating UK supermarkets: an oral-history perspective*, <<http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-70.html>> (accessed 28 September 2011)

<sup>64</sup> Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley, pp.29-31 of written transcript

<sup>65</sup> Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 16 October 2009 ; Norma Watson interviewed by George Watley

Street where Inspiration FM's office is currently.<sup>66</sup> Kaka Stores was also on Sheep Street from the 1970s, well-known for selling Caribbean food from this time.<sup>67</sup> Eventually, Kaka Stores moved to a larger location at 76-78 Wellingborough Road, where it currently operates, as well as operating a shop at 99 Winstanly Road in Wellingborough simultaneously then.<sup>68</sup> On Victoria Road there was Chris Frater selling records and a shop named Gordon's that was owned by an Asian person.<sup>69</sup> However, both shops were mentioned by only one interviewee, indicative of their probably limited popularity amongst local Afro-Caribbean people.

Eventually, the central markets of both towns, Market Square in Northampton and Wellingborough Market, had stall traders that sold Caribbean produce from the 1980s onwards. May Green for example, sold yams, sweet potatoes and green bananas amongst other Caribbean food items at Wellingborough Market in the 1980s, subsequently setting up a shop at 2 St. Barnabas Street that eventually became her home after the business failed.<sup>70</sup> Through all the mentioned shops and market stalls, traditionally Caribbean food items such as saltfish, salt mackerel, ackee, pumpkin and many other traditionally Caribbean products could be obtained. Local Caribbean people, as time progressed, used more traditional means of selling and purchasing items, such as in and from market stalls and shops, once they became more established in Northamptonshire.

Oxtail and pig trotters were, and are, part of ingredients used in Caribbean cuisine ranging from Bajan<sup>71</sup> Pepperpot, pickled pig feet, as well as oxtail stew

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<sup>66</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>67</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley; Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>68</sup> *New Ethnic*, September 1980, p.20

<sup>69</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>70</sup> May Green interviewed by George Watley

<sup>71</sup> Bajan is short and informal for Barbadian.

ubiquitous throughout the Caribbean. British food tastes however did not generally incorporate such cuts of meat, particularly in the immediate post-War decades. Caribbean people took advantage of this difference as measured by butchers' pricing schemes in recognising that:

*There were certain parts of the meat that, at that time, they would just throw away like the pig trotters and so on. They wouldn't even sell that. I noticed that quite a lot of Black folk from back home they think well that's the best part of the (pig) and the shops would give them bags of it! They would save up give them and now however that's a big commodity in the shops. You have to pay a lot of money (for them).<sup>72</sup>*

Another recollection of local butchers in the early 1960s was that oxtail and pig trotters were sold cheaply.<sup>73</sup> These local examples of butchers selling certain parts of pigs and beef cheaply also existed elsewhere in Britain, with Black people taking advantage of this perception of qualitative difference as measured by the low cost of, to Black/Caribbean people, high value items.<sup>74</sup> However, as the quotation mentions, local butchers soon caught on to the value Caribbean people had for such items, adjusting prices accordingly. This is a clear example of how the purchase and acquisition of Caribbean food became more integrated into the general consumer market such as in shops and markets. These manifestations will be addressed in the next section of this chapter. However, it should be noted that interviewees did not mention purchasing food at Tesco or any other large supermarket during the 1980s or before, with the only comments

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<sup>72</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>73</sup> Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley

<sup>74</sup> The author clearly remembered his father, whilst an American GI stationed in Buckinghamshire, recalling how cheaply spare ribs (ribs of pork) were sold in England; stating that the butchers were virtually giving it away. 'A penny a pound' he was remembered as saying although whether this was literal or conjecture is unclear in the author's memory.

about actually purchasing items in such larger supermarkets being about what they could purchase within the last decade or less at Tesco, Sainsbury's and/or other national chain supermarkets. Victor Value opened in Northampton in 1957 and was credited as being the first supermarket in town.<sup>75</sup> Despite being launched by the popular celebrity/actress Sabrina, neither of the two male interviewees living in Northampton at this time recalled this event nor Victor Value generally in their food purchasing experiences.<sup>76</sup>

In the author's recollection of attempting to purchase traditionally Caribbean food in 2003 upon arriving in Northampton, it is recalled that plantain, bottles of jerk seasoning and corn meal amongst other items were available in Northampton at the Market Square, the defunct Fish Market and Kaka Stores on Wellingborough Road. Tesco at Weston Favell in the eastern part of Northampton did not sell Caribbean food initially until 2004 or 2005 according to the author's recollection, with bottles of jerk seasoning, corn meal and plantain chips amongst the items available then. Tesco's relatively late introduction of Caribbean food items to its local shops might explain why interviewees did not mention buying food there because other shops and places to purchase food resonated more with them, particularly but not exclusively for acquiring traditionally Caribbean cuisine items. Furthermore, Tesco's introduction of Caribbean food in its shops reflects the contemporary desirability of these products in larger local and national consumer markets.

Less reputable but of significant importance to the consumer experiences of local Caribbean people was the existence of colour bars that were detrimental to Caribbeans enjoying leisure experiences like their White contemporaries in Northamptonshire. Colour bars, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, affected

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<sup>75</sup> *Northampton Looking Back: Volume Two* (Northampton: At Heart Publications/*Northampton Chronicle and Echo*: 2008), p.113

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p.113

Black people by significant occurrences of being refused entry and/or service in local pubs and nightclubs. Acts of ethnically-based exclusion ranged from the randomness of being allowed in dance halls/nightclubs on some nights but not others, to clearly stated colour bars operating in these decades. For example, The Princess Royal on Wellingborough Road in Northampton notably exercised a colour bar in 1966.<sup>77</sup> Because of this form of ethnically-based discrimination, one place Caribbean people in this era heavily frequented was The Mitre. This pub is especially notable because its punters were overwhelmingly Black or Irish, with the Irish unofficially congregating in the front of the pub and Black people at the back.<sup>78</sup> The notable exception to this were prostitutes that were attracted to well-paying American soldiers that often frequented this establishment. *'The Americans, they used to flash the dollars boy. And when they were in town, the West Indians, they didn't have a chance (to attract women). (laughs)'*<sup>79</sup> This occurred elsewhere in Britain with American GIs often gazumping their sexual competitors by stating, *'I'm not begging, I'm buying!'*<sup>80</sup> Another recollection of The Mitre was that, *'... it was a very popular pub with the prostitutes, and (laughs) I'm sure the Yanks (American soldiers) were good payers to the prostitutes.'*<sup>81</sup>

More reputably, The Mitre was desired because, *'... that was the best jukebox in the town because it had all the Black music, Motown which was very hard to get hold of and (it was acquired) off the (American) GIs that used to come into the*

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<sup>77</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley; 'Phipps to probe 'pub colour bar' complaint', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 11 July 1966; 'Concern over pub's colour bar report', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 18 August 1966

<sup>78</sup> Barbara Holker interviewed by Sanaa Lateef (Northampton: NBHA) 17 March 2011

<sup>79</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>80</sup> The author's late father, also named George Watley, was an American soldier in the late 1950s- early 1960s in Britain, stating the words in this quotation numerous times when discussing his recollections of how men talked to women in pubs/clubs in Britain. This phrase, according to this reference, was very popularly used by American GIs in this timeframe.

<sup>81</sup> Barbara Holker interviewed by Sanaa Lateef

*pub.*<sup>82</sup> Despite the unsavouriness of reported prostitution there, listening to Black American music, as well as socialising with other Black people was a reason for local Afro-Caribbeans to go to The Mitre. Even George Cleghorn, well-respected local Deacon of the Black church, New Testament Church of God, noted that he, '... went to Mitre because it's a pub house where you meet certain friends ... That pub has a bad reputation name for certain things, prostitutes meet there. But you know I didn't go in for prostitute I wanted to meet my friends, certain man friends.'<sup>83</sup>

The United Social Club (USC) on Northampton's Regent Square was another place Afro-Caribbean people heavily frequented.

*'The United Social Club was started in Billing (area of Northampton), Long and Hambley (rubber factory) where a group of workers, they used to get together on bank holidays and go on coach trips to different seaports, yeah. Beaches, what you call them, and that's how it started. And they went to the council and they got this place in ... It used to be an old pub in Regent Square. The Wheatsheaf it was called. And that was the United Social Club's first building in Northampton.'*<sup>84</sup>

Implied in this was that these were all Afro-Caribbean people who socialised because of common interests linked to their ethnic identity in Britain. USC was founded in 1963 because its founders recognised that they wanted their own space to socialise as Caribbeans.<sup>85</sup> Founder members contributed a shilling a week towards funding their Regent Square venue, which Northampton Borough

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<sup>82</sup> Barbara Holker interviewed by Sanaa Lateef

<sup>83</sup> NBHP/2004/142

<sup>84</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>85</sup> *Sharing the Past*, p.97

Council part-matched.<sup>86</sup> Before USC's acquiring a venue, the main form of entertainment for Caribbean people locally was either by house parties amongst friends where no money exchanged hands or by deliberate money making house parties also known as blues or shebeens. The latter existed pre-USC in Northampton, from and by Mr. Donaldson at Vernon Terrace, Mr. Gray on Lutterworth Road, as well as an by an unnamed man on Chalk Road amongst others.<sup>87</sup> There is no indication that Wellingborough had any blues or shebeens, as socialising in homes by Caribbean people there was solely done amongst friends.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to Northampton-based blues, local Caribbeans travelled elsewhere for such entertainment, including London, Leicester, Nottingham and Luton.<sup>89</sup> These blues were sought out in large part because revellers could party later than the 2am at latest closing times for pubs/clubs in Northampton, at least in the late 1970s into the 1980s, as well as for the Caribbean food available for purchase.<sup>90</sup> However, Wellingborough did not have blues, probably due to the significantly smaller population of co-ethnics in this east Northamptonshire town.<sup>91</sup>

USC acquired The Wheatsheaf, an abandoned pub at Regent Square. Even in the mid-1970s, it was described as:

*... an old terraced house although it seems to have been a pub before, but it must have been one of the smallest pubs that existed. I recall when I came to Northampton it had one main*

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<sup>86</sup> Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley

<sup>87</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>88</sup> Norma Watson interviewed by George Watley

<sup>89</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley; June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley; Lloyd Kelly interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 1 October 2009

<sup>90</sup> Lloyd Kelly interviewed by George Watley

<sup>91</sup> Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley; Norma Watson interviewed by George Watley

*hall which was maybe about 10 foot by 12 foot. And the bar and then another little back room was like 8 feet by 8 feet. And upstairs there were some rooms. They were dilapidated, no floorboards. You risked life going up there. There were outside toilets. Well, urinals, there weren't any proper places for the ladies and then we had to do something. It wasn't something that you would have gladly recommended anyone to, but that's what the community had.'*<sup>92</sup>

Despite the grimness of the physical space, interviewees who were either USC Members or had been to their parties remembered the Club fondly for reasons which the following chapters will analyse. USC members were virtually exclusively Afro-Caribbean. However interviewees overwhelmingly recall not being exclusionary towards non-Caribbean people. The word United in the Club's name was intentional, reflecting simultaneous unity amongst Caribbean people, as well as wishing to be united with the larger community.<sup>93</sup> This desire for these seemingly divergent types of unity were realised in USC's involvement and success in the Northants Cricket League, as well as playing other teams of Afro-Caribbeans elsewhere in Britain. Also fellow Afro-Caribbeans from London, Manchester, Nottingham, Leeds and Bradford amongst other cities, travelled to the county for national domino tournaments, with USC making return trips to these and other cities.<sup>94</sup>

USC social events did not exclude non-Afro-Caribbean people. However, these memories are strongly gender-influenced. Male interviewees recalled fondly

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<sup>92</sup> Bert Cuff interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 28 September 2010

<sup>93</sup> Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley; Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley; Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>94</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 'The United Social Club is no more', 11 February 2010 <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/northampton/hi/people\\_and\\_places/newsid\\_8509000/8509052.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/northampton/hi/people_and_places/newsid_8509000/8509052.stm)> (accessed 11 February 2010); Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

that some, if not many, White women socialised there. One male interviewee's recollection of USC was that, ' ... *as a matter of fact sometimes we were nearly overrun by the Whites, especially the girls! You know, chasing the Black fellows. (laughs)*'<sup>95</sup> A female interviewee remembered this similar circumstance less amiably by noting that

*... A lot of (White) females used to go there! (laughs)... So yes, it was quite a few English ladies there as well. (laughs) My feeling about that? Well (laughs) my friend and myself who is now, not with us anymore, while we were dancing; we'd go close to these ladies. We were trying to sort of knock them out the way. (laughs) And then say sorry! (laughs) Because we felt that this was our place and we wanted it for ourselves. And the competition was rife to put it mildly, so we weren't having that! (laughs) Say no more!' <sup>96</sup>*

Being advantaged or disadvantaged in sexual competition helped to shape individual memories. Whatever differences there were about the perception of many Whites at USC events, the consensus of interviewees indicates that there were few present in any particular evening, but many would have been remembered over several years, with an overwhelming majority being women.<sup>97</sup> A typical element of this local Caribbean leisure experience was that, for men, they enjoyed having White women at such parties whilst Caribbean women did not want added competition for male attention and potential mates. Echoing this Caribbean gender-based dichotomous sentiment elsewhere in Britain was Pat Sinclair's recollection of blues in London:

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<sup>95</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>96</sup> Norma Watson interviewed by George Watley

<sup>97</sup> Bert Cuff interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA) 10 September 2010; Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley

*There was always some White people in the parties, mainly White girls. Very, hardly any White boys, it was mainly White girls in the period we're talking about. It was mainly White girls. And there were times when I have to say that Black girls got mightily peeved with the White girls at parties, you know, because obviously they were trying to take all the Black men away. But also, this is the dichotomy of this is that Black boys used to go out with a lot of White girls but **hated** Black girls going out with White boys. If **ever** they saw a Black girl going out with a White boy, they actively really made her life hell. But also was sort of dissing the White guy as well as if to say why you're going ...? And I think what hypocrisy was going on in that, you know. And actually to a lesser level it still goes on. I really dislike that actually. You know, but yes there were White girls at parties who really enjoyed themselves, you know, because, they loved the music. But more importantly they loved, Black men. I'm sorry to say it. It was Black men they came in for, and Black girls really didn't like that too much I have to say. I didn't like it very much when I was a teenager and in my early twenties as well, before I got married. Well after that you, well you couldn't care less.<sup>98</sup>*

Sinclair acknowledges that getting married changed her perspective on White women at blues because she found her husband, so was not in competition for men at these parties post-marriage. However, just as existed at USC parties, recollections of an overwhelming majority of White people being women at these social gatherings was typical in the experiences remembered by most

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<sup>98</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

Caribbeans, local and national. Furthermore, gender-based disparities in Caribbeans' feelings towards White people at blues and other parties with mostly Caribbean people was that Caribbean men appreciated having a greater choice in potential mates whilst Caribbean women did not enjoy having added competition for male attention at such events.

In addition to going to USC parties for the attention and affections of the opposite gender, an important part of USC social events was the sale of Caribbean food and drink, despite (or because of) both being remembered as expensive.<sup>99</sup> Food particularly was an important money maker for the Club, with the most memorable dish served being curry goat.<sup>100</sup> Serving curry goat would have been especially memorable because there were no Caribbean takeaways or sit-down restaurants locally until the 1990s.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, goat was not mentioned by any interviewees as being sold by any local butchers like oxtail and pig trotters were, strongly implying that it was bought elsewhere, such as London or Birmingham. A Black man nicknamed '*China Man*' was cited as one of the cooks at USC, as well as Monica Levy. Levy was noted for cooking jerk pork and rice and peas there for many years.<sup>102</sup> Having such food earned money for USC whilst enabling the Club to acquire a late night alcohol licence in 1972, as they closed at 11pm before then.<sup>103</sup> Serving food was necessary in order to obtain and retain permission to open until 2am, rare for a Northampton pub/club then.<sup>104</sup>

At least one local business helped to promote USC events unofficially. Tony Brown of Tony Brown Travel on 110 Wellingborough Road in Northampton

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<sup>99</sup> Lloyd Kelly interviewed by George Watley

<sup>100</sup> Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley; Bert Cuff interviewed by George Watley

<sup>101</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>102</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley

<sup>103</sup> Bert Cuff interviewed by George Watley, 10 September 2010

<sup>104</sup> Ibid

and a founding member of USC, promoted the Club's events alongside his travel agency business.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, offering, '... *travel arrangements to Jamaica (and) West Indies ...*', whilst having two separate listed phone numbers would indicate that Mr. Brown had a successful enterprise probably serving mostly Caribbean clientele.<sup>106</sup> This was not the only Afro-Caribbean owned travel agent, as Percy Thomas also owned a travel agency until 1976, when he emigrated back to Jamaica.<sup>107</sup> It is not totally clear whether Mr. Thomas' business was eponymously named, or was West Indies Holiday Travel of 183 Kettering Road in 1973.<sup>108</sup> In any event, having at least two travel agents catering for local Caribbean people would indicate that there were significant co-ethnic people with enough disposable income to support these businesses.

Barbers and hairdressers were important businesses in the local Afro-Caribbean community, although these were largely home-based until the 1980s. Joyce Martin is largely credited with being the first Afro-Caribbean hairdresser in Northampton and also the first to lecture on Black hairdressing/hair care at Northampton College.<sup>109</sup> Martin was based at 74 Wellingborough Road at some point in the 1970s, working out of her home on Birchfield Road prior to this.<sup>110</sup> Daphne Smith was another Afro-Caribbean hairdresser in this era, although she worked for an unidentified 'White' hairdresser on Kettering Road, with Afro-Caribbean people frequenting this shop because Smith could do their hair.<sup>111</sup> In Wellingborough, Cherry Whitehead operated a home-based hairdresser business

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<sup>105</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>106</sup> *Yellow Pages Classified, Northampton Area Telephone Directory*, Post Office Communications, 1976, p.210

<sup>107</sup> NBHP/2003/39ai

<sup>108</sup> *Kelly's Directory of Northampton*, (Kingston upon Thames, Kelly's Directories, 15<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1973), p.763

<sup>109</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley

<sup>110</sup> Martin Hair Care business card, 'Afro \* Caribbean \* European Styling: West Indian Cosmetics and Nailcare', 1970s (exact date unknown); Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

<sup>111</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley

from approximately 1960-1966, catering largely for Black nurses working at Park Hospital.<sup>112</sup>

Afro-Caribbean barbers also operated home-based businesses for the most part until the 1980s. In Northampton, an unnamed Caribbean barber operated out of his home on Newtown Road off the Wellingborough Road as early as the late 1950s.<sup>113</sup> Other Caribbean barbers in the 1970s and prior who operated home-based businesses in Northampton include another gentleman named Cliff (surname unknown) on Victoria Road near St. Edmund's Road, as well as Mr. Morgan on Wycliffe Road near Billing Road and close to Northampton General Hospital. The latter was remembered because he worked in a factory during the week whilst barbering on Fridays and Saturdays.<sup>114</sup> There is clear documentary evidence of Caribbean owned barbershops from 1980, with Cliff of Cliff's Barber Shop operating from 52 Craven Road in Northampton, plying his trade in Wellingborough for an unknown number of years prior.<sup>115</sup>

Interviewees did not recall or recount specific hairstyles they requested at the Black barbershops and hairdressers, except for one interviewee mentioning that 'White' hairdressers knew nothing about cutting or styling Black people's hair, leading Black women to either growing an Afro or doing their hair themselves in cane row.<sup>116</sup> Despite not specifically requesting a haircut based on notions of race and/or ethnicity, a male interviewees' perspective on recalling 'White' barbers' inexperience and discomfort with cutting Black hair that led him to eventually using a Black barber was that:

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<sup>112</sup> Cherry Whitehead, Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley

<sup>113</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley

<sup>114</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley

<sup>115</sup> *New Ethnic*, September 1980, p.15

<sup>116</sup> Myra James interviewed by George Watley

*The first barbershop I went into (in St. James area of Northampton) and I walked in and took a seat. The barbers, I think he started being, a bit shaking and they were all talking among them. They went and had a little meeting and they ... I think they decided which one must have a go. And he came and he said actually, he said look I never had any cut this sort of hair before, but I shall have a go if you want me to have a go. Are you sure? I says well look I got only a certain short time because I got to get back (to work), you know. And he says well I'm gonna have a go.<sup>117</sup>*

A barber 'having a go' does not instil confidence that his services would be good, especially under the circumstances as mentioned in this quotation. Despite not specifically desiring haircuts particularly as Black men, wanting a Black barber to cut one's hair was perceived as desirable or necessary because of the confidence the customer would have that the co-ethnic barber would be able to cut his hair properly. Hairdressers worked similarly in that having co-ethnic hairdressers would indicate to her clients that such hairdressers would definitely be able to style Black hair. In ethnic terms, there was no specific mention amongst interviewees themselves of specifically desiring or obtaining any haircuts or hairstyles as an expression of Black and/or Caribbean identity although one interviewee recalled derisively that her, '... daughter (wore) a wig! She got this big Afro wig ... Yeah, she was the one that wanted this high Afro business and she wore a wig for that.'<sup>118</sup> This quotation illustrates the difference between the fashions of the generations, which following chapters will analyse.

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<sup>117</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>118</sup> May Green interviewed by George Watley

Black barbershops and hairdressers were important not merely for their services, as it was not necessary for Caribbean people to frequent Caribbean owned barbershops and hairdressers, at least theoretically. However, the majority of ‘*White*’ barbers and hairdressers did not know how to cut and style ‘*Black*’ hair, rendering using the services of a fellow co-ethnic perceptually necessary by local Afro-Caribbeans. Furthermore, frequenting co-ethnically owned and operated barbershops or hairdressers was part of general trends in Britain in this era for Black people that reflected ethnic solidarity in the face of a cruel environment of ethnically-based discrimination and exclusion from various social spaces.<sup>119</sup> Using Afro-Caribbean owned barbers or hairdressers had a significant social dimension as well as practical because Black people could get information and receive advice and support from other co-ethnics in these friendly environments.<sup>120</sup>

Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe claim that Black hairdressers specifically, and Black women generally, were responsible for organising an overwhelming majority of pardners<sup>121</sup> in Britain.<sup>122</sup> However, in Northamptonshire there is no evidence that pardners were either organised in or run by hairdressers. However, interviewees’ references to pardners in Northamptonshire mention one having been run by a woman on Derby Road in Northampton whilst the other was organised by an unidentified person in Wellingborough in the 1970s.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Peter Edmead, *The Divisive Decade: A History of Caribbean Immigration to Birmingham in the 1950s*, p.34; Ambalavaner Sivanandan, ‘From Resistance to Rebellion Asian and Afro-Caribbean Struggles in Britain’, p.23

<sup>120</sup> Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of The Race: Black Women’s Lives in Britain*, p. 131

<sup>121</sup> Pardner derives from Jamaica. A group of people will get together and agree to give a fixed sum of money each week or month for the life of the pardner. Each person in the pardner will receive the total sum of money until all in the group do so. This was used in Britain to provide deposit money to purchase homes, as well as to cover other large expenses. This is called sou-sou in Trinidad and meeting in Barbados.

<sup>122</sup> Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of The Race: Black Women’s Lives in Britain*, p. 131

<sup>123</sup> May Green interviewed by George Watley, Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

As individuals, Northamptonshire Caribbean women often styled their own hair, mostly because it was cost prohibitive to regularly use hairdressers. In addition to cane row and keeping an Afro, most Caribbean women straightened their own hair using a hot comb that could burn their ears if not careful.<sup>124</sup> Other ways of styling hair for women, mirroring national and international trends were by using relaxers in the home to straighten hair, including but not exclusive of having jheri curls<sup>125</sup> made famous by such celebrities as Michael Jackson, Billy Dee Williams, Lionel Richie and Rick James amongst others. However, it is notable that Caribbean male interviewees did not mention having or desiring to have jheri curls although females did have this hairstyle. Afros were part of national and international fashion trends for Black people, but were not mentioned by any male interviewees as a hairstyle they had. The main ethnically-based hairstyle of note amongst younger Caribbeans locally in the 1980s and prior was that of dreadlocks, a symbol of being Rastafarian and of which there were an estimated 80 active Northampton followers in 1978.<sup>126</sup>

Clothing fashion was also used to express clear ethnic identities as Caribbean/Black people. Caribbeans representing the younger generation in the 1970s and 1980s were wearing tonic trousers. Tonic as a style is:

*... kind of a material that's got like little kind of like glitter, but like a shine ... and then like you know when you press, iron your trousers, their trousers were sharp man, like razor. And then they had these trousers, right, and it's closed like this and when*

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<sup>124</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley; Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley

<sup>125</sup> The chemical process used to create jheri curls was invented by the American cosmetologist Robert William 'Jheri' Redding to relax or straighten Black hair. This hair style was very popular in the 1970s and 1980s, especially amongst African-American men.

<sup>126</sup> Peter Browne, 'Rastafarians: Who they are . . . what they believe', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 7 June 1978

*they walked, a bit opened. Like flares, but a bit opened and inside had a different colour!*<sup>127</sup>

More generally, matching fashion trends of Black British people elsewhere, local younger Caribbeans, ‘... *were wearing Afros, flared, tonic jackets. You know, all that was the rage. Cecil G tops, big jumbo collared shirts. That was the fashion.*’<sup>128</sup> Their parents’ generation would have largely viewed these styles as outrageous, but the mentioned fashion differences, as exhibited by many younger Caribbeans in the 1970s and 1980s, reflected their desires to express themselves as Afro-Caribbeans in Britain. Furthermore, younger Caribbeans wearing the clothing fashions mentioned in the prior quotation would have also been visibly different to the White contemporaries, further illustrating their ethnic identity through their clothing styles.

The general fashion trends of British young people in the 1970s included punk clothing fashions of wearing exclusively black clothing designed to shock and menace whilst expressing affiliation with nihilism and anarchy.<sup>129</sup> This fashion genre heavily linked with punk rock music, something there is no evidence young local Caribbeans listened to. Generally however, the alliance between fashion and popular music is acknowledged to have commenced strong links from the 1960s.<sup>130</sup> This recognition helps to explain why local Caribbean youth failed to embrace punk fashions because the corresponding music fell outside of what they predominantly listened to. Also, bleak employment and economic prospects for British young people generally in the early 1980s might have helped songs and music videos like Dream Academy’s ‘*Life in a Northern Town*’ appeal to at least younger Black people in Britain in this era, especially

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<sup>127</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley

<sup>128</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley

<sup>129</sup> Valerie Mendes and Amy de la Haye, *Fashion since 1900*, p.220

<sup>130</sup> Yvonne Connikie, *Fashions of a Decade: The 1960s* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1990), p.6

local Caribbean people facing similar circumstances. However, Dream Academy's wearing of black overcoats and dark clothing generally alongside long hair partially covering their eyes did not appeal to local Caribbean youth despite this popular song's message of despair akin to what many young Caribbeans experienced in this era. There is no evidence that folk rock was well-liked within this sub-group and no participants mentioned any interest in this genre.

Other general British youth fashion trends were based on musicians' styles like David Bowie's transformation from using heavy makeup alongside his glam rock music best expressed by his Ziggy Stardust alter ego in the early to mid-1970s to bleached blonde hair and tapered suits usually without ties of the late 1970s into the 1980s when he crossed over into more popular rock music as best visualised in his '*Modern Love*' and '*Let's Dance*' music videos.<sup>131</sup> Bowie was cited by de la Haye as significantly influencing the clothing and hairstyle fashions of young people throughout the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>132</sup> Other general British fashion trends of the early to mid-1980s were having bleached blonde hair and wearing denim overalls best exemplified by music videos such as the London-based female trio Bananarama's '*Cruel Summer*', as well as the Birmingham-based Dexy's Midnight Runners' '*Come on Eileen*'. However, the correlation is clear between this music not being popular amongst local Caribbean people and corresponding clothing fashions displayed by these musical groups not being worn by a detectable number, if any, co-ethnics.

It is not being claimed that Caribbean youth were unique in expressing their ethnic identity in this era as a function of group identity because youth groups

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<sup>131</sup> Amy de la Haye, *Fashion Source Book* (London: Macdonald Orbis, 1988), p.168; 'David Bowie's 1970s Evolution Calendar', *Cherrybombed*, <<http://www.cherrybombed.com/2011/04/david-bowies-1970s-evolution-calendar/>> (accessed 12 September 2011)

<sup>132</sup> Amy de la Haye, *Fashion Source Book*, p.168

as early as the 1950s,' ... *became more and more identified by extremes of dress (becoming) part of the social history of the day (in the following decades).*'<sup>133</sup>

Within general youth trends in the post-War era of using fashion to self-identify with a particular group or groups, local Caribbean young people expressed their ethnic identity through their clothing fashions in the 1960s onwards. The dichotomy between Caribbean and British youth fashion trends derived to a large extent from their overall different tastes in music, as well as in the case of hair styles particularly, aesthetics unable to be either authentically achieved by Black people whilst the social and/or economic cost of emulating such styles (i.e. jheri curls to mimic long hair of Whites) would have been prohibitive. However, despite the apparent dichotomies between the consumer practices and practicalities of Northamptonshire Caribbeans vis-à-vis the larger county-wide community, there were some elements of convergence which the following section will develop in greater detail.

In terms of religion, Black churches in Northamptonshire played an important role in the lives of many local Caribbeans. There was the New Testament Church of God, with its Northampton branch commencing services in September 1962 at Vernon Terrace School Hall, moving several times until finally making its home on College Street in a large venue placed in a more prominent area of the town.<sup>134</sup> Other Black churches commencing in Northampton included the Church of God Assembly starting in 1964 at Stimpson Avenue School, eventually making a permanent home at Clare Street, as well as The Church of God of Prophecy, part of a larger organisation started in London and Birmingham in the 1960s.<sup>135</sup> The Church of God of Prophecy initially set up their Northampton church in the mid-1970s, eventually making

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<sup>133</sup> Elizabeth Irving, *History of Twentieth Century Fashion* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1992), pp.240-241

<sup>134</sup> *Sharing The Past*, p.66

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, p.66

their home on Perry Street from the mid-1980s.<sup>136</sup> Also, The Seventh Day Adventist Church was active in the county from the 1970s at least, having a large majority of Black parishioners.

In addition to the expected importance of religion in church attendance, Black churches were significant in the lives of its congregants because of the performance elements within church activities. The musical experience, both listening and performing, in Black churches was central to church being enjoyable.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, local Black churches also influenced ‘*typical*’ Northamptonshire consumer experiences. Generally, heavily church-going Afro-Caribbeans in the post-War decades were generally less inclined to desire material items and socialise where money was spent ostentatiously. This is partly due to, in at least one stated case, strict tithing<sup>138</sup> being, ‘... *an essential thing of Seventh Day Adventism!*’<sup>139</sup> If money was being spent by these church-going people for socialising or other non-essential purposes, such funds were either used for either religious books like **The Word** and **The Daily Word** or for church related convention and other congregationally based social events, including food prepared by church members and used for such socialisation.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, it was claimed by the more church going interviewees that their children were also not particularly materially demanding because a non-materialistic value system was instilled in their homes.<sup>141</sup> Clearly exemplifying this was Marjorie Bradshaw. When asked about how her church based life experiences and religion affected her children’s consumer aspirations, she said:

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid, p.66

<sup>137</sup> NBHP/2004/142

<sup>138</sup> Tithing, as strictly defined in some Christian denominations, is giving 10 percent of a parishioners’ income to his/her church.

<sup>139</sup> Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley

<sup>140</sup> Marjorie Bradshaw interviewed by George Watley; Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley; Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley

<sup>141</sup> Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley; Marjorie Bradshaw interviewed by George Watley; Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley

*Well my dear, it depends on how you bring up your children, ok! Now they don't demand because they don't know my purse, you know. So I give them what I could afford. You know so they know that they shouldn't come to me and tell me that well that friend have this and I want that. And that what friend have that, no! I never going for that. You know what I mean. So I buy the best what my pocket could afford. You know what I mean. So I've never really had that problem. ... (for them) to say oh mum I don't want that because ... No, I don't go in for that. You know I wasn't one of the must have mothers, you know what I mean. One must have this or I must have that. And I brought them up like that.<sup>142</sup>*

As this quotation illustrates, consumer behaviour of at least some church-going Caribbeans was clearly based on moderation and affordability for the parent. However, this does not mean that local Black church-going Caribbeans did not spend money. Rather, they spent primarily in a manner that catered to needs rather than wants.

Obviously church-going local Caribbeans did have disposable income. One of the main aspects of spending for these parishioners was in the purchase of traditionally Caribbean food. Through church-based social networks and activities, they discovered shops and locations that sold traditionally Caribbean food.<sup>143</sup> One Black church-going interviewee recalled that, '... *When I came here in the '60s, I still buy me West Indian food, could get it here to buy. You know I never buy the English food ... I used to buy ... yam, green banana, ackee,*

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<sup>142</sup> Marjorie Bradshaw interviewed by George Watley

<sup>143</sup> Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley

*you name it!*'<sup>144</sup> Another interviewee remembered using her and her husband's regular trips to Birmingham for church matters as members of Wesleyan Holiness Church to buy food more cheaply than in Northampton:

*Birmingham is the headquarters (of Wesleyan Holiness Church) so we used to have a lot of meetings and what not that we go to. So it would be very easy for me because when I'm going to the meetings, I can always walk over to the market and get things and go back with it. You could pay 10 shillings and go on the train to Birmingham and you find that things was so much cheaper over Birmingham. So we used to go over there and you buy supplies, put it in the freezer. Well everything! The fish, the meat, the everything because you know, your second biggest (city) in England, Birmingham.*<sup>145</sup>

Buying Caribbean food was not unique to church-going Caribbeans. However, the networks used to assist acquisition of products relatively quickly, as implied in the prior quotations, were different in some respects between church-going and non-church-going Caribbeans, which the following consumer networks chapter will address. More directly however, members and churchgoers of Black churches desired the spiritual '*food*' on offer, which transferred into other areas of their lives.

As mentioned in chapter 1, Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe suggest that for many Caribbeans in Britain in the immediate post-War decades, particularly women, church related activities were in many cases the only forms of recreation they

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<sup>144</sup> Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley

<sup>145</sup> Marjorie Bradshaw interviewed by George Watley

experienced.<sup>146</sup> Exemplifying this locally was Medlin Cleghorn who noted the importance of her church when prompted by the author:

*(Author): What about magazines and books? If you wanted to ...*

*What types of books or magazines did you read?*

*MC: Mostly the Bible. You can't go wrong with the Bible.*

*(laughs)*

*(Author): Yes! (laughs) Did you read anything else?*

*MC: Things that drop through the door and things like that you know but I don't put me self out to go and buy them. The Bible is right there. Can't go wrong with it. That's true innit? It's guidance.*

*(Author): Yes, so obviously I get the feeling that most of your friends and family and social life comes from the church.*

*MC: That's right! We all together. We no different to no one, we're all together. We meet everyone in church and if we on the street we just the same. We greet each other. We speak to each other. The brethren are all good friends, no gossip! We talk about the love of God. We're very serious about that.*<sup>147</sup>

When asked about leisure, Cleghorn immediately and clearly referred to her church and religion as a source of not only how to live, but also that her social networks were and are significantly based around her church, New Testament Church of God. Cleghorn's church based experiences also support Green, Hebron and Woodward's recognition that Black churches provided for stability within the relative insecurity of being Black in Britain.<sup>148</sup> This was not only

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<sup>146</sup> Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of The Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*, pp.131-132

<sup>147</sup> Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley

<sup>148</sup> Eileen Green, Sandra Hebron and Diana Woodward, *Women's Leisure, What Leisure?*, p.75

expressed by Cleghorn in terms of friendship generally amongst church members, but also within a spirit of togetherness and similarity amongst them that did not exist elsewhere in their life experiences.

Contrasting somewhat with the experiences of church-going were celebrity-based international influences of Black people outside of Britain on local Caribbeans. Exemplifying this was the influence of African-American culture on local Afro-Caribbean people. **Soul Train**, the very popular music television programme featuring numerous highly recognisable African-American singers, was being seen in at least one Caribbean household in Northampton.<sup>149</sup> **Ebony**, the most iconic of African-American magazines, was well known and remembered by many, if not most, local Afro-Caribbeans. For example, one local woman annually subscribed to the magazine for over 40 years starting from 1967 when she lived in London, continuing to do so after moving to Northampton in 1973.<sup>150</sup> **Ebony** was initially difficult to obtain in Northamptonshire, having been acquired in London and/or supplied by mobile hairdressers from London in the 1960s-1970s.<sup>151</sup> However, the magazine was eventually sold in local shops sometime in the 1970s.<sup>152</sup> **Ebony** and **Soul Train** influenced local Afro-Caribbean people in various ways, which following chapters will analyse in greater detail.

By the 1970s, the younger generation of Caribbean people largely having grown up in Northamptonshire specifically, if not Britain generally, created and used ethnically based clubs to socialise. In 1977, Matta Fancanta Movement (MFM) was formed in Northampton at Sheep Street near Greyfriars Bus Station in an abandoned Salvation Army Citadel, operating to give younger Caribbean people

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<sup>149</sup> Myra James (pseudonym) interviewed by George Watley

<sup>150</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>151</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley

<sup>152</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley; Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

opportunities to socialise in a ‘safe’ environment whilst developing opportunities to learn about Black and/or Caribbean artistic forms and history, as well as having sporting teams in cricket, football and netball by the mid-1980s.<sup>153</sup> MFM was also seen as being necessary at this time because of the perception according to Lee Bryant, the leading founder of the organisation, that, ‘*There (was) absolutely nowhere for young Black (people) in this town to go for recreation.*’<sup>154</sup>

The younger generation of Caribbeans as exemplified by MFM differed from their parents as best represented by USC because they had different styles such as dreadlocks and distinctive red, gold and green hats if they were believers in Rastafarianism, as well as in many cases smoking cannabis, also referred to as ‘*the herb*’ by Rastafarians because of its perceived medicinal, meditational and religious benefits without using it as a drug in the contemporary sense of merely doing so for enjoyment.<sup>155</sup> Rastafarianism was also followed to some extent by many other MFM members, possibly a majority.<sup>156</sup> Its appeal was based on reclaiming African culture as something to 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.*’<sup>157</sup> Ethnic identity developed through Rastafarianism was integral in creating the impetus to found MFM.

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<sup>153</sup> ‘Meeting place for coloured youngsters’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 11 August 1977; ‘Ball Winners bound for Belgium: Campaign for funds launched’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 28 January 1984, ‘Black youth group to show off its culture’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 23 August 1982; Ras Jabulani aka Trevor Hall interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 10 September 2010

<sup>154</sup> ‘Meeting place for coloured youngsters’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 11 August 1977

<sup>155</sup> Ras Jabulani aka Trevor Hall interviewed by George Watley (Northampton: NBHA), 24 September 2010

<sup>156</sup> ‘Rastafarians’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 7 June 1978

<sup>157</sup> Ibid

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.<sup>158</sup> Not only was MFM successful in promoting Black cultures within five years of its inception,<sup>159</sup> but was also able to obtain over £30000 in funding for employment training in 1983 for unemployed young people.<sup>160</sup> 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 had decreased.<sup>161</sup>

Moving from Northampton-based fashion and music manifestations in the county, Wellingborough Caribbeans had similar but somewhat distinct experiences. Wellingborough had a Black/Caribbean organisation, Wellingborough African-Caribbean Association (WACA), starting off at Herriott’s Lane before eventually settling long-term at Rock Street in 1989.<sup>162</sup> Although not set up by younger Caribbeans like MFM, WACA was important because:

*It was about finding and expressing a sense of cultural identity. So there was music and language and food and you know. A lot of what was happening at the time was being conveyed via reggae music. So that was an important vehicle for all of us I think in terms of ideas, as I say a wider understanding of what was happening in the world and where we fit in within it all. So*

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<sup>158</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley; Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley; NBHP/2004/140ai

<sup>159</sup> ‘Black youth group shows off its culture’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 23 August 1982

<sup>160</sup> ‘Training plan aids job prospects’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 12 January 1983

<sup>161</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

<sup>162</sup> Mark Steinhardt, *The Story of the Victoria Centre* (Wellingborough: Victoria Centre, 2003), pp.100-101

*sound systems were very key at Rock Street both in terms of the regular youth club (and) often times local sound systems would play.*<sup>163</sup>

Having Black/Caribbean food, music and cultural events were integral in attracting Afro-Caribbeans to WACA. WACA also offered Saturday supplementary school to young people, which not only added an educational dimension to the cultural offerings of the Association, but also, because of using the Rock Street premises years before 1989, served as a harbinger to using these formerly abandoned school buildings as their long-term base.<sup>164</sup> WACA, unlike MFM and USC in Northampton, aimed to, ‘... *serve all aspects of the Afro-Caribbean community; the old people, the youth, education, welfare rights, and so on ... (not) just a social centre for dances ...*’<sup>165</sup> WACA did all this within one organisation in Wellingborough that currently still runs a Saturday supplementary school, elderly centre and has regular sound systems and other social events whilst Northampton’s three significant organisations that started in the 1960s-1970s, USC, MFM, as well as West Indian Parents’ Association (WIPA) that will be mentioned shortly, all ceased operating in their significant forms by the early 1990s in large part because they lacked the ability to be multifaceted and intergenerational like their Wellingborough contemporaries.

Education as a form and means of consumption connecting with identities as Caribbean and/or Black people in Britain occurred locally, with WIPA as a prime example. WIPA was founded as a Saturday supplementary school in 1974 by Morcea Walker, Ivan Bryan and Joseph Dixon amongst others.<sup>166</sup> WIPA borrowed ideas specifically obtained from an Afro-Caribbean Saturday supplementary school in Leeds.

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<sup>163</sup> NBHP/2003/72ai-av

<sup>164</sup> Mark Steinhardt, *The Story of the Victoria Centre*, p.101

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, p.101

<sup>166</sup> *Sharing The Past*, p.69; Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley; Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

*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.*<sup>167</sup>

This is an expression of typical Caribbean consumption because Black supplementary schools were called for and organised across Britain in this era by educationalists such as Bernard Coard in response to significant, recognised underachievement of Caribbean children in education, as well as Caribbean parents recognising this problem existed because of '*inherent racism of the mainstream system.*'<sup>168</sup> Also fuelling this impetus across Britain was, from the late 1960s, Black parents targeting the state educational system as fundamentally discriminatory and responding to this by forming Black parents' groups and supplementary schools.<sup>169</sup> As mentioned in chapter 1, supplementary schools were not new to Britain in the 1970s, having originated from socialist Sunday schools in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as Mirza and Reay as well as Gerrard have recognised.<sup>170</sup> However, what WIPA was part of was a national British trend of setting up ethnically-based supplementary schools because of the duality of countering hegemony whilst recognising that British schools generally were not educating their offspring as well as White

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<sup>167</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>168</sup> Barry Troyna, 'Fact or Artefact? The 'Educational Underachievement' of Black Pupils', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 5 (1984), p.154; Bernard 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*, p.39

<sup>169</sup> Ian Grosvenor, *Assimilating Identities*, p.60; Jessica Gerrard, 'Emancipation, Education & the Working Class: Genealogies of Resistance in Socialist Sunday Schools and Black Saturday Schools', p.216

<sup>170</sup> Heidi Mirza and Diane Reay, 'Spaces and Places of Black Educational Desire: Rethinking Black Supplementary School as a New Social Movement', p.532; Jessica Gerrard, 'Emancipation, Education & the Working Class: Genealogies of Resistance in Socialist Sunday Schools and Black Saturday Schools', p.169

British children. Furthermore, this can be labelled ‘*typical*’ Caribbean consumption in large part because WIPA modelled its Saturday supplementary school upon those run by co-ethnic contemporaries in London and Leeds.<sup>171</sup> This local-national link illustrates how WIPA was part of national trends. However, whilst recognising that ethnically-based discrimination was pervasive in Britain, WIPA’s Annual Dinner and Dance Queen toasted the Queen, at least to 1987.<sup>172</sup>

WIPA held its first sessions at Barry Road Primary School, chosen in part because of being in the perceptual heart of the Afro-Caribbean community in Northampton.<sup>173</sup> Also talks were given to inform the community about how the local education system worked, as well as giving the community knowledge about how young people learn, at least in 1980.<sup>174</sup> Although started because of local recognition that Afro-Caribbean children were largely underachieving in education at this time, amongst WIPA’s greatest contributions were that it set the foundation for many Black/Caribbean organisations in Northampton, including but not exclusive of the African Caribbean Elderly Service (ACES) that still exists at 2 Park Avenue North in the Abington area of Northampton.<sup>175</sup> ACES also had its name as of 2010 on a 16<sup>th</sup> Annual ACES Caribbean Fundraising Ball at Park Inn Hotel on Silver Street off Horsemarket.<sup>176</sup> However, ACES dinner dances existed from 1975, making recognition of a 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary as an organisational change for the dance as opposed to the 16<sup>th</sup> time ACES actually held such an event.<sup>177</sup> The ACES name also is currently

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<sup>171</sup> Joe Dixon interviewed by George Watley; Bert Cuff interviewed by George Watley, 28 September 2010

<sup>172</sup> Karen Davies, ‘Biography of George Inniss – One Man’s View’, p.4

<sup>173</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>174</sup> *New Ethnic*, p.4

<sup>175</sup> *Sharing The Past*, p.115; Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley; Nikki Taylor, *Black Community Organisations in Northampton* (1970s), Northamptonshire Black History Project, 2003; ACES Centre For Older People <<http://www.acescentre.co.uk/contact.html>> (accessed 27 May 2011)

<sup>176</sup> Skiddle.com, <<http://www.skiddle.com/whats-on/Northampton/Park-Inn-Hotel/ACES-Caribbean-Fundraising-Ball/11382260/>> (accessed 27 May 2011)

<sup>177</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

used by Club Aces, a nightclub on the corner of Lady's Lane and Sheep Street. However, the only connection between the Club and the Elderly Service was that ACES used to operate where Club Aces is now.<sup>178</sup>

As WIPA developed, it also operated a summer supplementary scheme started in 1982, initially funded by Northamptonshire Police Authority.<sup>179</sup> 120 children were part of this scheme in its first year, experiencing local trips to amusement and nature parks, as well as participating in swimming and archery.<sup>180</sup> Furthermore, WIPA moved in the early 1980s from Barry Road Primary School to Northampton School for Boys and later to Trinity School (which is now Malcolm Arnold Academy but was also Unity School) near The Racecourse.<sup>181</sup> Moving from operating in primary to secondary schools not only resulted from not wishing to alienate older children from its schemes, but also reflected its aim to give something to the larger community in part by introducing 'Blackness' to White children that were an estimated 20-30 percent of summer supplementary scheme participants.<sup>182</sup> The general desire to integrate by many local Afro-Caribbeans was reflected by their consumer habits, as the following section will delineate.

### **Integration with 'typical' Northamptonshire consumer experiences**

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, 'Typical' Northamptonshire consumer experiences refers to the local leisure and acquisition of items that many local non-Afro-Caribbeans would have also experienced alongside Caribbeans, or at least would have been familiar with in this era. More specifically, as Caribbean people lived longer in Northamptonshire, they

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<sup>178</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley

<sup>179</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>180</sup> Ibid

<sup>181</sup> Ibid

<sup>182</sup> Ibid

adjusted to their available local purchasing and consumer acquisition options, integrating themselves as local consumers. Like others living in Northamptonshire, they bought furniture, food, clothes, and other items in many ways based on their local options similarly to the overall population. This section simultaneously delineates where local Caribbeans acquired goods as a reflection of living in the county, as well as the items they acquired resulting from their residence in Northamptonshire.

An example of these simultaneous recollections is of Brierley's on Gold Street in Northampton. Brierley's was remembered by virtually every interviewee as a shop that offered excellent value for various items.<sup>183</sup> More specifically, Brierley's was known for selling good quality tinned food, clothing (including school uniforms), shoes, toiletries, cutlery and other kitchen and household items at significantly reduced prices that appealed to Caribbeans as part of its local market. Frank Brierley was White and did not cater specifically to Caribbeans, as would be expected from a large scale local retailer seeking as much turnover as possible. Despite this, fond recollections of Frank Brierley range from nicknaming him '*Daddy Brierley*'<sup>184</sup> to referring to his eponymously named shop as, '... *the Harrods of Northampton*.'<sup>185</sup> An earlier Caribbean arrival to Northampton remembered that Brierley started out with a small shop out of Denmark Road, a mostly residential location near Northampton General Hospital, before his Gold Street shop was set up.<sup>186</sup> Brierley's was also known of in London by at least one interviewee before her arrival to Northampton in 1974 because she:

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<sup>183</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley; Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley; Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley; Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>184</sup> Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley

<sup>185</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

<sup>186</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

*... heard about Brierley's from the '70s, from somebody who I was working with in London. I was working, this is before I moved up, and there's a White lady who used to come to Northampton to go to shop in Brierley's ... and this would have been about 1972, and she was telling me about Brierley's in Northampton, she was going to ... Basically, how they sell really good stuff for very cheap prices, in there, and how she'd got whatever she'd got. She may have had family (in Northampton) I can't remember, but I do know she was telling me. When I told her I was going to move to Northampton, this is what she was telling me, you know. You need to go to Brierley's because they've got a, b, c, d, that's really, really good.<sup>187</sup>*

In addition to the shop on Gold Street, Brierley sold his wares at Market Square in the late 1950s-early 1960s closest to the fountain, which was simultaneously a form of entertainment and purchasing activity.<sup>188</sup> Brierley did not always have fixed prices when selling from the Market Square. Customers were lured, according to one account, because:

*... First time that I've seen this thing, I went on the market place and I saw bartering (actually a Dutch auction). Oh I loved it! ... There was a monument (fountain) on the Market Square and I would sit on it, you see. And Brierley's was always the closest to this monument. And he had a powerful voice when he says I'm selling this thing here he says. I bought it, he says, very expensive and I'm selling it to you cheap today. And then he'd*

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<sup>187</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

<sup>188</sup> Fred Golby, *Northampton Market and forty years trading there* (Northampton: (self-published), 2006), pp.21, 32; Note: The fountain on Northampton's Market Square was demolished in 1962; Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

*start off at one price and then he'd go down and he'd go down and he always had a lot of crowd around him, you know. And I think I bought things from him that I didn't even want.*<sup>189</sup>

Another account of Frank Brierley's sales pitch style in this era:

*He used to (say he was) sell(ing) stolen goods openly and the pensioners used to go in, they used to love it! ... He used to say it just fell off the back of a lorry. Come and get it before the coppers come! Yeah, he was a lad he was. (laughs)*<sup>190</sup>

The legend of Brierley's started from these entertaining moments, at least for the earliest post-War Caribbean people arriving to Northampton. However, the reality was that Brierley's sold very reasonably priced items, which was very attractive to local Afro-Caribbean consumers as part of the larger consumer market, as well as having developed as more co-ethnics moved into the town. Brierley was also known by, and popular with, at least some Wellingborough Caribbeans because of the excellent value Brierley's offered its customers.<sup>191</sup> Caribbean integration into the local consumer market through the numerous mentioning of Brierley's by interviewees indicates there were a plethora of similarities between Caribbeans and the larger population in terms of simultaneous recollections of Frank Brierley and his eponymously named shops as having a, '... *'down to earth' and 'cheap and cheerful' approach to retailing ...*'<sup>192</sup> This approach worked well with its customers, which, in addition to his popularity in Northamptonshire, helped Brierley to be treated as, '*... one of their own ...*' in Peterborough because of his retailing persona.<sup>193</sup> However, Brierley was not necessarily unique in the immediate post-War era in using his

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<sup>189</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>190</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>191</sup> Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley

<sup>192</sup> Richard Yates-Smith, *I Thought Frank Brierley Was Dead* (Leicester: A. Willday & Sons Ltd, 1996), p.66

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid*, p.59

familiarity with, and engendered loyalty to, customers as his business practice. Such attributes, combined with proximity and friendly experiences with shopkeepers, were typical of the small-shop experience of the immediate post-War decades.<sup>194</sup> Brierley's contribution to local retailing was, until Frank Brierley's December 1977 conviction for Long Firm Fraud, that his shops were very successful in combining his market seller/small shop flair with discounted pricing that appealed to a large percentage of the local market which Caribbeans were part of.<sup>195</sup>

In addition to Brierley's, Caribbean consumers used existing tailors to exhibit their clothing fashionability. For example, Burton's on Abington Street in Northampton was well-noted in the 1950s and 1960s as, '... *(making) a fortune out of (Caribbean people), you know. 'Cause they used to go there and get our suits, you see, with these specially made. So, as far as I gather, Burton's employed a couple of Black tailors.*'<sup>196</sup> Dovetailing with the prior quotation was a recognition that, '... *most of the clothes (Afro-Caribbean locally would) wear, they would buy it (at) Burton's. Get it specially made! Specially made with designs that they like.*'<sup>197</sup> Reed, a Northampton tailor on St. Giles Street across from The Guildhall, was also noted for making bespoke shirts and suits that was at least known to, if not popular with, Caribbean consumers in the 1950s-1960s.<sup>198</sup> It is not clear how Caribbean people desiring specially made clothing in this era compared with their White contemporaries earning similar wages. However, purchasing bespoke clothing, particularly on the low wages many Caribbeans earned in this era, combined with using existing tailors as opposed to fellow Caribbean tailors that would have existed, at least in London and other

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<sup>194</sup> Phil Lyon, Anne Colquhoun and Dave Kinney, 'UK food shopping in the 1950s: the social context of customer loyalty', pp.33, 38

<sup>195</sup> Richard Yates-Smith, *I Thought Frank Brierley Was Dead*, pp.76-78

<sup>196</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>197</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>198</sup> Ibid

large cities, indicates that Caribbean people integrated themselves within larger localised consumer options in order to acquire clothing fashions they sought.

Parsonsons, originally on Gold Street in the 1950s and 1960s, was a furniture shop that was recognised as a place where many, if not most, Black people in Northampton bought their furniture.<sup>199</sup> This was in large part because Parsonsons was perceived as being, '... *very good to Black folk*.'<sup>200</sup> For example, radiograms, standard pieces of functional furniture for Caribbean people across Britain, were bought at Parsonsons by many if not most Northampton-based Caribbeans in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>201</sup> In addition to radiograms, settees and beds/bedroom suites were bought through hire-purchase at Parsonsons and Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans bought their furniture almost exclusively through hire-purchase (h/p). H/p was commonplace in Britain in this era, commencing in the 1860s when Singer first started selling its sewing machines.<sup>202</sup> H/p proliferated in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, increasing an estimated 24-fold from 1891 to 1936 with approximately 24,000,000 such agreements in existence in the latter year.<sup>203</sup>

H/p continued to be a well-recognised and practiced local and national means of purchasing higher priced items in the post-War era, being well advertised in the 1950s to 1970s. Local Caribbeans merely used h/p to buy big ticket items in the same way as their White contemporaries. When asked about hire purchase in the 1950s and immediately afterwards, Ulric Gravesande recalled how hire purchase combined Caribbean consumer manifestations with local selling practices surrounding hire purchase:

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<sup>199</sup> Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley; Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>200</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>201</sup> Tony Sewell, *Keep On Moving: The Windrush Legacy*, p.62; Michael McMillan, *The Front Room: Migrant Aesthetics in the Home*, p.36; Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>202</sup> Peter Scott, 'The Twilight World of Interwar British Hire Purchase', *Past and Present*, 177 (2002), pp.196-197

<sup>203</sup> Ibid, pp.196-197

*Oh yes! Oh yes! (There were advertisements for hire purchase.)  
And we had stores and shops, there's one just gone, Parsonsons.  
They were very good to Black folk. Almost every Black folk  
would have got something from them, a bed, radiogram,  
something from them. And it was easy ... You didn't have the  
difficulty like you would have today, the background  
investigations and so on. They knew where you live or if they  
didn't know where you live or you move from here and go  
somewhere else, somebody would say oh well he's gone to live  
this place. And that's how it was in those days. You didn't have  
to have that (hesitation) like you have to have now. But getting  
these things was more or less word of mouth. You go to see your  
friend with one and the friend is going to recommend it because  
they want you to be just as happy as they were! You didn't have  
this back biting this people envious of one and other, no. You all  
wanted to live in the same sort of (lifestyle) ... You want to know  
that you go to my friend on Sunday. He's going to give me some  
food and I'm going to sit there and listen to his lovely records.  
This is the type of music he likes and I'm going to sit and listen  
to they're type of music. Or I'm going to go there and see the  
girls from the hospital is going to be at his house because he's  
courting one and I'm going to meet these other girls and so on.  
That was the way of life.<sup>204</sup>*

Although word-of-mouth was mentioned as being important in identifying reputable shops, this was also important amongst Caribbeans in terms of establishing baseline co-ethnic consumerism. A definition of this baseline

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<sup>204</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

would be those expectations local Caribbeans would have of individual members, at least when entertaining at their homes. Hire purchase was used to buy items virtually unaffordable if purchased totally in cash. However this was not unique for local Caribbeans, as this was part of general selling practices of shops in this era, at least those selling higher priced items. In the early 1950s for example, 75-80 percent of furniture sales in Britain were through h/p, as well as 50 percent of radio sales.<sup>205</sup> In this context, local Caribbeans' purchasing behaviour was similar to their non-co-ethnic contemporaries. However, what was notable amongst Caribbeans, particularly those living in Northamptonshire in the 1950s and 1960s, was that they wanted other co-ethnics to have the same things and enjoy them as much as they did. The prior quotation illuminates this through this interviewee's recollection and recognition of co-ethnics living similarly through having the same consumer items, as well as by implication contrasting this with the contemporary competitive consumerism the interviewee perceives existing at the time of the interview. Local Caribbeans used hire-purchase to buy expensive items in part to help create a sense of community through having and using similar items as a means of displaying togetherness. This occurred especially through the radiogram, which allowed both the host and visiting friends to share their music, creating commonality through such purchasing and resulting activity.

Notably, Parsonsons was mentioned by Gravesande as a reputable, honest trader, an opinion that other Caribbeans living in Northamptonshire in the 1950s and 1960s concurred with.<sup>206</sup> This reputation contrasts with other shops, notably Smart's on Gold Street, which was not perceived similarly because this furniture shop was according to one account, '*... a bit of a crook.*'<sup>207</sup> Other unnamed shops having sold items on hire-purchase were also remembered as

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<sup>205</sup> Institute of Public Affairs, 8 (1954), p.17

<sup>206</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley

<sup>207</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

short-changing Afro-Caribbean consumers until they became enlightened to such dubious business practices as not keeping accurate records of payments made.<sup>208</sup>

The Wellingborough experience in terms of purchasing furniture differed significantly because of the auctioneer Wilford's at 76 Midland Road. Wilford's was known as an excellent place to purchase second hand furniture, discovered by word-of-mouth although advertisements were often placed in the local newspaper.<sup>209</sup> Beds, dressing tables and other types of furniture were sold there. The experience of purchasing furniture at Wilford's contrasts with the Brierley's example in Northampton because it was not universally perceived as enjoyable to acquire items there, although one account of purchasing, or attempting to purchase, through this auctioneer recalled the bidding process as being '*exciting*'.<sup>210</sup> Despite conflicting accounts of the Wilford's experience being exciting to one interviewee because of the thrill of winning an auction despite not being recollected as enjoyable to another, partaking in its bidding process was necessary to acquire items significantly cheaper than in local furniture shops.<sup>211</sup> This explains why Wellingborough Afro-Caribbeans never mentioned purchasing furniture in Northampton despite citing other shops such as Brierley's, as well as the town's Market Square, as locations where excellent value could be found. Hire purchase could not be used to buy items at Wilford's, but the significant savings that could be obtained there vis-à-vis purchasing furniture at shops made this experience worthwhile for those doing so. This activity was not unique to Wellingborough Caribbeans vis-à-vis the larger population there. Rather, such purchasing at Wilford's reflects their integration into local consumer practices and places to acquire goods as this

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid

<sup>209</sup> Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley

<sup>210</sup> Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley

<sup>211</sup> Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley; Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley

auctioneer has been in business since 1934, decades before significant Afro-Caribbean migration into Wellingborough.<sup>212</sup>

Hire-purchase in Wellingborough in other respects worked similarly to Northampton in terms of national establishments such as The Co-operative (Co-op), Curry's and Dixon's being cited as shops where Caribbean people bought their washing machines, refrigerators and record players as well as other more expensive items difficult to purchase entirely in cash.<sup>213</sup> This is indicative of Caribbeans adjusting to and fitting in generally with local and national consumer habits and processes in terms of the acquisition of big ticket items and shops such items were purchased. In terms of hire-purchase, this was frequently advertised by many shops in local newspapers in Northamptonshire up to and through the 1970s. The Co-op was particularly well remembered and respected because customers were given stamps as a form of rebates that could be used for future purchases working similarly to Green Shield Stamps as mentioned earlier in this chapter.<sup>214</sup> Curry's was also particularly respected in Wellingborough because, according to one account, in 1957 the store manager was particularly helpful when on one interviewee's wedding night, he was promised a radiogram to lend but his friend reneged. The store manager was remembered fondly because he relaxed the normal down payment expectation in order for the radiogram to be purchased that day.<sup>215</sup> This event was so memorable that not only did this participant still have the radiogram at the time of interview nearly 50 years after purchase, but hoped that it would be kept as a family heirloom; such was the importance of this circumstance.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Wilford's Auctioneers Ltd. <<http://www.wilfords.org/about.html>> (accessed 11 August 2011)

<sup>213</sup> Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley; Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley; Norma Watson interviewed by George Watley

<sup>214</sup> Cherry Whitehead (with Frank Whitehead) interviewed by George Watley

<sup>215</sup> Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley

<sup>216</sup> Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley

Other consumer experiences were shocking to Caribbeans in the county. For example, Northampton's Cattle Market in the late 1950s-early 1960s sold live chickens to be killed or arranged to be slaughtered by the purchaser, which was not expected by Caribbean people in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Britain because of individual squeamishness, as well as not expecting such live slaughtering to occur because of Britain being perceived to be more '*civilised*' than the Caribbean.<sup>217</sup> Length of time in Britain, specifically in more urban locations to Northamptonshire, influenced perceptions that slaughtering animals should be done before purchasing them.<sup>218</sup> Other unhygienic conditions perceived as revolting in the 1950s and 1960s included recalling butchers not wrapping meat in paper after its purchase, as well as in at least one circumstance, a Caribbean person accidentally discarding a co-worker's lunch whilst cleaning toilets at a construction site because he thought it impossible that someone would store a sandwich under a toilet.<sup>219</sup> Bread was left unwrapped outside customers' homes as late as the 1960s, as well as fish and chips recalled to have been wrapped in newspaper in this era, clearly unhygienic by Afro-Caribbean standards.<sup>220</sup> The shock of leaving unwrapped bread outside customers' doorsteps in this era, as well as other similar perceptually unhygienic practices, was not exclusive to Northamptonshire Caribbeans, as contemporaries elsewhere in Britain were equally stunned by this occurrence.<sup>221</sup>

Another unpleasant surprise related to hygiene was that Caribbeans could not assume that baths and showers could be taken where they lived. Locally, Mounts Baths were one of the biggest public baths in Northampton, with 22 slipper baths on site.<sup>222</sup> However, the Mounts Baths' Golden Jubilee booklet

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<sup>217</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley; Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

<sup>218</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

<sup>219</sup> NBHP/2005/181ai

<sup>220</sup> NBHP/2005/181ai

<sup>221</sup> Peter Edmead, *The Divisive Decade: A History of Caribbean Immigration to Birmingham in the 1950s*, p.22

<sup>222</sup> *Mounts Baths Golden Jubilee 1936-1986* (Northampton: Northampton Borough Council, 1986), p.5

ignores the fact that some Northampton people had to use such baths because bathing facilities were not available in at least some local homes. Because of lacking bathing facilities in homes, at least for some local people, Mounts Baths' slipper baths were heavily used because:

*Most of the houses in those days (1950s) there weren't no baths. You couldn't have a shower, you know. And these are things you're accustomed to in the Caribbean. So the houses you lived in, you had to leave it and you have a bath or a shower, 3-4 times a week, by going down to the public baths or they had showers also. And when you go there ... they'll give you a towel, soap and you go to there and they'd run the baths, start running the bath for you. And you stand there and you turn it off when you feel it's to your temperature and you have a bath. And then you put on your clothes and you go back home. And so you had a bath. You sometimes ... On the weekend you see queues of people waiting to go in to have a bath because houses didn't have bath.<sup>223</sup>*

Partly explaining the reason for such queues was that, at least during the Baths' founding, ladies and gentlemen could not use the baths at the same time with ladies days being Tuesday, Thursday and Friday whilst gentlemen's days being Wednesdays and Saturdays with Monday being split with ladies hours in the morning and gentlemen in the afternoon and evening.<sup>224</sup> Although it is unclear if this arrangement was in operation in the 1950s, it is at least possible that at least 3 baths per week could have been taken at Mounts Baths if such arrangements had been in place in this decade. Furthermore, it is also unclear

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<sup>223</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>224</sup> *Mounts Baths Golden Jubilee 1936-1986*, preface

whether this account of taking a bath at public baths 3-4 times a week was similar to White people who lived in analogous circumstances. Outside Northamptonshire, having to use public baths also occurred and was equally surprising to one interviewee. This interviewee's early-1960s Deptford-based (London) reminiscence was that:

*You had to go to the public bath which was strange to me. There is an assumption that people coming from so called Third World come from places where certain facilities don't exist ... I was somewhat disappointed in terms of what I found when I came. But nonetheless I made the best of what existed and I would go to my public bath.*<sup>225</sup>

This expressed disappointment was because of Caribbean people being taught, whether in the Caribbean or in Britain, that living standards and hygiene were higher or better in Britain than the Caribbean. Unfortunately this did not exist in the lives of many, if not most, Caribbeans in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s particularly.

Despite lack of some clarity surrounding the specifics of using public baths locally, Caribbean people in the early years of post-War migration to Britain were surprised and shocked to have to clean themselves this way because it was assumed that they would be able to take showers and baths where they lived like they did in the Caribbean. Use of public slipper baths was not unique to Northampton, as this also existed elsewhere in Britain in this era, necessary for people living in the 17-22.5 percent of living accommodations in England and

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<sup>225</sup> NBHP/2003/81a11

Wales not having fixed baths or showers in 1961-1964.<sup>226</sup> Furthermore, even as late as 1973, 8.8 percent of British dwellings had no baths or showers fixed within them.<sup>227</sup> As Caribbean people generally earned less money than the British average, it would be reasonable to conclude that this ethnic group would be more likely not to have baths or showers in their dwellings because lower cost accommodation would have been less likely to have had baths and/or showers. ‘*Coloured*’ people nationally were one-third more likely to not have a bath or shower available to them in 1973 vis-à-vis Whites.<sup>228</sup> If this national trend held true locally, it would be expected that a greater percentage of Caribbeans would have had to use Mounts Baths than Whites, simultaneously helping to explain the mention of using the Baths for personal cleaning by interviewees, as well as the omission of this as an important function of the Baths as stated in Northampton Borough Council’s official printed history.

In terms of religion, Caribbeans did not all attend Black churches nor were they all Christians. Some local Caribbeans attended Methodist, United Reform and Catholic churches, notably not reporting racist experiences similar to many of those who frequented Black churches because of their recollections of such in churches with White majority denominations.<sup>229</sup> A few even reported attending both majority White and majority Black denominated churches as a reflection of their multiple identities as reflected by a participant’s statement that:

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<sup>226</sup> *The General Household Survey: Introductory Report*, p.137; Office for National Statistics, *1964 Housing Survey for England and Wales in ‘60 Years of Social Survey, 1941-2001*, p.37, <[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_compedia/SSD\\_Anniversary/SSD60AnniRD\\_v2.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_compedia/SSD_Anniversary/SSD60AnniRD_v2.pdf)> (accessed 5 October 2011)

<sup>227</sup> *The General Household Survey: Introductory Report*, p.123

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid*, p.146

<sup>229</sup> Lloyd Kelly interviewed by George Watley; Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley; Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; Alphanso Bryan interviewed by George Watley; NBHP/2004/156ai

*I love people and like the Black churches, when I go there I can see my own people, of my colour. And when I go to the White churches, I see my own people of a different colour.*<sup>230</sup>

Similar to other aspects of identity and connections of Caribbeans' consumer experiences, attendance of specific Black and other churches varied in large part according to perceptions of their identity. Furthermore, religion amongst local Caribbeans was not totally limited to Christianity or even Rastafarianism, as there was at least one local example each of local Afro-Caribbeans converting to Hinduism and Islam after arriving to Northamptonshire in the 1970s, reflecting integration with local non-White people in the process.<sup>231</sup>

Also reflecting consumer integration by local Caribbeans into the general consumer behaviour of Northamptonshire people was Caribbean involvement in Working Men's Clubs (WMCs). Many Caribbean people in Northampton particularly, were members of WMCs. A practical reason for this was that beers and other alcoholic drinks were significantly cheaper at WMCs than pubs and/or clubs.<sup>232</sup> Despite initial reluctance of local WMCs in the late 1950s-early 1960s to accept Black people in them, this was relatively brief and many local Caribbean people became life members and were fully accepted as such, continuing such memberships to the present day if still living nearby.<sup>233</sup> In addition to socialising successfully in an integrated environment, advantages of WMC membership was that it opened up possibilities to go to other WMCs anywhere in Britain, as well as being able to take the family out whilst drinking alcohol, which some local pubs would not allow.<sup>234</sup> The two WMCs of

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<sup>230</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley

<sup>231</sup> NBHP/2004/140ai-aii

<sup>232</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley

<sup>233</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley; Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley

<sup>234</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley

particular mentioned are the 20<sup>th</sup> Century WMC on the corner of Sheep Street and Lady's Lane and Monks Park WMC at 259 Wellingborough Road on the corner of Stimpson Avenue. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century WMC closed due to financial administrative mismanagement sometime in the 1980s, but was recognised as important in the social lives of many Northampton Caribbean people for over 20 years before it folded.<sup>235</sup> Monks Park WMC currently operates, with Afro-Caribbeans being members from as early as 1959.<sup>236</sup>

Another example of Afro-Caribbean integration into local entertainment and nightlife were of at least some individuals who, particularly in the late 1970s onwards, desired to go to the '*White*' clubs in Northampton as opposed to USC and MFM social events, largely because of desiring to hear the popular music younger British people were listening to generally, as opposed to solely hearing Black music whether Caribbean or African-American originated. Cinderella Rockefeller's in the St. James area of Northampton near Franklin's Gardens<sup>237</sup> was a highly desired nightclub to go for many if not most young Northamptonshire people in the 1970s and 1980s. This nightclub was so named because the '*Cinderella*' section was for under 21s whilst the '*Rockefeller's*' part was for the over 21s.<sup>238</sup> Some Afro-Caribbean people that grew up in Northamptonshire wanted to go to this nightclub because of its overall popularity locally. In the 1960s, The Salon occupied this location, making this physical space a known location for local nocturnal entertainment.<sup>239</sup> During the 1950s and 1960s when The Salon was operating as a local centre for Big Band music, Black people were let in sometimes, but not on other occasions and for

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<sup>235</sup> Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley

<sup>236</sup> Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley. The author conducted one group interview at Monks Park WMC on 4 July 2010. Despite not being able to transcribe this interview because of the excessive noise of its customers, as well as a live band playing, it was clear that socialising at Working Men's Clubs can be very lively, much more than the author expected.

<sup>237</sup> Franklin's Gardens is home to Northampton Saints of Rugby Union's Premiership

<sup>238</sup> Myra James (pseudonym) interviewed by George Watley

<sup>239</sup> Myra James (pseudonym) interviewed by George Watley

reasons not clearly given.<sup>240</sup> When Cinderella Rockefeller's was open, a male interviewee noted '... *at one stage ... they say not so much (Black people) can come in ... You know they don't want you to come in. I mean they don't mind a couple but you know they would bar you.*'<sup>241</sup> A female interviewee remembered that she had no problem getting into this, or any other local, nightclub, but, ' *Maybe if I was a boy, I might have done, but no I didn't as a girl, no, none at all as long as I looked old enough.*'<sup>242</sup> Gender was a factor in accessing and desiring to access entertainment experiences, which following chapters will analyse in greater detail. However, it was clear that at least some Afro-Caribbean people frequented so called 'White' clubs locally, of which Cinderella Rockefeller's was the most notable, at least amongst interviewees who were in their teens or early twenties in the late 1970s and 1980s.

By the 1980s, Black music such as soul was being played locally by White deejays such as Steve Clarke under the Hot Wax brand. Black and White young people followed Clarke's sound around Northamptonshire when he played at venues such as Bannaventa in Daventry and other local venues.<sup>243</sup> This exemplifies clear integration of Black music in the county-wide entertainment scene in addition to Cinderella Rockefeller's.

Within this theme of the integration of Afro-Caribbeans and their influences on the larger local population, the legendary reggae singer Bob Marley played with The Wailers twice in Northampton in 1973. Their first appearance was on 22 May 1973 at Fantasia on Witham Way in the Kings Heath area of Northampton and they appeared again locally on 27 November 1973 at Northampton

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<sup>240</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>241</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

<sup>242</sup> Myra James (pseudonym) interviewed by George Watley

<sup>243</sup> Myra James interviewed by George Watley

College.<sup>244</sup> Only one interviewee, a female who was 15 or 16 years old at the time, has claimed to have witnessed either event. This indicates that Bob Marley and The Wailers were not very popular amongst Caribbean people in 1973. Also, Kings Heath was a relatively remote location in Northampton approximately 2.5 miles from its town centre and extremely few Caribbeans lived there in that timeframe.<sup>245</sup> Furthermore, a male interviewee who was 18 years old at the time stated, '*Kings Heath wasn't a place for West Indians to go to. It had a reputation ... if (Bob Marley) was in Kings Heath, I probably wouldn't have went to Kings Heath.*'<sup>246</sup> Also, Fantasia was actually a pub with live music on occasion as opposed to a venue that regularly featured well-known singers.<sup>247</sup>

In performing at the Fantasia, Bob Marley and The Wailers probably had an almost exclusively non-Caribbean audience. Attending the Northampton College event would have required student identification to enter, indicative of an audience of late-teenagers or near late-teenagers. Furthermore, the Catch a Fire tour which the Fantasia event was part of played 9 of 26 venues at universities or colleges whilst also performing in the obscure Hertfordshire town of Hitchin twice.<sup>248</sup> All these factors indicate that Bob Marley and The Wailers' were not popular amongst Caribbeans in 1973 Britain, although they became more popular afterwards. The circumstances surrounding these performances indicates that Bob Marley and The Wailers were more integrated then within the music scene of young White people than Caribbeans, as they did not play at USC, nor is there any evidence that a request was made by USC for

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<sup>244</sup> 'Tonight – Live: Bob Marley and the Whalers' (advert), *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 22 May 1973; 'Northampton College of Education Students Union presents The Wailers and Disco' (advert), *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 27 November 1973, p.2

<sup>245</sup> Myra James interviewed by George Watley

<sup>246</sup> Lloyd Kelly interviewed by George Watley

<sup>247</sup> Ibid

<sup>248</sup> Bob Marley Magazine Forum

<[http://www.bobmarleymagazine.com/forum\\_bmw/showthread.php?s=e5818b6f07773c4bc711a118f1c49aa0&t=2403](http://www.bobmarleymagazine.com/forum_bmw/showthread.php?s=e5818b6f07773c4bc711a118f1c49aa0&t=2403)> (accessed 9 June 2011)

this to occur. Although Marley clearly became more popular in years following, facts and details surrounding these concerts suggest that the local music scene embraced Marley before a significant number of Caribbean people did, particularly amongst teenagers and young adults. Furthermore, Marley playing at both Fantasia and Northampton College in 1973 indicates that Caribbean consumer influences, as in musical tastes, were to some degree integrated within local Northamptonshire consumer behaviour in this era.

### ***‘Atypical’ local Afro-Caribbean consumer experiences***

Afro-Caribbean consumer experiences and decisions should not be thought of monolithically, as there are some significant deviations from the perceived norms as mentioned throughout the earlier sections of this chapter.

Understanding deviations from stereotypical or commonly practiced consumer habits or trends as Northamptonshire people will augment the analysis of such in future chapters. This section addresses *‘atypicality’* from both Caribbean and Northamptonshire perspectives in recognition of deviations from the majority of people in these subgroups.

Consumer atypicality, as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, is defined as Afro-Caribbean and/or Northamptonshire consumer experiences that were unique to select individuals particularly because their individual experiences were significantly different from most local Afro-Caribbeans and/or those from Northamptonshire regardless of race and/or ethnicity. Exemplifying this atypicality is Morcea Walker, who not only paid for independent school education for all three of her children, but also hired a nanny, Lauren Rice, for her eldest son whilst she worked as a teacher.<sup>249</sup> Northamptonshire County Council part-matched funding for this as an added employment related

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<sup>249</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

benefit.<sup>250</sup> No other interviewee mentions placing their children in independent schools, or does this theme appear in any other NBHA interviews of Northamptonshire Caribbeans.

Another atypical example of local Afro-Caribbean consumer activity was that of Vivian Allen. Allen arrived to Northampton in 1956 with £500 in travellers' cheques and £200-300 in cash, which he used to purchase his first home in 1957. Allen eventually acquired 14 homes of which he let rooms within, mostly to Afro-Caribbean people having difficulty renting rooms/flats in the larger local real estate market.<sup>251</sup> By 1980, Allen also operated businesses in car repair and sales, as well as international shipping and domestic transport/home moving, catering at least in part to the growing local Caribbean consumer market whilst integrating his enterprises into the larger Northamptonshire economy.<sup>252</sup> Allen's atypicality is because not only does no other interviewee mention arriving to Britain with more than approximately £100, but also because no other local Caribbean person mentions, or is mentioned as, leaving the Caribbean for Britain with a significant amount of money to invest in real estate or other investments similar to Allen.

The ubiquitous sending of remittances by Caribbeans was not solely one way from Britain as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Ulric Gravesande noted that he received remittances because his primary purpose for coming to England and Northampton was to earn British qualifications in order to return to Guyana to obtain work in the hydroelectric or bauxite industries.<sup>253</sup> In terms of obtaining loans, excluding mortgages, there is no evidence of local Caribbean people seeking or being given loans by established banks or legalised loanshark type

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<sup>250</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>251</sup> NBHP2003/20ai-ii

<sup>252</sup> *New Ethnic*, September 1980, p.24

<sup>253</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

doorstep lenders, save for one interviewee who borrowed money from the doorstep lender Provident in the 1970s.<sup>254</sup>

Weekes Baptiste wrote, directed and spent £500 of his own money to produce a local play, *Parable of Love*, in 1980, seen by 70 people in its first performance at an unknown venue.<sup>255</sup> Furthermore, an 8mm film with the same title was also produced by Baptiste in his leisure time, taking 14 months to film and edit.<sup>256</sup> However, Black people were infrequent visitors to Northampton's main theatre, Royal and Derngate, if not totally invisible. Furthermore, Black people going to this theatre would have been viewed as 'very strange'.<sup>257</sup> Baptiste in discovering Royal and Derngate remembered when he first went to this theatre in 1979 or 1980:

*I've always been into films and telling stories and performing myself. I got a job in a theatre purely by chance. It was ... Northampton University or it was then Northampton College. And it was Christmas and I needed a job, so I went to the Job Centre and the woman said to me, my husband is working in the theatre and they're looking for casual labour. So my first question was (pause) where was the theatre? Very odd! If you're into the arts, you should know where the theatre is. But anyway, I knew where the cinema was. I didn't know where the theatre was and I thought the theatre was under the cinema because Americans call cinemas, theatres. So I thought well, it must be a cinema. So I went in there and of course it wasn't a damn*

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<sup>254</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley Note: Doorstep lenders like Provident charged 100 percent or more annual percentage rate in interest during this era, still doing so today. Although legal in Britain, charging such rates of interest can easily be perceived as exorbitant and would be illegal in many developed countries. This is why the legalised loanshark phrase is being used in this instance.

<sup>255</sup> *New Ethnic*, September 1980, p.20

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid*, p.15

<sup>257</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley

*cinema. It was actors who were doing like performances. So that was a shock to me. So anyway, I went there because it was a job. It was job that I needed to do because Christmas was coming and I needed some spending money.*<sup>258</sup>

Baptiste was into the arts before discovering Royal and Derngate, but didn't know where it was because it was a place unknown to an overwhelming majority of Black people in this era. However, partaking in the theatre would have been uncommon for British people generally of any race or ethnicity, as only 8.4 percent of people in Britain did so in 1973.<sup>259</sup> In terms of Baptiste's local experience, not knowing where the theatre was locally indicates that it was not part of commonly accepted knowledge in his social network, indicative of lacking Afro-Caribbean and/or general community interest in the theatre through to the date of the interview. Of particular note is that Baptiste has repeatedly, both during and after the interview, castigated local co-ethnics for overwhelmingly failing to attend the theatre.<sup>260</sup> When asked directly about Black people in theatre audiences, based on working at Royal and Derngate for nearly thirty years, Baptiste clearly remembered the extreme scarcity of Black people in local theatre audiences by answering:

*No, you're joking, you jest! Not at all, absolutely no way! You're joking. You having a giraffe now. No, there's no Black people. No Black people came to the theatre at all! Period, you just didn't see them. Didn't see them, there was no Black people in the audience. You just would not see them. And I would be, I would go into the foyer, before the show started and have a little*

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<sup>258</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley

<sup>259</sup> *The General Household Survey*, 1973, p.80

<sup>260</sup> Baptiste has stated as such on numerous occasions in conversations the author has had with him after being interviewed.

*walk around and have a little wiggle around. Listen, on a serious note, I would be lucky if I saw one.* <sup>261</sup>

Furthermore, the only other local person mentioning the theatre as a form of their entertainment, Bert Cuff, gained this interest from Jamaica and London before moving to Northampton. Cuff also remembered that there was a Bert Cuff promotion Royal and Derngate had where 20 percent off tickets was offered if his name was mentioned, done in an effort to get Black people to attend the theatre.<sup>262</sup> The only other stated exception to Caribbeans enjoying the so called ‘*high*’ arts was Billy Walker of Wellingborough enjoying classical music which resulted from his education obtained in Barbados, including scholarships in private schools.<sup>263</sup> Obtaining such scholarships would have been rare in Walker’s 1940s childhood.

The generation of Caribbean people born, or had most of their childhood experiences locally and/or within Britain, in some cases sought the fashion, music and other related styles of their White contemporaries. When it existed, this manifested itself much more fundamentally than merely seeking to go to so-called ‘*White*’ clubs like Cinderella Rockefeller’s as mentioned earlier in the chapter. Myra James for example, followed the music and fashion of New Romantic musicians such as Duran Duran, Japan and Steve Strange amongst others.<sup>264</sup> James’ fashion did not derive from any aspect of being Caribbean, being, ‘... *a cross between Gothic and New Romantic.*’<sup>265</sup> Lloyd Kelly, despite being born in Jamaica, rejected reading *The Gleaner*, a Jamaican newspaper, whilst at local ‘*Black*’ barbershops because he, ‘... *was more involved with the English way of life. I think Jamaica had gone. That was, yeah, had gone by me.*

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<sup>261</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley

<sup>262</sup> Bert Cuff interviewed by George Watley, 10 September 2010

<sup>263</sup> NBHP2004/163ai-aii

<sup>264</sup> Myra James interviewed by George Watley

<sup>265</sup> Ibid

*That was a distant memory then ... But I do remember the Jamaican papers being in there, yeah.*<sup>266</sup> Kelly's account of not reading *The Gleaner* as a child in the 1960s-1970s contrasts with not only older local co-ethnics who did read this newspaper in this timeframe whenever they either bought it or was otherwise available to them, but also his father who he recalled having read this newspaper during this interviewee's childhood.<sup>267</sup>

Such dichotomies between embracing and/or rejecting items actually or perceived as Caribbean derives from deviations in discernment between commonly held Afro-Caribbean and non-co-ethnic notions of tastes (even by antithesis), fashion and music styles, amongst other aspects of consumption. Furthermore, expressing such atypical consumer behaviour reflects the Simmelian concept, as noted in chapter 1, of individuals selecting and being part of a variety of groups in order to maximise articulation of one's individuality.<sup>268</sup> Such forms of individual identity correlate with various perceptions of being Black, Caribbean and/or British that influenced consumer decisions of local Afro-Caribbeans. The following chapters will delineate and analyse such themes of identity in various ways but most specifically related to consumer networks linked to identity amongst local Caribbean people.

## Conclusion

Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbean consumer habits and leisure exhibited aspects of uniformity and individualisation. Such individualisation, when it occurred, was at least somewhat dependent on age, as well as perceptions of the importance of being Black and/or Caribbean. Illustrating this were the various facets of the '*typicality*' and '*atypicality*' of local Caribbean consumer

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<sup>266</sup> Lloyd Kelly interviewed by George Watley

<sup>267</sup> Lloyd Kelly interviewed by George Watley; May Green interviewed by George Watley; Mike Prescod interviewed by George Watley

<sup>268</sup> Georg Simmel, *Conflict and The Web of Group Affiliations*, p.156

acquisitions and manifestations. In its entirety, understanding the '*typicality*' and '*atypicality*' of local Caribbean consumer behaviour helps to capture the essence of the multitude of influences on consumption and its connections with identity. The final section on '*atypical*' consumer experiences, although considerably shorter than the other sections, is important in developing understanding of some elements of individual consumption that differed from normative forms of consumer experiences from Caribbean and Northamptonshire perspectives. It is acknowledged however that if there had been more participants outside the NBHA nexus, it is at least possible that more strands of such '*atypical*' consumer experiences could have been delineated and analysed.

Following larger national trends for Caribbean people, local co-ethnics made their own entertainment when faced with ethnically-based discrimination. However, local Afro-Caribbeans' consumption cannot and should not be reduced to this reactive binary because not only was their consumption primarily based on more general circumstances like wanting traditionally Caribbean food and music for example, but also the means of acquiring and supplying such goods and leisure was based on convergent and divergent social networks vis-à-vis the larger Northamptonshire population. Furthermore, Caribbeans influenced some consumer manifestations within the general population of Northamptonshire, rendering Caribbean consumer behaviour at least to some degree interactive between Caribbeans and non-Caribbeans. A particular manifestation of this was that Whites were not being excluded from local events run and overwhelmingly frequented by Caribbeans.

Local Caribbean people were highly adaptable to and within local, national and international forms of consumer behaviour in terms of finding products and leisure they wanted. Furthermore, they discovered

opportunities to take advantage of inexpensiveness of at least some items in the local market that were prized more by Caribbean people than the general population in Northampton, at least until shopkeepers recognised this differentiated value. Overall, Northamptonshire Caribbeans exhibited consumer behaviour that reflected their varied but intersecting identities as Black, Caribbean, British and Northamptonshire people. Such intersecting identities also developed over time because of changes in local Caribbean consumer desires. As Caribbeans became relatively more comfortable and accepted in Northamptonshire specifically, and in Britain generally, their consumer practices were shaped by their county-wide and British-based experiences. This included integrating with Whites in many instances within and outside of Caribbean organisations like USC and WIPA.

Integration was not universal however, particularly with some of the younger generation becoming adults in the 1970s. This was best reflected by MFM. Non-organisational forms of consumption practices also exhibited changes over time in terms of local Caribbeans following the general trends of consumerism, as well as material and leisure changes between the 1950s and 1980s. These were best exemplified by the extensive mention of Brierley's as crucial in local Caribbeans' shopping and WMC experiences. Furthermore, Michael McMillan's *The Front Room* was useful as a reference point in determining similarities and differences between local Afro-Caribbean home consumption, display and aspirations vis-à-vis their urban/metropolitan co-ethnic contemporaries.

Acquiring items, enjoying leisure, as well as knowledge underpinning the use and appreciation of such, required the establishment and development of

consumer networks to support consumption. Consumption related to themes and conceptualisations of identity and community which have been mentioned throughout this chapter will be developed more explicitly subsequently. The consumer networks chapter which follows will delineate how such networks started and developed locally, as well as analysing in greater detail the social and cultural factors that underpinned such networks in local, national and international terms as they affected Northamptonshire Caribbeans.

## **Chapter 4: Consumer Networks**

### **Introduction**

Following on from identity related themes connected to Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption, this chapter will focus on consumer networks that helped to shape such consumption. Each section of this chapter will address a key theme involving connections between identity and consumer networks. More specifically, these themes will illuminate and analyse interpersonal contacts and strong and weak ties that supported consumer networks. Also to be addressed will be the correlation between interpersonal contacts, strong and weak ties, and multiple manifestations of identity local Caribbeans intersected within.

The first section on formal and informal influences on consumer networks will delineate and analyse various permutations of these influences on consumer networks and the extent of their correlation with social networks of local Caribbeans. The second section on shared sense of community helps to develop and comprehend the nature and extent of various understandings of community generally, as well as how these theories can be applied to Northamptonshire Caribbeans and their consumer networks. Furthermore, this section will analyse the strong and weak ties local co-ethnics had with Caribbeans living elsewhere in Britain, as well as with Whites and other minority ethnic groups. Through analysing these strong and weak ties, the combination of how they influenced the consumer networks of Northamptonshire Caribbeans will be understood.

The final section on hairdressing and transnational influences reflects a combination of, and a development from, the themes in the prior two sections through delineating and analysing how the informal nature of hairdressing amongst local Caribbeans alongside the formal nature of transnational media

helped to shape both the consumer networks and the identities of Northamptonshire Caribbeans. Through understanding a broad range of dimensions influencing consumer networks, the significant importance of these factors to local Caribbeans will be obtained. Also to be delineated and analysed in this chapter will be how intersections of identities as Caribbean, Black, British and Northamptonshire people influenced their consumer networks.

### **Formal and informal influences on consumer networks**

McMillan asserts that sense of community is largely singular, that is referring to the creation of a single community. However, amongst Northamptonshire Caribbeans, we should comprehend the creation and develop of separate but not mutually exclusive recognitions of their sense of community as Black, Caribbean, Northamptonshire and/or British people. The consumer networks used to facilitate their consumption, including leisure, manifest themselves based on intersections between these multiple identities. Formal and informal influences both helped to define and shape such networks, with informal consumer networks turning into more formalised structures such as MFM and USC described in Chapter 3. The following diagram helps to illustrate the varied and intersecting influences of (in)formality and geographic location on the consumer networks of local Caribbeans.

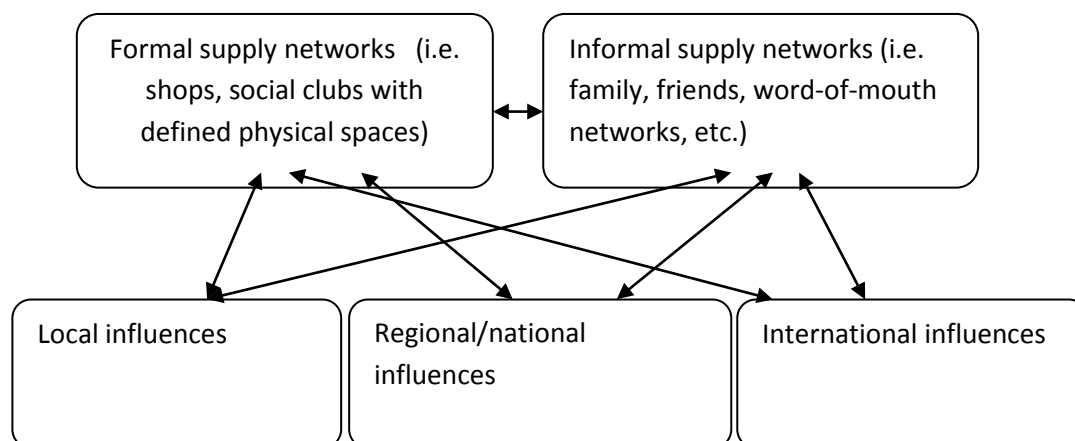


Diagram 1: Influences on formal and informal supply networks

Also included within the informal networks, but not explicitly stated in the diagram, is that word-of-mouth was the primary means of accessing and being part of an overwhelming majority of consumer networks that involved Northamptonshire Caribbeans, particularly in the 1950s-1970s. Because of this, comprehending the word-of-mouth dimension that influenced informal supply networks should be the first point of analysis with the more formalised supply networks delineated and examined after this. However, formal and informal influences of consumer supply networks were not mutually exclusive, with such influences often overlapping. Family, friends and other fellow Caribbean people were all crucial in accessing and developing consumer supply networks, with such strong ties existing because of, to a large extent, a perceived need to be cohesive co-ethnically when individual and small group perceptions of hostility to Black/Afro-Caribbean people and/or manifestations of their cultures were highest. In such incidences, the establishment of local Caribbean consumer networks, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, resulted. For example, MFM founders Horace Cohen and Ras Jabulani both strongly recalled that hostility of White children and teachers towards Black children in school led to intra-ethnic

cohesion in this era.<sup>1</sup> High inter-group fragmentation whilst having strong intra-group cohesion correlates with a group having strong ties. This strong tie-high intra-group fragmentation from the larger community link was suggested by Grannovetter.<sup>2</sup> Grannovetter's assertion in this regard correlates with manifestations of local Caribbean consumer networks in their first decades because the creation and initial development of these networks was highly linked to various perceived and actual group fragmentation vis-à-vis the larger White local population.

Consumer networks surrounding housing, at least until the 1980s, reflects to some extent the strong ties Northamptonshire Caribbeans had with each other, particularly in the rental market. In terms of local housing as mentioned in chapter 3, Caribbean people often had difficulty renting rooms until the 1980s when it ceased to be a theme amongst interviewees both directly in their experiences and indirectly in the experiences they spoke of. The influence on consumer networks was that co-ethnics developed strong interpersonal ties because of ethnically-based discrimination. Mentioned in the last chapter was Vivian Allen's purchase of homes for rental income. Allen's property ownership enabled him to be a major player in the local Caribbean consumer network in terms of renting rooms, as he was a broker in the local Caribbean housing supply network due to significant difficulty of Black people renting rooms/flats generally before the 1980s. Further exemplifying connections between strong ties local Caribbeans had and their consumer networks was Ulric Gravesande's recollection of his attempting to rent a room in Northampton in the late 1950s:

*Let me say about finding a place to live. It was very difficult for us to move away from the society that I was in. I was going to college and I was living with*

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<sup>1</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley; Ras Jabulani interviewed by George Watley, 10 September 2010

<sup>2</sup> Mark Grannovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', p.1378

*some English folk. Now then I wanted to branch out and live on my own. And I would go and knock on doors where there was a sign that says vacancy here and the lady if she didn't want to say they didn't want me, they just say well can you come back another day or you know I got to ask my husband or I got to think about it or so. That was the difficulty in those days. You couldn't get a place to move on. So inevitably, there were just 2 people, 2 Black folk who had owned some houses here. And I got on to them, Mr. Moore, and he ... They says come over to live over at us, have a little place. I got myself a little room there and I went to live with them.*<sup>3</sup>

This example illustrates how Caribbean people supplied each others' mutual needs. Gravesande needed a room during his first years in Northampton in the late 1950s-early 1960s whilst Mr. Moore needed money. However, this was more than an exchange of money for a place to live, as Mr. Moore surely would have needed this income in an era of limited employment prospects and resulting income for Black people in Britain whilst Gravesande needed living accommodation he would have had greater difficulty obtaining if he were solely reliant on the larger local housing rental market. This mutual exchange amongst co-ethnics was not isolated, but part of consumer networks that, at least in some cases, were manifestations of strong co-ethnic ties created to ameliorate socio-cultural isolation, of which pardners were one manifestation of local Caribbean consumer networks as discussed in Chapter 3. Although local pardners existed, there was no recollection of using local pardners to obtain deposit money to purchase a home, differing from Caribbeans elsewhere in Britain.<sup>4</sup> Despite this local/national dichotomy of pardners and home deposits, such consumer networks through economic exchanges helped to create and develop a local sense of community significantly because of desires for interdependency

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<sup>3</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>4</sup> Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of The Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*, p.131

resulting from employment and housing discrimination, as well as perceiving each other to be similar because of common experiences in Britain due to being from the Caribbean. Links between interdependency and perceptions of being similar amongst group members within a common sense of community has been cited by Hombrados-Mendieta et al earlier in this chapter as basic ingredients a sense of community must have.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, these strong ties and correlative sense of community developed into satisfying consumer desires that will be addressed in greater detail subsequently in this chapter.

An additional illumination of links between accessing local Caribbean supply networks out of necessity whilst remaining and developing such networks out of aspirations or desires, were specific actions by local Caribbeans to place other co-ethnics in their consumer supply networks. Gravesande recalls his wishes to actively include other co-ethnics:

*Brixton market was the place where quite a number of Black folk had stalls. And they would get things from the Caribbean, so the interaction was great. They would leave on a Saturday and go down to shop in London, come back to Northampton and tell their friends look this is what I bought, this is what and direct from the Caribbean. It was a marvellous time! We were living in when you were actually ... and also at that time in the '50s and '60s on a weekend, when you read in the papers a ship is arriving from the Caribbean and you would think oh well I must know somebody if the ship is coming bringing people from the Caribbean. And you go down there and you stand around and you would see somebody from your country and you know them*

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<sup>5</sup> Isabel Hombrados-Mendieta, Luis Gomez-Jacinto and Juan Manuel Dominguez-Fuentes, 'The Impact of immigrants on the sense of community', *Journal of Community Psychology*, pp.671-672

*... I've done that once or twice. Yes, I think I did that 2 or 3 times.*<sup>6</sup>

After renting a room from a fellow Caribbean person, Gravesande was able to not only discover where he could obtain traditionally Caribbean items, but also used the combination of reading national papers with his cultural isolation to at least attempt to persuade other co-ethnics to join him in Northampton, as well as to know if others known of from his then colony immigrated to Britain. These actions were exhibited because of desires to (re)create social relationships, whether in Northamptonshire or elsewhere, but none of these interactions were formally planned. Gravesande's actions in this regard is evidence of attempting to reduce socio-cultural isolation by creating a place of belonging and a resulting sense of community that Herman et al assert should happen when a group is hopeful about its future.<sup>7</sup>

Social networks and their resulting consumer supply manifestations grew from these types of interactions. This example was that of endeavouring to use Caribbean connections to influence local consumer supply networks, specifically in this example to include more co-ethnic people within it. Furthermore, Brixton Market as a regional/national market influenced consumer supply networks locally because Northamptonshire Caribbeans told others about what could be bought there, as there were not printed advertisements in this era showing what could be bought at Brixton Market.

Blending the informal with the formal in terms of consumer and resulting supply networks occurred to some degree when shops began to discover and supply traditionally Caribbean food to meet the needs of Caribbean customers.

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<sup>6</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>7</sup> Sandra Herman et al, 'Sense of Community in Clubhouse Programs: Member and Staff Concepts', p.353

As mentioned in chapter 3, Josephine Geddes of Victoria Road in Northampton bought approximately £100 per month in Caribbean food to stock her shop, partly doing so based on specific requests for items. This formal shop was partly reliant on informal word-of-mouth networks to convey information that Geddes not only stocked traditionally Caribbean food items, but would also obtain other products for sale upon request. This blend between informal and formal supply networks also had a trajectory, moving from informal mostly word-of-mouth social and related systematic consumer interactions to formal fixed venues used as a base for such networks. However, the informal in terms of unplanned oral relaying of information related to leisure and other events, as well as more physical manifestations of consumption such as fashions and hairstyles, still occurred after the formalised venues were created and developed.

Shared experience is important in comprehending this informal/formal blend of consumer networks influential in the consumption habits of Northamptonshire Caribbeans. This extended into the development of both United Social Club (USC) and Matta Fancanta Movement (MFM), organisations dedicated to older and younger Caribbean people respectively. Despite generational schisms, both organisations followed a similar trajectory: moving from meeting informally, including in private homes, to desiring delineated community spaces in order to have safe ethnic spaces recognised by the larger community. The creation and development of these organisations were dedicated to the positive affirmation of Caribbean identity and culture. USC and MFM were the products of consumer networks becoming more formalised, despite the continuing informality of using word-of-mouth to disseminate information about their events through the 1960s-1980s. These consumer networks also reflected desires to share Caribbean and Black diasporic cultures in a non-exclusive manner whilst having a designated space that recognized Caribbean people as part of Northamptonshire's larger community. Furthermore, and especially for the

younger generation growing up in the 1970s and 1980s, these consumer networks were predicated to some degree on common experiential consumption based mainly on informal experiences, at least at first. This was to some degree a symbolic rejection of the capitalist system and resulted from the social and economic exclusion felt in this era. Resulting affirmation and protest by Black young people generally in Britain reflected itself through common experiential consumption behaviour, particularly but not exclusively in the enjoying of music.<sup>8</sup> Such arguments should not be construed as suggesting that young Northamptonshire Caribbeans in this era uniquely faced issues of high unemployment. However, the manifestations of common experiential consumer behaviour combined with including some Whites despite facing significant discrimination generally renders inter-ethnic inclusivity in the consumer networks of young local Caribbeans in this era most notable.

In chapter 3, USC was mentioned as commencing in the early 1960s by and mainly for the first generation of Caribbean immigrants, largely as a result of informal conversations amongst Caribbeans at Long and Hambley, a rubber factory in Northampton. This formation was also a manifestation of the limited social opportunities they had as Black people in Northamptonshire. USC's membership and leadership were generally older than MFM's, which was reflected in the social networks used to inform and persuade people to attend USC's events. For example, Tony Brown's importance in this social/supply network was that, as a businessman running a travel agency, he would have been respected and information about USC's events would have been equally respected because of the messenger. Furthermore, he would have been able to reach many local Caribbean people, maybe even most, because of his work. As such, his link in the networking nodes of promoting the Club's parties and other social happenings was important because of his brokering role in the local

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, p.210

Caribbean consumer network. Brown was influential in large part because he spanned otherwise unconnected individuals because of his travel agency business which enabled him to reach many people relatively quickly. These categories linking network brokers with their importance in consumer networks were also noted by Lee as being structurally important and influential in consumer networks.<sup>9</sup>

Another reason for USC's formation was a result of police pressure against more informal means of socialising, most specifically blues. This blended the formal and informal whilst, '... *the (United Social) Club (kept) pressure (from the police) off ... house parties.*'<sup>10</sup> The informal networks in terms of house parties and other forms of socializing simultaneously created the impetus for USC whilst using already developed social networks as a significant factor in helping to bring people to its parties. Both informal and formal networks resulted from strong co-ethnic ties that existed largely because of racist exclusion from many clubs and pubs in Northampton. Also, Caribbean and/or Black music and food were highly desired as reflected in this network because of longing to at least partially replicate experiences enjoyed in the Caribbean.

The idea of minority groups establishing their own places has been referred to by Sonn and Fisher as being desired as a means of collective improvement of the group whilst being recognised by the dominant community.<sup>11</sup> In addition to these factors influencing the creation and development of USC, having this organisation augmented maintenance of positive Caribbean identity. Despite the aesthetic weakness of the venue, its importance in Caribbean social and consumer networks was that:

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<sup>9</sup> Seung Hwan (Mark) Lee, 'The Structural Importance of Consumer Networks', p.67

<sup>10</sup> Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley

<sup>11</sup> Adrian Fisher and Christopher Sonn, *Aspiration to community: Community responses to rejection*, p.715

*It wasn't a very nice place (but) beautiful music, yeah, getting in the reggae system in from London and places like that, but the quality of the place ... I wasn't impressed with that.*<sup>12</sup>

Bert Cuff, Secretary of USC from 1973-1979 elaborates on this in terms of the local and regional/national network used to inform people about USC parties:

*What was important about what went on there was the fare was so good in there ... People would travel from other parts of the country for a night out (with) no kind of organised publicity as such. I mean John will tell Mary. It was word-of-mouth.'*<sup>13</sup>

The experience of having a defined space for Caribbean people and the positive affirmation of Caribbean and/or Black identity outweighed the lack of décor. The power of the music listened to in this space was similar to the experiences of other Black people in Britain in that such events suspended the dominant culture's order and power.<sup>14</sup> The enjoyment of Caribbean music and the collective emotion of being part of the Caribbean and/or Black diaspora overcame the actual antiquated dinginess of the physical space and relative remoteness of Northampton compared to larger cities and metropolitan areas where at least some USC revellers came from. However, even after USC became firmly established, word-of-mouth remained the only way of discovering the times and dates of their parties.<sup>15</sup>

USC also was a node in the regional and national network of Caribbean clubs, particularly involving cricket and dominoes. It was mentioned in chapter 3 that

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<sup>12</sup> Lloyd Kelly interviewed by George Watley

<sup>13</sup> Berston Cuff interviewed by George Watley, 28 September 2010

<sup>14</sup> Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, p.210

<sup>15</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley; Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley; Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

USC travelled to cities across Britain for domino tournaments. However, connections between Northampton Caribbeans and co-ethnics elsewhere were much greater. USC was a clear part of a network of Caribbean sport and entertainment clubs in Britain, having sought links with such organisations elsewhere. For example, USC had extensive interactions with the Derby Caribbean Cricket Club (DCCC) and the Carib United Domino & Football Club (CUDFC), both of Derby. On 31 March 1985, CUDFC invited USC to a friendly football match on 24 August of the same year, although it is unclear whether DCCC folded and re-launched in some form, or with many of the same people, as CUDFC or both Caribbean clubs existed in Derby simultaneously. Despite this possible discrepancy, on 6 March 1980 DCCC assigned 35 tickets for USC to sell for an Easter Monday party on 7 April 1980 held at the Pennine Hotel in Derby.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, DCCC and USC were arranging a jointly organised and funded trip to Jamaica in 1980.<sup>17</sup> Despite this planned trip not launching, correspondence between both clubs indicates prior and extensive links between both clubs had been made because planning for such events would probably not have been made without some, if not extensive, earlier contact between both groups. USC extended its organisational network to support Caribbeans outside of Britain, as well as to the local majority population. USC donated £479 to the Jamaican government in response to a Flood Appeal, acknowledged by letter by the Jamaican High Commission on 8 January 1980.<sup>18</sup> Also, USC collected clothing for a Dominican Hurricane Disaster Fund in 1979, of which there was correspondence from the Dominican High Commissioner in an attempt to arrange for collection/transportation of such items.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Northamptonshire Record Office: USC/319

<sup>17</sup> Northamptonshire Record Office: USC/320

<sup>18</sup> Northamptonshire Record Office: USC/(not catalogued)

<sup>19</sup> Northamptonshire Record Office: USC/92

Interviewees generally agreed that USC desired to celebrate Caribbean identity through developing weak ties with the larger town and county community under the mantra of unity with the community as a whole. Recollection of the word '*United*' in United Social Club had a double meaning. The primary meaning was the intention of uniting Caribbean people from various islands, as well as Guyana which is considered culturally Caribbean despite being located in South America.<sup>20</sup> The secondary meaning was that the United Social Club purposely, by not having Black in its name, demonstrated a wish to unite with any and everyone who respected and celebrated Caribbean culture.<sup>21</sup> One interviewee claimed that Caribbean people from cities such as Coventry, Birmingham and Nottingham used the United Social Club as an example to set up similar clubs in these cities.<sup>22</sup> However, further research needs to be undertaken amongst Caribbean people in these much larger locations in order to confirm or refute this. What is clear is that USC intentionally expanded its networks inclusively through developing strong ties with Caribbeans outside the county, as well as weak ties with local White people. Such strong and weak ties were created and developed for the purposes of enabling Caribbean people to be recognised by the larger local community whilst promoting positive reflections of Caribbean identity. In addition, the younger generation were not ignored by USC, most notably by its annual children's Christmas party held at least until 1979.<sup>23</sup>

Consumer networks were also exemplified in a more specific intra-ethnic manner by MFM, blending informal with formal consumer networks. As mentioned in chapter 3, MFM was founded in 1977 at Sheep Street in Northampton in response to desires for younger Caribbean people to have a safe place to socialise after meeting frequently at the Racecourse before the group's

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<sup>20</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>21</sup> Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley

<sup>22</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>23</sup> Northamptonshire Record Office: USC/278

acquisition of their venue. Precursors to this organisational formation were based on extensive intra-group understanding that Caribbean children growing up in this era felt the sting of ethnically-based discrimination in various forms; including in schools, socialising in already established youth clubs and pervasive employment discrimination, regardless of qualifications earned.<sup>24</sup> Even churches provided no escape from the reach of ethnically-based discrimination in the years before MFM. Ras Jabulani aka Trevor Hall recalled a vivid local church experience that simultaneously encapsulated his attitudes about his lacking affinity towards British identity despite being British-born whilst developing his rationale for helping to form MFM:

*When the pastor said, there was one thing never leave my mind. He came up with this, he says we Whites were created by God, right. (pause) And then he went on to say we, was pointing to we as Blacks, you are heathens, right. And then when we went to Sunday School, I was finding that they were very kind of, you know, putting us down as Black people ... I couldn't go to that church (again).'*<sup>25</sup>

This experience of discrimination in church, although extreme, was not unusual locally during this era, as other Caribbean people recalled examples of ethnically-based discrimination ranging from being refused baptism for a child by a local church in Wellingborough to another founding MFM member, Horace Cohen, recalling being denied fair chances to play sport in Church of England sponsored teams.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, Caribbean children learned very little, if anything, positive about Caribbean and/or Black people and cultures in the

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<sup>24</sup> 'Black youth group show off its culture', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 23 August 1982

<sup>25</sup> Ras Jabulani aka Trevor Hall interviewed by George Watley, 10 September 2010

<sup>26</sup> Norma Watson interviewed by George Watley; Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

compulsory education system at the time. Eventual MFM founders also felt ostracised from youth clubs and recognised that:

*We wanted 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 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.<sup>27</sup>*

These experiences helped develop the desire, at least amongst some Northamptonshire Caribbean young people, to seek out experiences (re)creating actual and psychological senses of community that simultaneously gave them a sense of being part of a larger group to which they shared emotional connections with whilst developing positive self-esteem as Caribbean/Black people in Britain. Furthermore, these individuals sought to engage with consumer networks that represented both the freedom of choice Dubuisson-Quellier et al recognised as being important in consumer networks, as well as DiMaggio's assertion that culture shapes decision making processes used in

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<sup>27</sup> NBHP/2002/1

creating and developing social spaces.<sup>28</sup> Factors shaping consumer networks were also influenced by the negative experiences of local ethnically-based discrimination that significantly helped Northamptonshire Caribbeans to work and socialise together for their common good and co-ethnic collective appreciation. Supporting this assertion is Goulbourne's argument that Caribbean identity in Britain resulted from facing significant and numerous racist experiences.<sup>29</sup>

Northampton's Racecourse, a 118 acre park located near the centre of the town, was the primary location where young Caribbean people first gathered in groups, particularly in the mid- to late-1970s. These young Caribbeans developed an understanding that they were more than isolated Caribbean individuals and families in the local area whilst developing their positive ethnic identities through various informal sporting and learning activities. For one young Caribbean boy living in an area where there were only 1 or 2 other Caribbean children in his school, '... *going to The Racecourse ... was an oasis (because there were) loads of Black people ... all (my) age.*'<sup>30</sup> This personal recognition of being part of the same psychological sense of community was replicated and understood by many Caribbean young people who socialised at The Racecourse regularly during these years. This shared sense of Caribbean identity in Britain led to many further discoveries by them, including simultaneously learning more about Black and Caribbean history and culture whilst ascertaining more immediately pertinent survival skills like being made aware of police behaviour directed against Caribbean young people, particularly young men in that timeframe.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Sophie Dubuisson-Quellier, Claire Lamine and Ronan Le Velly, 'Citizenship and Consumption: Mobilisation in Alternative Food Systems in France', p.307; Paul DiMaggio, 'Nadel's Paradox Revisited: Relational and Cultural Aspects of Organizational Structure', p.138

<sup>29</sup> Harry Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience*, p. 29

<sup>30</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley

<sup>31</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

### Shared sense of community connections

Even as late as the 1970s, advertisements were not used to attract Caribbean people to co-ethnically based local social/entertainment events because word-of-mouth was the primary if not only means of combining social interactions with injecting those within such social networks into local Caribbean consumer networks. For example, younger Northamptonshire Caribbeans in this decade:

*... never saw adverts ... saying The Wailers are playing at wherever, we're going to go to it tonight. I was never asked are you going to that. It was more to do with, there was this blues taking place at so and so's house. It starts at Saturday from 8 o'clock at night, goes all the way to 3 in the morning and music will be blaring. There's food, there's drink, all kinds of stuff gonna be there. That's the connection. That's what we all were listening to.*<sup>32</sup>

Consumer networks frequently were symbiotic with social networks that connected local Caribbean people based on common interests as co-ethnics exhibited through similar tastes in food, drink, but most importantly for this younger generation at the time, their musical interests, particularly of reggae music. Reggae music would have been viewed as subversive and/or antithetical to the value systems of younger Caribbeans' parents, as well as White people generally, except for younger people such as those partaking in the two 1973 Bob Marley and The Wailers Northampton concerts. In terms of Caribbeans specifically, sharing such similar experiences through identifying with messages in the music they were listening to as **Black people** helped to develop the

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<sup>32</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley

shared emotional connections required to have a genuine sense of community as defined by Chavis and McMillan, Obst and Wombacher et al.<sup>33</sup> It was acknowledged in Chapter 3 that some White people did listen to reggae music. However, it is the shared emotional connection that local Afro-Caribbeans had with reggae music as co-ethnics that helped develop consumer networks around this music which would not have resonated empathically with their White contemporaries.<sup>34</sup>

Such shared emotional connections existed both in the listening to reggae and other '*Black*' music, as well as the production of local and other British-based music, including sound systems. Sound systems locally provided, '*... a central meeting point and an education point as well because the music was very informative and led us to actually look for more information for ourselves.*'<sup>35</sup> Sound systems and reggae music should not be conflated. However, messages within these music forms contributed simultaneously to entertain and inform about world issues that affected them. Furthermore, the, '*central meeting point*' sound systems provided illustrates a manifestation of strong co-ethnic ties as Black British people. Illustrating this is the recollection of:

*The sound system, I could put it like football teams up and down the country and supporters up and down the country, it was immense. You know it was truly a different era really. 'Cause you had sound system all over England and you had followers from all over England and there was ... And then you get the*

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<sup>33</sup> David Chavis and David McMillan, 'Sense of community: A definition and theory', p.323; Patricia Obst, Lucy Zinkiewicz and Sandy Smith, 'Sense of Community in Science Fiction Fandom, Part 1: Understanding Sense of Community in an International Community of Interest', p.89, Jorg Wombacher, Stephen Tagg, Thomas Burgi, Jillian MacBryde, 'Measuring Sense of Community in the Military: Cross-Cultural Evidence for the Validity of the Brief Sense of Community Scale and its Underlying Theory', p.672; David McMillan, 'Sense of Community', p.322

<sup>34</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley, Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley, Ras Jabulani interviewed by George Watley, 10 September 2010

<sup>35</sup> Ras Jabulani aka Trevor Hall interviewed by George Watley, 10 September 2010

*emerge(nce) (of) enough local people going on the different sound system to say something and to try to show you that their sound system is the best sound system to listen to.*<sup>36</sup>

Strong ties that helped to facilitate the sound system culture as described in this quotation were based on being Caribbean and/or Black in Britain. Having regional/national competitions amongst co-ethnics that celebrated strong Caribbean/Black ties amidst being competitive as co-ethnics. Furthermore, Simmelian concepts of sociation and fashion were evident within sound system culture because of the socialisation through enjoying music this way, as well as the fashionability of sound systems being based on popular support. The combination of socialisation and fashion through sound systems illustrates Simmel's ideas, as mentioned in chapter 1, that people will unite based on common interests whilst expressing change and differentiation amidst conformity.<sup>37</sup>

Despite co-ethnic competition, MFM 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.<sup>38</sup> Through the Afro-Caribbean British sound system culture, as well as sharing of Black musical influences, particularly of reggae directly from 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.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

<sup>37</sup> Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, p.24; Georg Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, p.461

<sup>38</sup> NBHP/2002/1

<sup>39</sup> NBHP/2002/1

Another form of Caribbean entertainment encompassing a specific consumer network was blues. Blues were mentioned in chapter 3 in terms of where they occurred in Northamptonshire and attended outside the county by local Caribbeans. The networks used to attract people to these blues were totally informal based on word-of-mouth communication only, with the social networks of Caribbeans being the only way to discover the venues and times of such events. In terms of blues outside the county, knowledge of such was also based on word-of-mouth interactions. Lloyd Kelly's recollection of learning about the blues elsewhere was that:

*One of the guys in Northampton would have said oh Lloyd, there's a ... yeah! That's it. There's a blues in Leicester, come along! I had a car very early on. So I'd end up doing the driving and they'd just tell me where it is. So that's other Jamaican boys would tell me where to go ... Yeah, so we would go to Leicester, Nottingham, Luton, places like (that), yeah. That's where it was happening, so yeah, I'd go with my friend. He was Jamaican.<sup>40</sup>*

Similar to the Northamptonshire-specific Caribbean network related to discovering blues within the county, finding out where they existed elsewhere was predicated on informal, oral-based social networks that relayed such information. Also, these blues could be considered as resulting from strong local and regional Afro-Caribbean ties because in part they existed due to ethnically-based exclusion from clubs, as well as Northampton nightclubs closing at 2am if not earlier in this era. In addition, blues played music until daylight which did not happen in nightclubs generally in Britain in this era, particularly in smaller cities and towns.

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<sup>40</sup> Lloyd Kelly interviewed by George Watley

Despite perceptions of detrimental weak ties with White British people, MFM was eventually able to obtain local government funding to start the organisation in 1977<sup>41</sup> whilst holding regular parties to raise additional funds, including artists coming from as far as Jamaica to perform.<sup>42</sup> MFM existed primarily for Caribbean youth, but like USC, did not attempt to exclude non-Caribbean people, particularly at its parties. MFM was pro-Caribbean and predicated itself on, '... *peace and love (and) when (people) realize (this), they start to come (to MFM parties). A lot of (White) English people used to come there after awhile.*'<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, MFM rented out its facilities to other community organisations, which cemented its status in the general Northampton community as a whole. The organisation also raised funds that were needed to provide learning programmes for the Caribbean people facing significant obstacles in schooling and employment based on their ethnicity.

In terms of MFM events information about them was primarily relayed by informal word-of-mouth networks, with the first known printed information about an MFM event dating from September 1980. This event was a sound system party held on 11 October 1980, featuring Sir Coxson and Jah Shaka with a coach making two stops in London, at Dalston and Brixton before transporting partygoers to Northampton.<sup>44</sup> It is unclear whether London resident partygoers would have read the advert in the **New Ethnic**, as it was a local magazine produced solely by volunteers.<sup>45</sup> However, Northamptonshire-based Caribbeans would most likely have informed their friends and family in London of this party, including being able to take a coach from London to MFM's event. The planning required for such an event utilised the formalised structure of having a

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<sup>41</sup> '£1,000 grant to squatter youth', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 22 November 1977

<sup>42</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

<sup>44</sup> *New Ethnic*, September 1980, p.17

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.2

fixed venue with use of informal oral networks to inform others of this event, as well as others generally mentioned by some interviewees.

In terms of organisational rationale and development, MFM and USC both used the following schema in creating and developing their associations:

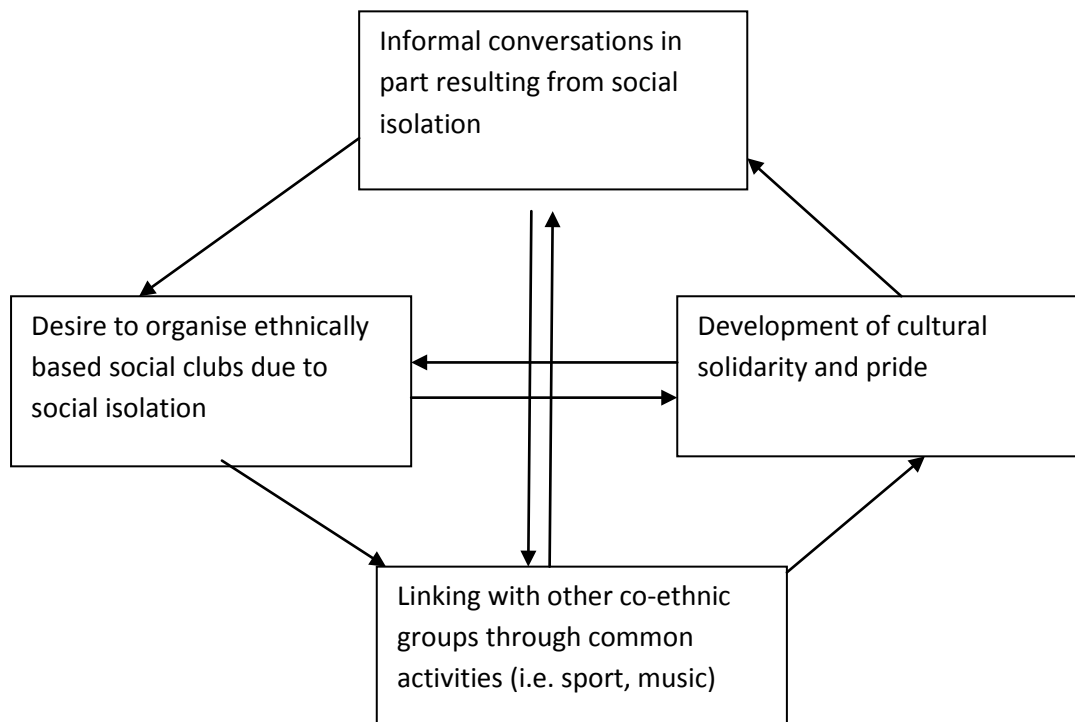


Diagram 3: Northamptonshire Caribbean club rationale, formation and development

All the steps mentioned in the diagram, as well as their repetition, were mentioned in some form by interviewees as being important in creating and comprehending the development of their clubs, although specific information from them were somewhat imprecise due to oral recollections occurring in some cases 50-plus years after such events happened. Furthermore, such recounting of events was without benefit of written documents the author has had the benefit of finding and analysing after recording their oral testimonies. However,

Diagram 3 is accurate based on interviewees' historical accounts with significant documentary evidence supporting their claims. Strong ties as were manifest in informal conversations developed through acting on these conversations through organising ethnically-based social clubs that reflected strong ties as local and national Caribbean people. Also supporting evidence for the strong ties of Afro-Caribbeans was that there were more Northamptonshire Caribbean organisations during the 1980s and afterwards than before.

Also, Caribbeans developed weak ties with other minority ethnic groups through cross-ethnic activities. For example, there was a “*‘Mini-Olympics’ presented by Northampton and Wellingborough Ethnic Minority Communities at Lings Forum (in the eastern part of Northampton) on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June 1980.*”<sup>46</sup> This event was for under-12s to over 18s competing in netball, volleyball, basketball and running events. Teams taking part in this competition came from not only MFM and USC, but were also from the Hindu and Traveller communities, as well as a netball team coming from Rugby.<sup>47</sup> It is unclear whether or not this Rugby team comprised of totally or mostly Caribbean or other ethnic minority groups, as well as the other teams coming from primary schools in Northampton, including two basketball teams from Cogenhoe, a village outside of Northampton having few if any Black or other people from ethnic minorities there.<sup>48</sup> Connecting with this event was the Northampton Council of African & Caribbean Organisations (NCACO) fundraising dance held later that evening at Roadmender in the town centre of Northampton, charging £2.00 for entry.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Northamptonshire Record Office: USC/303

<sup>47</sup> Northamptonshire Record Office: USC/303

<sup>48</sup> Northamptonshire Record Office: USC/303

<sup>49</sup> Northamptonshire Record Office: USC/303

NCACO continued to play an integral role in organising similar cross-organisational events, as it invited USC and other groups to a Family Sports Day on 14 July 1984, expanding on the competitive sporting events on offer to include, in addition to the events in the 1980 'Mini-Olympics', table tennis, darts, sack race, potato race, 3 legged race, tug-o'-war, relay races and other unspecified competitions.<sup>50</sup> NCACO planned to produce posters for the 1984 event, which did not occur in 1980, indicative of better finances available to this umbrella organisation as this decade progressed.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, NCACO's profile in the local community rose through the 1980s, in large part due to setting up a nursery in 1985, existing until 2003. Also, it administered a job training programme helping unemployed people obtain office skills through the Manpower Services Commission until 1987, with NCACO having 14 workers supporting this programme at its peak.<sup>52</sup> The nursery deserves particular mention because, according to Bert Cuff, Secretary of NCACO:

*... it was the first multicultural nursery in Northampton both in terms of staff and the composition of the user group. I can't remember going into any of the White nurseries that I actually supported during my social work days and find Chinese, Indians and the whole community were actually (there). We were actually trying to bring together, to make sure that the staff composition reflected the community that we were serving.*<sup>53</sup>

NCACO's efforts as measured by the nursery and leisure events are indicative of an umbrella group reflecting larger Black and ethnic minority assertion of their identities, as well as recognition that working together across ethnicities

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<sup>50</sup> Northamptonshire Record Office: USC/254

<sup>51</sup> Northamptonshire Record Office: USC/254

<sup>52</sup> Bert Cuff interviewed by George Watley

<sup>53</sup> Bert Cuff interviewed by George Watley

would be useful and productive for each group to achieve this. As such, NCACO represents weak ties amongst Northamptonshire ethnic minority groups, strengthening them all through being part of this organisation. Grannovetter, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, has asserted that the strength of weak ties are in their ability to create opportunities for those having them.<sup>54</sup> In terms of networks, NCACO was a hub supporting the spokes of individual groups such as USC, as well as other Black and other ethnic minority organisations, whilst creating and developing opportunities to incorporate a wide variety of groups through its self-run programmes, when funds and other resources permitted.

Other consumer networks also required knowledge of local Caribbean social networks in order for its actors to convert their social networks into consumer based ones. For example, many Northamptonshire Caribbeans used their strong ties to find fellow local co-ethnics that could provide catering for parties or weddings.<sup>55</sup> Anne Marcano has been mentioned specifically as an example of someone well-known for doing so as unadvertised home based work, historically to the present.<sup>56</sup> Barbers and hairdressers were also mentioned in Chapter 3. Discovering who performed these services and where such services were performed by Black people locally required being part of local Caribbean social networks. This point is especially relevant because the first identified advertisement for a Black barber in Northamptonshire was in the September 1980 edition of **New Ethnic** for Cliff's Barber Shop. This suggests that word-of-mouth would have been the sole means of discovering Black barbershops and hairdressers locally before 1980.

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<sup>54</sup> Mark Grannovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', p.1378

<sup>55</sup> Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley, Medlin Cleghorn interviewed by George Watley

<sup>56</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

Generally amongst local Caribbeans, consumer networks were more multifaceted than the relatively monolithic MFM and USC examples mentioned earlier, reflecting the diversity of strong and weak ties local Caribbeans had. In addition to the aforementioned African-American and housing examples influencing consumer networks, smaller networks manifest themselves in large part due to splintering ethnic identities amongst Caribbean people as their time progressed in Northamptonshire specifically, as well as Britain generally. An important facet of relatively diffuse consumer supply networks for Northamptonshire Caribbean people were the short term travels they made to London and other cities to purchase traditionally Caribbean/Black goods and leisure specifically and/or as part of travels to spend time with family and/or friends. Norma Watson recalled travelling to Brixton with her husband from the mid-1980s, partly in order for him to purchase reggae records unavailable locally.<sup>57</sup> Pat Sinclair visited London bookshops such as Foyle's in Leicester Square and New Beacon Books in Finsbury Park approximately three to four times a year after moving to Northampton in 1973.<sup>58</sup> However, Sinclair shared this information and reading materials with few fellow Northamptonshire Caribbeans because:

*I didn't know enough Northamptonians and certainly didn't know enough of them who were of a politically, not even politically, the educationally ... mindset (similar to mine) as well.*<sup>59</sup>

Further illuminating Sinclair's dissonance between herself and most Northamptonshire Caribbeans was that:

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<sup>57</sup> Norma Watson interviewed by George Watley

<sup>58</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

<sup>59</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

*Black people that we encountered in Northampton were not the same as Black people from London. They seemed much tamer. They seemed to be putting up with a lot of things that Londoners would never put up with. Didn't seem, oh my God! This is going to seem awful to, Northamptonians that I don't know, as if they didn't have too much backbone. They seemed to ignore insults that we could see. And if I say we, I can only go back to me again. Coming from London and seeing how some people were spoken to, and treated, and I'm thinking **what?** You wouldn't put up with that, but it was as if, you know ... They seemed to put up with a lot of things that I found (pause) frankly, some of it insulting and was spoken to in ways that you wouldn't tolerate sometimes. But maybe it's because again, it's a very small, population of Black people in a county that's very conservative. Always was, always will be. You might see little pockets of things but it's a conservative county, and therefore you know, there's some things that's going on there that, unless you're really, really sort of thinking about it, you may just choose to ignore sometimes. And, so where, the Black Londoners and to this day I know Black Londoners who've come up to live in Northampton and have gone back again. They just couldn't take it; you know some of what was going on.<sup>60</sup>*

Sinclair's failure to be significantly part of the local consumer networks other co-ethnics engaged with, at least during her early years in 1970s-1980s Northampton, derived from value system differences. Such differing values particularly related to her perceived strength as a Black and Caribbean woman vis-à-vis many of her co-ethnic local contemporaries. Illustrating this in greater

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<sup>60</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

detail was the reading Sinclair did before arriving to Northampton, which included works by Malcolm X, the Black Panthers Huey P. Newton and Eldridge Cleaver, CLR James' *The Black Jacobins*, Marxist Guyanese people-centred historian Walter Rodney's *Groundings with my brothers*, and J. A. Rogers' *One Hundred Amazing Facts about the Negro: with complete shortcut to the world history of the Negro*.<sup>61</sup> Further adding to the distance between Sinclair and fellow local co-ethnics was her then husband, Ashley Sinclair, noticing in the 1970s and 1980s that, '... Northampton's a very different town to London. I found the young (Black) men here sleepy. They were really, they were really sleepy (and politically unaware).' <sup>62</sup>

Pat Sinclair's consumer network example was primarily based on her radicalism juxtaposed with the lack of political nous of her co-ethnic contemporaries combined with being significantly frustrated with living in an area with an overwhelming majority of people who were extremely conservative in her view. As such, this is an example of geographical dissonance within co-ethnic strong ties through Sinclair's connections with London-based book networks. This was perceptually important to her as a Black and Caribbean woman despite being geographically distant from this consumer network during her early years in Northampton. Sinclair created her own consumer network through these ties in the absence of established ones; directly between her and the London bookshops. This network existed because of the void Sinclair perceived and desired to ameliorate. Because of this, visiting London bookshops was seen as a necessity for Sinclair to support and further her development as a Caribbean and Black person. Having this network through this combination of ties eventually proved to be fruitful in helping Sinclair eventually develop strong ties with some other local Caribbeans from the mid-1980s onwards, including WIPA

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<sup>61</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

<sup>62</sup> NBHP2004.140ai-aii

founders Morcea Walker and Ivan Bryan, as well as the Wellingborough Caribbean stalwart and active leader of WACA, Mike Prescod.<sup>63</sup>

Night-time entertainment was not always by or through organised clubs or blues. A local example, despite being unsuccessful, sheds light on how one-off organising of club/musical type events worked for local Caribbeans as part of the national co-ethnic network of such. June White Gulley's recollection of such an event was:

*My brother, my late brother Eddie (White) says June, I'm having a dance I'm having a dance at the end of the month, at least I get paid so they know I can bring some float (money) ... I was the organizer. So I said, "Eddie, no it's not a good time because it's Easter just gone, right, Easter weekend. So now you're putting on a dance the Thursday after Easter up north, Nottingham or Derby up them way. So you're going to hire a coach, you're going to hire a disco?" And he said, "No, it's alright, it's going to work." And we used to have Meccas and Top Rank places, they control the ballrooms. So it wasn't as though it was a hall that you'd pay a couple of shillings for. ... When I got here, the coach was full. So Eddie's car was full. There wasn't even room for him. You know what I mean, so he had to hire a car. And we got up there ... trying to think if it was Nottingham or Derby. The guy that was there, he worked just at the roundabout at that petrol station. We call him Chalky, but his name was Lyndon Curtis, Curtain, about 5 brothers of them. And when we went up there, you know what? There wasn't nobody there except for the people that come up on the coach that Eddie paid for. Rest of*

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<sup>63</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

*them never paid to go on it, 'cause Eddie was that sort of person. Eddie ordered the coach and them all just jump on. So they didn't pay to come in ... So there really isn't any money and then the dance wasn't his 'cause it was Top Rank's, then there was some sitting in this hole waiting for you to pay to come in. The bar's not his, so I mean you know but this is the worst part now is he booked a lot of artists. Not just the dance you know. ... So now this is how it went. You had some of these Jamaican artists (pause) and they were very feisty. You know what I mean? They were very cheeky 'cause when they come and they look, they said, "Me nah go up upon stage to empty audience but me want me dundsaye." You know what dundsaye is, the money. They want them money. They want (money) even though (they are) not going on stage. And one of them went like this (June putting hand into an imaginary jacket pocket around the shoulder) put his hand in his jacket and he pulled his hand out kind of showing who he is. He said the reason why," ... they call I man Clint Eastwood you know, cause I man draw the fastest back a yard." Everybody went ran (and to sort this problem out) Eddie kind of had to like give him a promise. You know what I mean? A cheque and whatever and I found out later on when Eddie went to Balham Studio, right ... and they were waiting for him ... 'cause those cheques he paid up north bounced! So what they done, I think, I don't think they turned him upside down, but I think they took his jacket off and took away the keys for the car. So I think Horace (Cohen) and Benji and a few of those guys gave him some money to get back the car keys so they could get back from Northampton.<sup>64</sup>*

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<sup>64</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley

Organising a one-off event required not only the understanding of what would be popular in terms of music for Caribbeans, but also of pricing and ensuring money would be collected before and during such an event. Furthermore, working with non-Caribbeans, especially in terms of the larger national nightclub owners and promoters like Top Rank necessitated understanding both co-ethnic and larger British consumer networks, which unfortunately did not happen in Eddie White's promotion. However, what can be gleaned is that such Jamaican artists such as Clint Eastwood, named after the actor famous for the Dirty Harry movie series from 1971 onwards, significantly iconic because of the main character's saying before shooting a perpetrator, 'Go ahead, make my day.'<sup>65</sup> Reggae names were created because:

*These artists were, in the early to late '60s, early '70s, a lot of the artists, a lot of the influence used to be from the movies. Right! And they were the baddest man. Them used to be like the cowboy them and gangsters. You see! So you had like Dillinger, Trinity. You had like it was say like Josie Wales, Clint Eastwood, You know! These were, you had enough artists named themselves out of that, Ninja Man, because of the kung fu (and popular) cowboy movies.<sup>66</sup>*

Such reggae artists played in Northampton at the Racecourse Pavilion, which would have made them known more closely to local Caribbean people. This was especially important in terms of preparing events utilising these artists' services.<sup>67</sup> However, art became life in this instance when Eddie White did not have enough money to pay the reggae Clint Eastwood, which highlights dangers

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<sup>65</sup> Clint Eastwood (director and producer), *Sudden Impact* (Warner Brothers, 1983)

<sup>66</sup> Ras Jabulani aka Trevor Hall interviewed by George Watley, 24 September 2010

<sup>67</sup> Ras Jabulani aka Trevor Hall interviewed by George Watley, 24 September 2010

of organising such an event without proper financial and administrative planning. What is clear was that local Caribbeans worked within larger consumer networks to hold events, at least in some instances. Eddie White, with his sister's support, was able to attract local people for this trip, indicative of successful promotion amongst his Caribbean peers. Also, his ability to use the services of the local Caribbean entrepreneur Vivian Allen to regularly have different cars would suggest, rightly or otherwise, to Caribbeans inside and outside the county that he had a significant amount of money, at least enough to cover the mentioned event financially.

Local consumer networks were not merely of local people travelling elsewhere in Britain and returning either with items or visiting such domestic destinations for leisure. Trips by friends and relatives to Northamptonshire were also important in local Caribbeans' consumption. Weekes Baptiste recalled his childhood experience of his family being given a cocoa log during Christmas visits by his aunties, with this cocoa being used for hot drinks.<sup>68</sup> Other items brought by his relatives during their visits included records of traditional Caribbean music, especially calypso from his Grenada-born family. Also, other items were given as gifts such as art sets, comics and crates of Fanta and other fizzy drinks not seen in the family home by Baptiste at any other time during the year.<sup>69</sup>

Morcea Walker recalled her family and in-laws bringing the ingredients from London to cook oxtail soup, pig trotters and corn meal porridge at her Northampton home.<sup>70</sup> However, some ingredients were locally grown in Walker's garden, such as pumpkin.<sup>71</sup> Pumpkin was also grown by other

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<sup>68</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley

<sup>69</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley

<sup>70</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>71</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

Caribbeans locally in their allotments, with Walker recalling that co-ethnics such as Joe Dixon, Ivan Bryan and Alphonso Bryan amongst other Caribbean men had allotments, with unnamed fellow-Caribbeans giving her pumpkin in addition to what she grew in her garden.<sup>72</sup> In addition developing friendships with local Caribbeans led to her less frequently

*... going to London and driving over to Birmingham. What happened was good networking in the Black community like my friend, you know, the chap that my husband played the sound system with. His wife would say oh, I'm driving over to Birmingham to do a bit of shopping, you want anything? Or my brother and I'd say oh yeah, fish, for example. You know, you buy because it was cheaper there. So she'd say oh well I'll get you some fish and so on, you know, and you'd ask. So there was a kind of communal feeling about that, a bit of sharing something, somebody would have a car, somebody was going. You'd give them £10, see what you can get me for £10, you know. It's £5, buy me some fish. So it was nice. You know, you built up nice friendships with that.*<sup>73</sup>

Birmingham was important for Walker just as it was for the church-going local Caribbean people mentioned in Chapter 3. However, Walker's network was informal and not generally based on, or because of, any specific organisational group such as a church or social club. What is important is that this consumer network was based on friendship and collective desires to acquire similar items of traditionally Caribbean foods. Achieving this required the intersection of social and consumer networks for mutual advantage. Joe Dixon also noted

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<sup>72</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>73</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

similar experiences of purchasing traditionally Caribbean foods in Birmingham, recalling that he went there once a month to purchase fish unavailable in Northampton, often travelling there in carpools with other Caribbeans.<sup>74</sup> Also supporting Walker's claim was Dixon noting that Birmingham was most popular to travel to for shopping amongst local Caribbeans.<sup>75</sup>

In more general terms of local Caribbeans' access to 'White' consumer networks, participants' narratives overwhelmingly focussed either on shops open to the general public or entertainment experiences and the spectre of ethnic exclusion that often occurred. Racist exclusion from pubs/clubs was less evident as time progressed, disappearing as an important theme amongst Caribbean people by the latter 1980s. However, gender influenced memories of such exclusion. For example, June White Gulley noted the Lamplighter pleasantly as a regular place to meet up on a Friday night before deciding on where to go afterwards on evenings.<sup>76</sup> However, Horace Cohen recalled having to take this same pub to the local ombudsman, '... *'cause they barred me for no reason and I had to take them to (the ombudsman) to get the bar lifted.*'<sup>77</sup> Horace Cohen also mentioned Cinderella Rockefeller's in the Franklin's Gardens area of Northampton as limiting the amount of Black people allowed to enter the club, contrasting but supporting Myra James remembrance that she would probably have been barred if she were male.<sup>78</sup> This type of racist exclusion was not isolated to Cinderella Rockefeller's at this time, as Birdnest on Bridge Street was also noted as operating a ethnically-based filtering system that allowed for a few, but not too many Black people, particularly males, to enter the club.<sup>79</sup> The combination of gender-based ethnic exclusion from 'White' leisure spaces

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<sup>74</sup> Joe Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>75</sup> Joe Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>76</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley

<sup>77</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

<sup>78</sup> Myra James interviewed by George Watley

<sup>79</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

at least helped to create more ethnically-based '*Black*' social spaces. Such '*Black*' social spaces also reflected strong Northamptonshire co-ethnic ties with correlative consumer and social networks reflecting the psychological need and desire for MFM in the 1970s-1980s. These factors also explain why an overwhelming majority of members, including all its leadership, were young Black men.

### **Hairdressing and transnational influences**

In addition to networks surrounding leisure and entertainment, hairdressers not only were important parts of local Caribbean consumer networks, but also used strong ties amongst local and extra-local Black/Afro-Caribbean people to develop a psychological sense of community that celebrated their strong ties. The strong ties local Afro-Caribbean women exhibited manifest through the discovery of where and when hairdressers were working in Northamptonshire was accomplished solely by word-of-mouth. Through their hairdressing experiences, particularly during the often hours of waiting time, Caribbeans often read **Ebony** magazine, as mentioned in Chapter 3. From a consumer network standpoint, obtaining knowledge of African-American cultural influences as were visibly celebrated in **Ebony**, facilitated fashion changes because of interest in, and aspirations towards emulating the clothing and hairstyle fashions within its pages. In terms of strong ties, these were developed in the word-of-mouth means of discovering the hairdressers' availability to perform their services locally exhibited through mobile hairdressers influencing local fashion because of their coming from London, as well as local women reading and reacting to the images in **Ebony**. Mobile hairdressers from London arrived with **Ebony** for their clients to read whilst waiting for their hair to be done. Clients of these hairdressers learned about African-American hair care products, according to one account:

*I used to look at the pictures. I used to read what was happening and I think wow! We didn't really have that in England ... There was a magazine out; there was a couple of magazines out.*

***Ebony**, **Jet**, American magazines! And when you look at those magazines, you say boy! And then you see certain things like (Black) hair creams. I mean in Northampton we didn't have much of a choice. I can remember when I was young we used to have Lanolin and Black and White. That was the name of the hair Vaseline, or Pommenade that we put on our hair ... So, now when you look in the American magazines, they had lots of different ... They had a wide range (of Black hair and skin care products) ...*<sup>80</sup>

**Ebony** helped to shape local consumer desires and fashions based on their desires to be part of the African diaspora via American influences, as well as augmenting identification of hair and skin care products suitable specifically for Black people, as similar British-based products did not exist in this era. Furthermore, actually organising the mobile hairdressers to arrive and have clients necessitated having word-of-mouth consumer networks based on hairdressers setting up temporary shop in a room in the house of a local Caribbean person, as well as potential clients knowing about the time/date of such, usually Saturdays. Even non-mobile hairdressers operating out of their homes such as Cherry Whitehead in Wellingborough from 1960-1966 as mentioned in Chapter 3, needed word-of-mouth contact to spread the knowledge amongst fellow Caribbean women that her services were on offer.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley

<sup>81</sup> Frank Whitehead interviewed by George Watley

Reading of the African-American **Ebony** magazine by British Afro-Caribbeans occurred because of some shared emotional and cultural connections felt **as Black people** despite geographical lack of proximity. These shared emotional connections developed because of recognition that Black people elsewhere faced similar life circumstances, as well as seeing clothing and hairstyle fashions they could realistically emulate within frameworks of positive Black identity.<sup>82</sup> These factors support the earlier reference to Wombacher et al; recognition that shared emotional connections can occur across cultures as long as there is a similar psychological belief that such groups are connected.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, Northamptonshire Caribbeans' frequent visiting of out-of-county blues due to shared emotional connections as Caribbean people in Britain supports Obst et al's theory that commonly accepted facets of group identification, in this case music, can be used to create a sense of community amongst geographically disparate group members.<sup>84</sup> **Ebony** also helped to create a similar sense of community, albeit more of a psychological sense of community than geographical vis-à-vis blues experienced in Britain by local Caribbeans, because of the significant physical distance between its predominantly American audience and local Afro-Caribbeans whilst identifying with psychologically similar experiences of being Black in a majority White country. In terms of strong ties, these were exhibited when local Caribbeans got together to read and discuss **Ebony**.

**Soul Train**, the iconic African-American music television programme is most remembered by the deep voice of Don Cornelius and its catch phrase memorable to most African-Americans over 35 years of age of, ' *Love, Peace and Soooooooul ..... Train!* ' Videotapes of **Soul Train** were seen by at least

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<sup>82</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley; Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>83</sup> Jorg Wombacher et al, 'Measuring Sense of Community in the Military: Cross-Cultural Evidence for the Validity of the Brief Sense of Community Scale and its Underlying Theory', p.684

<sup>84</sup> Patricia Obst, Lucy Zinkiewicz and Sandy Smith, 'Sense of Community in Science Fiction Fandom, Part 1: Understanding Sense of Community in an International Community of Interest', p.97

one Caribbean family through a network of most probably an American relative in Brooklyn recording these programmes on videotape and receiving such videotapes through an aunt living in Brighton. Myra James explained that:

*My mum would get videotapes of it and it would go on. And she used to get that from Camelita (her aunt). Now where Camelita got it from, I don't know, but there were certainly videotapes in the late '70s ... We were one of the first families on the estate to get a video recorder ... It was a big clunky thing and we used to get these videotapes and mum used to put them on. Maybe mum got them from Hazel, my mum's sister that lived in New York. She used to live in Brooklyn, so it may have come from her.*<sup>85</sup>

This transnational family network leading to local consumption of this African-American cultural icon is part of Caribbean people experiencing a plurality of cultural influences shaping them, akin to Chamberlain's recognition of such.<sup>86</sup> Also, viewing **Soul Train** probably would have been seen as necessary by James' parents' generation because there would have been a recognition that positive images of Black people were limited if impossible to experience in Britain whilst having a common understanding that watching this programme could help to ameliorate this despite the geographical distance local Afro-Caribbeans would have had between themselves and America. Supporting this suggestion linking familial desires to promote positive ethnic identity as Black people with Soul Train was James' description of:

*Auntie Camelita that was really flamboyant. She had the biggest Afro I'd ever seen in my life with these massive hoopy earrings!*

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<sup>85</sup> Myra James interviewed by George Watley

<sup>86</sup> Mary Chamberlain, *Family Love in the Diaspora: Migration and the Anglo-Caribbean Experience*, p.72

*She used to wear false eyelashes and these lovely crushed velvet green flares with a cord inset going through. She's still really flamboyant. She dresses more in African gear today.*<sup>87</sup>

James' aunt wearing an Afro then whilst being flamboyant would suggest that not only she desired to be visibly Black, but also by implication wanted her niece to experience celebratory Black culture through watching Soul Train. Furthermore, wearing an Afro for Black people, particularly women, was often a political statement of boldly celebrating Black identity in 1960s-1970s America particularly, making Camelita's intentional link in the network transporting this programme to James all the more likely. The familial, transnational network used to acquire **Soul Train**, akin with the **Ebony** example mentioned earlier, helped to develop a psychological sense of community alongside the family through the '*Black*' commonality of this African-American music television programme despite disparate geographical proximity. This supports Obst et al's theory mentioned earlier in this chapter that common cultural artefacts can simultaneously symbolise group commonality through such mutual interests as an active manifestation of group identity.<sup>88</sup>

Correlating with population growth of Caribbean people, young local Caribbeans learned about fashion, music and films from the African diaspora, particularly America and the Caribbean. Weekes Baptiste, a local Caribbean teenager at this time, recalled:

*Every week, every month you would meet more people, new people. And the whole thing just got bigger and bigger and bigger. And of course through that the fashion kind of crept in.*

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<sup>87</sup> Myra James interviewed by George Watley

<sup>88</sup> Patricia Obst, Lucy Zinkiewicz and Sandy Smith, 'Sense of Community in Science Fiction Fandom, Part 1: Understanding Sense of Community in an International Community of Interest', p.97

*Guys were wearing Afros, flared, tonic jackets. You know, all that was the rage ... (Then) came the music and of course from that came the films. We all stuck together. We were all a squad and we would, you know, we would all go out together ... So we would go to the cinema as a squad of people and we would go to the blues as a squad of people.*<sup>89</sup>

The combination of creating and developing informal verbal networks about fashion, music and films worked alongside needing to be part of a safe and comfortable group in the face of social and institutional hostilities which frequently occurred in this era.

Informal learning aspects of Caribbean young people meeting at The Racecourse was predicated on an experiential model of collective consumption in which the primary *raison d'être* was consuming Caribbean and Black diasporic knowledge together alongside cultural capital that was gained by learning about and being able to share knowledge of Black diasporic history and culture. Eventual MFM members used their sense of community to share and discuss intra-ethnically uplifting books after meeting, according to one account:

*... for about 6-7 months, reading a lot of ... One book we read, the 100 Facts of the Black Man, amazing facts. We start to get a few books from America and that was one of the major books that we used to read, about realizing that wait, Black man invent this! Yeah! Don't know, what's going on and that give me ... strength.*<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley

<sup>90</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

This experience exemplifies some of the harbingers leading to the formation of MFM in that this was part of the general experiences of Caribbean people in Britain who were, '... *anti-school but pro-education (whilst) rejecting racist curriculum.*'<sup>91</sup> This is consistent with the view that learning, akin to the (psychological) sense of community referred to earlier in this chapter, being based on, '... '(p)articipation' ... *denot(ing) meaningful activity where meaning is developed through relationships and shared identities ...*'<sup>92</sup> Learning can be informal and/or community based, as demonstrated by the Racecourse meetings. The Racecourse's importance to MFM members pre-organisation was that it was a, '... *university of (informal) learning that untangled myths left by the colonial rulers.*'<sup>93</sup> This community based learning and socialisation eventually led to these young Caribbean people desiring a clearly demarcated location for social space that reflected being part of the larger Northamptonshire community whilst craving to learn practical skills within an environment free from the discrimination experienced in their compulsory education and life experiences afterwards. Such expressions of desiring freedom from experiencing ethnically-based discrimination correlated with yearning for safe social spaces. These factors were also cited by Jabareen as being important in creating and developing a sense of community, particularly for immigrants and ethnic minority groups.<sup>94</sup>

This clamour for a defined safe space for Caribbean young people in Northampton led to the eventual formation of Matta Fancanta Movement (MFM). Matta Fancanta translates as, 'Come guard yourself against self

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<sup>91</sup> Yvonne Channer, *I am a Promise: The School Achievement of British African Caribbeans*, p.17; Ruth Chigwada, 'Not Victims Not Superwomen: The Education of Afro-Caribbean girls', p.1; Open University, *Block 4: Ethnic Minorities and Education* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1982), p.22

<sup>92</sup> Karen Handley, Andrew Sturdy, Robin Fincham and Timothy Clark, 'Within and Beyond Communities of Practice: Making Sense of Learning Through Participation, Identity and Practice', *Journal of Management Studies*, 43(2006), p.651

<sup>93</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

<sup>94</sup> Yosef Jabareen, 'Ethnic groups and the meaning of urban place: The German Colony and Palestinians and Jews in Haifa', pp.94, 97

destruction.’<sup>95</sup> ‘Matta was more Ethiopian, was Amharic, to come. Fancanta was more Mandinka.’<sup>96</sup> The combination of intertwining a language from East Africa with one from West Africa was intentional because, ‘(Our origin) we had from Ethiopian, as we as Rastas show that... Most of us see our roots as well coming (from the) west coast of Africa. So you know. So it was more to our thing. That is where we really decided that is the name.’<sup>97</sup> In addition to attempting to reclaim a cultural history institutionally denied to these young people, naming the organisation Matta Fancanta (Movement) was a reflection of compulsory education overwhelmingly failing young Caribbean people whilst recognising that Caribbean people had to be self-reliant to solve the problems of ethnically-based inequality of Caribbean people vis-à-vis the larger White British population. For example, ethnically-based discrimination in employment was reflected by Caribbean people in facing 2-4 times higher rates of unemployment than Whites in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>98</sup> In Northampton, these factors led to the eventual founders of MFM taking over an abandoned Salvation Army Citadel on Sheep Street in the summer of 1977. This effort was made in order to negotiate from a position of strength with local government leaders for a defined space where they could simultaneously feel safe in congregating and socialising amidst celebrating African diasporic cultures.<sup>99</sup> Their persistence was rewarded as MFM founders were successful in obtaining £1000 in funding from Northampton Borough Council later that year.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Ras Jabulani interviewed by George Watley; *Sharing the Past*, p.68

<sup>96</sup> Ras Jabulani interviewed by George Watley

<sup>97</sup> Ras Jabulani interviewed by George Watley; Rasta(s) is short for Rastafarian.

<sup>98</sup> Monica Taylor, *Caught Between: A Review of Research into the Education of Pupils of West Indian Origin*, p.30-31; Frances Benskin, *Black Children and Underachievement in Schools: A Case Study and a Review of the Debate on the Issue of Black Underachievement*, p.96

<sup>99</sup> ‘Squatters in ‘Army’ Citadel’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 11 August 1977

<sup>100</sup> ‘£1000 grant to squatter youths’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 22 November 1977

There was recognition, at least by Lee Bryant, the initial leader of MFM; that *'Integration does not work.'*<sup>101</sup> Because of this rationale, an important part of MFM's Constitution was its desire to create links with Africa, aspiring to, *'stretch out to Africa as well, and to help people in Africa to move to have branches in Africa.'*<sup>102</sup> This was mentioned by influential MFM members, who also recalled numerous conversations about permanently moving to Africa. Ras Jabulani aka Trevor Hall actually did move to Africa in 1982 as a result of, *'... (growing) up in an environment which always was reminding me that I don't belong here.'*<sup>103</sup> Horace Cohen also seriously thought about doing similarly after visiting Sierra Leone in 1981 because of having similar thoughts to Jabulani.<sup>104</sup> Such desires of MFM members reflect yearning for developing strong ties with African people that would hopefully blossom in contrast with the weak ties they had with White British people that were often negative from their perspectives. As such, MFM sought to replace the weak ties they had with White British people with perceived strong ties with African people. The latter tie sought to replace the weak ties they had with White British people that were perceived to be negative because of pervasive discrimination they experienced and placed barriers in their lives. However, weak ties with White British people perceived to be negative does not equate with exclusion. Rather, such weak ties were celebrated within contexts of rejoicing in Caribbean and African diasporic cultures whilst wishing not to replicate the spectre of ethnically-based discrimination having existed elsewhere locally and nationally during this era.

## Conclusion

Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumer networks simultaneously reflected the strong ties they had as Caribbean people in local and national terms whilst

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<sup>101</sup> 'Black Squatters Occupy Citadel', *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 11 August 1977

<sup>102</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

<sup>103</sup> NBHP/2002/1

<sup>104</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

having weak ties with local Whites and other minority ethnic groups. Additionally, such consumer networks correlated closely with social networks that developed locally, which is consistent with the contentions of Grannovetter and Lee that economic action is significantly linked with the structures of social relations.<sup>105</sup> Also related to social relations is the role sense of community played in the manifestation of local consumer networks. In terms of Northamptonshire Caribbeans, general manifestations of sense of community played out in their consumer networks. Such materialisations of consumer networks significantly reflected the combination of their overall sense of community as Northamptonshire, Black, Caribbean and/or British people.

Caribbeans sought weak ties with Whites and other minority ethnic groups through consumer networks they were actors within. This was reflected in the rationale and progression of organisations like USC and MFM. These organisations were part of Caribbean consumer networks, most specifically in terms of leisure. However, it is not suggested that consumer networks should be reduced to those that existed because of, or as part of, organisations. Groups of local Caribbeans were part of consumer networks outside of USC and MFM. This was best illustrated by individuals and small groups using consumer networks outside of organisations to acquire items and entertainment as result of family and friend connections, travels outside the county, or more generally in being actors in helping shape the items at least some shops sold in Northamptonshire.

Overall, the sense of community amongst local Caribbean people reflected to a significant extent their strong ties as co-ethnics. Such strong ties were evident in individuals' roles as actors in consumer networks by identifying, purchasing

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<sup>105</sup> Mark Grannovetter, 'Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness', p.481; Seung Hwan (Mark) Lee, 'The Structural Importance of Consumer Networks', p.84

and/or giving away traditionally Caribbean food and/or other items between members of their co-ethnic consumer networks. The combination of these informal networks, as well as more formalised networks vis-à-vis USC and MFM, were based on a spirit of desiring common items reflecting an active Caribbean identity when occurring. Also, mutual trade between those in the given networks in terms of both USC's activities at Regent Square, as well as trust between group members in both formal and informal networks, was especially notable in the informal network of purchasing items for others when travelling to London and Birmingham. In addition, the sense of community of Northamptonshire Caribbeans' first generation was not only visible through USC's parties, but also through creating new consumer networks as a result of relative co-ethnic isolation due to being approximately 1 percent or less of the local population.

Many of the younger generation having either been born in Northamptonshire (or elsewhere in Britain) and having most of their childhood experiences locally deviated more significantly between stronger identities as Black and/or Afro-Caribbean people and significant affinity for consumption networks affiliated with British identity. When stronger identities as Black and/or Afro-Caribbean people existed, this was partly gender-based due to the younger generation of Black men and boys having harsher experiences of ethnically-based discrimination directed against them in comparison to Black women and girls. Furthermore, consumer networks of those expressing stronger Caribbean and/or Black identities developed through sharing ethnically uplifting books and discovering blues through various co-ethnic social networks. However, over time Caribbeans developed weak ties through increasingly becoming part of a larger community of minority ethnic people facing similar experiences of cultural isolation and threats. Organisations like NCACO symbolised this by creating a sense of community through weak ties in uniting Caribbeans with

other minority ethnic groups as exemplified in having pan-ethnic minority sporting and other leisure events locally.

It is recognised that there has been a greater emphasis on experiential vis-à-vis material consumption in the networks discussed in this chapter. This is to a large extent because the accounts of interviewees primarily focus on their experiences of consumption, with material consumption being generally less elaborated on by participants unless such material consumption was linked to experiences remembered, in most cases with family and/or other co-ethnics. This is consistent with Van Boven and Gilovich's assertion that experiential consumption is more memorable than its material counterpart over time.<sup>106</sup> Experiential consumption predominated somewhat in this chapter because more strands of memory were recounted by interviewees in this context than with strictly material consumerism. Furthermore, ephemera and other documents related to local Caribbean consumer networks refer significantly more often to experiential consumerism than material items.

Notable by their absence are island-specific consumer networks in Northamptonshire. This absence existed in large part because having a Caribbean identity became more important locally, as it did elsewhere in Britain, because such ethnicity was created, as Goulbourne asserts, due to facing similar life circumstances in Britain, including facing significant ethnically-based discrimination.<sup>107</sup> The networks that might on a prima facie basis have appeared to be island-specific were actually family specific, at least amongst participants. Supporting this contention of a lacking of these types of networks locally is the fact that there were, and are, no island-specific organisations in Northamptonshire.

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<sup>106</sup> Leaf Van Boven and Thomas Gilovich, 'To Do or to Have? That Is the Question', pp. 1193, 1199

<sup>107</sup> Harry Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience*, pp.29-30

The consumer networks of Northamptonshire Caribbean people became more diverse as non-Caribbean ethnic influences exerted themselves more significantly as time progressed. Senses of community, including psychological, that resonated with local Caribbeans influenced their desires to access and become actors within various consumer networks. Moving on from consumer networks, another important dimension connecting consumption with identity is education. The following chapter will develop connections between education and its influence on the links between identity and consumption.

## Chapter 5: Educational alternatives as, and shaping, consumption

### Introduction

Another factor connecting identity with consumption is education in terms of learning outside of schools in various forms. Education in formal and informal contexts can help to shape identity, even by antithesis. This chapter will develop understandings of how education in its various forms influenced the identity of Northamptonshire Caribbeans, as well as how this identity shaped consumption. Supporting this paradigm is Bourdieu's assertion that education and compulsory schooling can be used to define and demarcate cultural and social differentiation.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Bourdieu links education with consumption by arguing that cultural consumption, as through compulsory schooling and other forms of state sponsored education, fulfils social functions of legitimising social differences.<sup>2</sup> This chapter will examine and transcend these assertions through illuminating and analysing how Caribbean organisations and individuals in Northamptonshire used compulsory schooling, even through antithesis, to thwart institutional and social views of Caribbean inferiority through various manifestations of educationally-related consumption. Comprehending the layers of these legitimised and resisted social differences will facilitate understanding how the multiple identities of local Caribbeans influenced their consumption in educational and non-educational ways. Northamptonshire Caribbeans' educational manifestations and influences reflected education in terms of its direct consumption amongst local Caribbeans, as well as how compulsory schooling shaped some future consumption. Also, dimensions of how compulsory school and non-school education ignited consumption outside its immediate contexts and timeframes will be addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: The Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, pp.23, 80-81; Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason on the Theory of Action*, p.19

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: The Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, p.7

This chapter will discuss education as consumption, as well as education shaping consumption, although some predominance will be on the former. Firstly, a brief overview of compulsory schooling and other educational issues that affected Caribbean people in Britain generally will be discussed. In addressing these matters, institutional structures and values Caribbean people were fighting against will feature prominently. The chapter will then move on to illustrate how local Caribbean people resisted cultural hegemony, individually and collectively. Various forms of discrimination and ethnically-based ostracism combined with compulsory schooling and other educational experiences that attempted to impose inferiority onto Afro-Caribbeans at various points and through multiple prisms. These will be delineated and analysed in order to understand exactly what had to be resisted in order for Afro-Caribbean and larger Black cultures to be respected and celebrated locally through transformative uses of education as a means of consumption, as well as being used to shape non-educational consumption.

### **(Mis)education of Caribbean people in Britain**

*The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life.*<sup>3</sup>

Simmel has identified as universally problematic the struggles individuals and sub-groups within societies have against larger societal forces desiring to subjugate them. Compulsory schooling could be construed as being part of the external culture and historical heritage Simmel mentions, as well as its desires

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<sup>3</sup> Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, p.324

to control those seeking to be recognised outside of cultural hegemony. As conflicts between people of Caribbean origin and larger British cultural forces played out, Caribbeans arriving to Britain in the post-War era faced significant obstacles in achieving economic success commensurate to their educational qualifications. Schooling in Britain, particularly of Caribbean migrants, was significant in teaching these children their supposed place in British society, which was at or near the bottom of it as part of the '*racialisation process*' seen as necessary in order to indoctrinate Black people into British norms, including acceptance of their supposed intellectual shortcomings vis-à-vis White British people.<sup>4</sup> This was antithetical to their rationale for leaving the Caribbean. Caribbean migrants were motivated to move to Britain, in large part, to give their children better education and resulting improved economic opportunities.<sup>5</sup> In reality, Caribbean migrants faced having qualifications not recognised in employment whilst their children were both subtly and overtly indoctrinated into British notions of their supposed inferiority in schools throughout the immediate post-War decades.<sup>6</sup>

Overall, projections of Caribbean inferiority by educators in Britain resulted from attempts at social closure to restrict '*newcomers*' from scarce jobs, particularly higher wage professional employment.<sup>7</sup> Social closure strategies included adjusting Caribbean children's career expectations significantly downwards due to racist beliefs.<sup>8</sup> Racialised attitudes towards Afro-Caribbean

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<sup>4</sup> Ian Grosvenor, *Assimilating Identities*, p.60

<sup>5</sup> Andy Forbes, 'The Transition from School to Work' in *Race Relations and Urban Education: Contexts and Promising Practices*, ed. by Peter Pumfrey and Gajendra Verma (London: Falmer Press, 1990), p.280

<sup>6</sup> Monica Taylor, *Caught Between: A Review of Research into the Education of Pupils of West Indian Origin*; Brian Bullivant, *The ethnic encounter in the secondary school: ethnocultural reproduction and resistance; theory and case studies*; Frances Benskin, *Black Children and Underachievement in Schools: A Case Study and a Review of the Debate on the Issue of Black Underachievement*; Andy Forbes, 'The Transition from School to Work'

<sup>7</sup> Brian Bullivant, *The ethnic encounter in the secondary school: ethnocultural reproduction and resistance; theory and case studies*, p.1

<sup>8</sup> Frances Benskin, *Black Children and Underachievement in Schools*, p.194; Andy Forbes, 'The Transition from School to Work', p.287

children were also influenced by schools as perceiving ‘immigrants’ as having problems with adjusting to the English education system, as well as being perceived as problematic because educators judged their language and cultures as ‘*inadequate*’ based on being compared to British norms, whether or not English was their first language.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, many teachers were antagonistic towards Caribbean students’ educational progress, even in many cases preventing them from taking exams they probably would have passed.<sup>10</sup>

Grosvenor asserts that race is a social construct rather than social fact whilst arguing that in post-1945 Britain, ‘... *education (was) a crucial agent in the racialisation process.*’<sup>11</sup> As ideas of race in Britain in the immediate post-War decades largely conceptualised Black and British as mutually exclusive, it is hardly surprising that compulsory schooling reflected socially constructed views that sought to significantly relegate Black people not only to inferior streams within schools whilst hindering future opportunities as adults.

Socially constructed views on race through transmission of information during schooling occurred through significant denigration of Caribbean cultures in British schools through using an ethnocentric curriculum with British middle class values biased against the Caribbean child.<sup>12</sup> Also, use of overtly racist reading materials made Black children, ‘... *offended to the point of making them feel withdrawn and not (wanting to take) part in the lessons.*’<sup>13</sup> Education systems according to Bourdieu actually measure inherited cultural capital through the ‘*racism*’ of intelligence as a means for the dominant class to

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Syer, ‘Racism, Ways of Thinking and School’ in *Race, Migration and Schooling* ed. By John Tierney (Eastbourne: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), p.89

<sup>10</sup> Frances Benskin, *Black Children and Underachievement in Schools*, p.193; Open University, *Block 4: Ethnic Minorities and Education*, p.20

<sup>11</sup> Ian Grosvenor, *Assimilating Identities*, pp.8, 49

<sup>12</sup> Graham White, ‘Black Access to Higher Education’ in *Race Relations and Urban Education: Contexts and Promising Practices*, ed. by Peter Pumfrey and Gajendra Verma (London: Falmer Press, 1990), p.287

<sup>13</sup> Frances Benskin, *Black Children and Underachievement in Schools*, p.218

maintain and justify its supremacy.<sup>14</sup> Although Bourdieu does not refer to racism specifically in the prototypical biological or ethnic contexts, he specifically uses the word racism in relation to societal views on intelligence by stating:

*The racism of intelligence is the means through which the members of the dominant class aim to produce a 'theodicy of their own privilege', as Weber puts it, in other words a justification of the social order that they dominate. It is what causes the dominant class to feel justified in being dominant: they feel themselves to be **essentially** superior.*<sup>15</sup>

The essentialism Bourdieu refers to significantly correlates with commonly conceptualised biological ideas of race encapsulated in his assertion that, 'All racisms resemble one another.'<sup>16</sup> As such, justifying social stratification through schooling and education systems legitimises discrimination through its tests and expectations. Bourdieu's arguments connect cross-generational social class stratification with racism in the context that the biology of lineage through parental and/or familial background demarcates lines used to discriminate against individuals and groups at the lower ends of this spectrum akin to racism that seeks to exclude those outside the lineage of 'accepted' ethnic groups. Furthermore, Bourdieu clearly links racism with state sponsored mechanisms of social stratification through schooling and education because the logical frameworks for both are similar, seeking to exclude people from positions of power or influence due to their position in society through factors other than their ability to be successful in highly regarded education and/or professions.

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<sup>14</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question*, p.177; Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason on the Theory of Action*, p.20

<sup>15</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question*, p.177

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p.179

Illustrating this is Bourdieu's example of the *numerus clausus*.<sup>17</sup> The *numerus clausus* as proclaimed by Bourdieu not only existed in his era in some disciplines by filtering away people not meeting the socially expected criteria of select areas to study, but also was a dream of elites because it was, '... a kind of protectionist measure, analogous to immigration restrictions, a riposte to 'overcrowding' provoked by the fear of being 'overwhelmed' by invading hordes.'<sup>18</sup> Bourdieu's noting of socially protectionist attitudes through schooling and education systems' mechanisms and actions is akin to ethnocentrists' use of protectionist rhetoric and activity to justify their own privilege and superiority at the expense of others socially weaker than themselves.

As Bourdieu's notions of the '*racism of intelligence*' applies to children of Caribbean origin in post-War Britain, the compulsory schooling local Caribbean children experienced reflected such essentialist viewpoints through the general rationale of educational policies supporting beliefs that the cultures of immigrants were inferior to White British cultures whilst perceiving Black children as educational '*problems*' hindering the schooling progress of White children.<sup>19</sup> Beliefs of Black children's intellectual inferiority were part of the essentialisms Bourdieu refers to because views on their academic ability were largely predicated on justifying ethnically prejudiced dispositions transposed through the education system that intelligence correlated positively with being White or White British, as well as negatively in the context of being Black and/or an '*immigrant*'. The label of '*immigrant*' also referred to British-born Afro-Caribbean children, indicative of the essentialism of equating being White as British. Exemplifying this are newspapers like the **Daily Mail** still referring to some second- and third-generation British-born people as '*immigrants*' in

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.179

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.179

<sup>19</sup> Ian Grosvenor, *Assimilating Identities*, pp.50, 54-55

2009.<sup>20</sup> Also, **The Guardian** referred to some British-born people as second-generation immigrants as late as 2001.<sup>21</sup> These linguistic nuances shed light on historically essentialist views of Black people, regardless of being British-born or not, as '*immigrants*' because British nationalist essentialisms were, and still are to some extent, based on being White.

Hegemonic influences transmitted through racialised essentialisms in schools worked overwhelmingly to maintain the status quo of a highly socially stratified compulsory schooling system. Furthermore, being indoctrinated into the British racialised view of Caribbean intellectual inferiority as expressed through compulsory education led many Black children to become brainwashed into devaluing their ethnic identity at the significant expense of their positive self-esteem.<sup>22</sup> However, devaluation of Black identity was also resisted by many Caribbeans in Britain in order to thwart cultural hegemony. Cultural hegemony working against Caribbean people in this era was not *societas leonina* (i.e. '*... sociation with a lion*', *that is, a partnership in which all the advantage is on one side.*').<sup>23</sup> However, despite significant disadvantages Caribbean people had in Britain, strong efforts were made to escape social and cultural domination through using education in various ways. People of socially less powerful groups can achieve freedom from domination, according to Simmel, if willing

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<sup>20</sup> Sunny Hundal, 'Apparently I'm not British', *The Guardian*, 27 February 2009, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/feb/26/daily-mail-immigration-britain>> (accessed 27 October 2011) Note: Although the Daily Mail article of 26 February 2009 in question has been referred to in numerous Web sources, it is unavailable on the Daily Mail Web site itself.

<sup>21</sup> Jeevan Vasagar, 'Stuck in the middle', *The Guardian*, 23 May 2001, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2001/may/23/immigration.immigrationandpublicservices4>> (accessed 27 October 2011)

<sup>22</sup> Bernard 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*, pp.26-29; Christopher Bagley and Bernard Coard, 'Cultural Knowledge and Rejection of Ethnic Identity in West Indian Children' in *Race and Education Across Cultures*, ed. by Christopher Bagley and Gajendra Verma (London: Heinemann, 1975), pp.322-323; David Milner, *Children and Race* (London: Sage Publications, 1976), p.135; Monica Taylor, *Caught Between: A Review of Research into the Education of Pupils of West Indian Origin*, pp.164-165

<sup>23</sup> Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, p.97

to pay the necessary price to achieve significant autonomy from hegemonic forces.<sup>24</sup>

Caribbean people across Britain largely were aware that their children were underachieving educationally in the 1960s and early 1970s. Black parents increasingly became critical of the state education system due to its failure to address this issue.<sup>25</sup> Integral in inspiring Black parents to become more involved in their children's schooling and education was Coard's *How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Sub-Normal in the British Education System*. It was inspirational in Northamptonshire in helping to create and develop supplementary schools as it was generally for Black British supplementary education movements in this era.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, supplementary schools like WIPA worked to counteract educational professionals' labelling of Black children, particularly boys, as educationally subnormal to maintain social and 'moral' order.<sup>27</sup> The specific historical practicalities of Northamptonshire's West Indian Parents' Association (WIPA) were mentioned in Chapter 3. However, the educational impetus and rationale for this Association will be developed here. Coard was specifically mentioned by Morcea Walker as extremely important in creating the impetus to found WIPA, being, '... *very important indeed*.'<sup>28</sup> Other co-founders, Ivan Bryan and Joe Dixon, recognised that Afro-Caribbean identity had to be cultivated in opposition to hegemonic forces making such educational underachievement not only possible, but desirable for those controlling compulsory education. WIPA's efforts used knowledge of Caribbean culture overwhelmingly obliterated by school curricula

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.98

<sup>25</sup> Ian Grosvenor, *Assimilating Identities*, p.60

<sup>26</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley; Ealing Borough Council, *Ealing Supplementary Schools Directory*, 2009, p.5

<sup>27</sup> Sally Tomlinson, *Educational Subnormality: A study in decision making* (London: Routledge, 1981), p.1

<sup>28</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

to improve the self-esteem of Northamptonshire Caribbean children alongside improving their educational attainment.

WIPA deliberately were:

*... 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 Black literature or using texts that the parents could understand. 'Cause we're still talking about a number of parents who were born in the Caribbean, yeah, and that had Caribbean upbringing for even 'til the age of 9 or 10.* <sup>29</sup>

Using books familiar to Caribbeans whilst concentrating on English and mathematics created a comfortable learning atmosphere antithetical to their compulsory schooling experiences. This combination was claimed to have simultaneously improved their educational and subsequent employment opportunities. Unfortunately no young people involved in WIPA were interviewed despite numerous and varied requests for interviewees representing a cross-section of local Caribbeans. However, WIPA's supplementary school did exist for approximately 20 years, indicative of at least some success during this timeframe. WIPA's use of such literature indicates that this reading material would have at the very least have been less-threatening, if not more uplifting ethnically, than textbooks used in compulsory schooling in that era that covertly made ethnocentrism seem reasonable through making it appear logical that Europeans were smarter or more skilled than Africans or other non-European ethnicities.<sup>30</sup> In contrast to British or Europeanised ethnocentricity, using Black

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p.10

<sup>30</sup> Michael Syer, 'Racism, Ways of Thinking and School', p.89

literature in WIPA's contexts would have challenged young co-ethnics to learn in a less threatening environment than their schooling experiences. Developing this type of challenging but low-threat environment is, according to Maxted, most conducive to learning.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, using cultural knowledge as WIPA did is a mechanism of self-esteem theory meant to improve both self-esteem and academic performance according to Brigham and Weissbach, as well as Coard.<sup>32</sup> WIPA supplementary schools were more informal than compulsory school education would have been, tapping into well-documented Caribbean desire to learn informally. Such informal desires to learn were part of the general trend of British minority ethnic groups demonstrating significantly greater formal and informal learning participation rates than the British population overall.<sup>33</sup>

Culturally, Caribbean children in Britain generally chose between rejecting their ethnic identity and using boundary phenomenon such as language (i.e. Jamaican patois) to demarcate ethnicity.<sup>34</sup> However, WIPA created a different, and intentional, version of boundary phenomenon that was based on accepting, respecting and consuming Caribbean food, items, artefacts and music through learning experiences, as opposed to claiming these exclusively for Caribbeans. Such boundary phenomenon as practised at WIPA also was envisioned to help facilitate inclusion of Caribbeans into being fully recognised members of the local community. This reflected local Caribbeans' developing identity as Northamptonshire, and by extension, British people alongside pride in Caribbean ethnicity.

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<sup>31</sup> Peter Maxted, *Understanding Barriers to Learning: A guide to research and current thinking*, p.73

<sup>32</sup> John Brigham and Theodore Weissbach, *Racial attitudes in America: analyses and findings of social psychology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); Bernard 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*; Brian Bullivant, *The ethnic encounter in the secondary school: ethnocultural reproduction and resistance; theory and case studies*

<sup>33</sup> Naomi Sargent, *Lifelong Learning: a brave and proper vision*, pp.282, 324

<sup>34</sup> Michael Byram, *Minority Education and Ethnic Survival: Case Study of a German School in Denmark*, (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1986), p.150

## Education as consumption

Consumers of education may prefer to classify their learning as leisure as opposed to education in order to provide a different perspective to their lives.<sup>35</sup> In terms of compulsory schooling however, young people are forced consumers of educational products often unpalatable in the form provided. More specifically related to Caribbean and Black youth in Britain, consumption of compulsory education contributed to Caribbean young people being barraged into internalizing ethnocentric views of their intellectual inferiority whilst at the same time Caribbean students were cited as consumers who were significantly dissatisfied with the educational product they were forced to consume.<sup>36</sup> In terms of Northamptonshire Caribbeans' post-compulsory learning experiences, these were significantly shaped by largely negative consumption of Caribbean culture, including through omissions discovered subsequent to their compulsory schooling. However, crucially less well-known is how forced consumption of education, even by omission, affects future consumption habits, other than referring to negative or unpleasant experiences in education as a major factor in lacking the desire to seek future qualifications, being turned off post-compulsory education because of its perception as being a white middle-class activity or seen as being antithetical to group/class identity.<sup>37</sup> Perceptions of Caribbean youth as academic failures led some of these children to fulfil this expectation whilst in school.<sup>38</sup> WIPA helped to create solidarity by using Caribbean literature as a means of transmitting positive aspects of Caribbeans as

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<sup>35</sup> Naomi Sargent, *Lifelong Learning: a brave and proper vision*, p.325

<sup>36</sup> Frances Benskin, *Black Children and Underachievement in Schools*, p.76; Open University, *Block 4: Ethnic Minorities and Education*, p.76

<sup>37</sup> Andy Beattie, *Working People and Lifelong Learning: A Study of the impact of an Employee Development Scheme*, (Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, 1997), p.6; Peter Maxted, *Understanding Barriers to Learning: A guide to research and current thinking*, pp.20, 24

<sup>38</sup> Barry Troyna, *Racial inequality in education* (London: Tavistock, 1987), p.122

opposed to,' ... (children) not being allowed to show where they were (in) education ... because everyone put them at the bottom.' <sup>39</sup>

In terms of getting started, WIPA launched its Saturday supplementary school in 1974 as a result of small but significant research sponsored by Northamptonshire County Council that

*... showed ambitious Black children. Yes, so they had the ambition. Some of their parents were being interviewed but I was interviewing the young people. I found ambitious young people, for themselves, but not in the school. There was no way, so somebody wanting to be a designer was definitely not in the right set or was definitely not doing the right exams to even remotely sneeze at that! Yeah! So that was, having put the research together, the research found that the young, as long as the young Black people were where they were in our schools, we were creating factory fodder, which is not a bad thing. But obviously parents were already working in factories, so they wanted better for their children. So what we were doing we're creating people that were going into work in the factories, not with high profile jobs. We were creating people that might join our (National) Health Service as SEN (State Enrolled Nurse) and not SRN (State Registered Nurse). Yeah! So that's what we were doing, empty the toilet pans and all the rest of it. We were definitely not going to be creating people who were going to be the SRN.<sup>40</sup>*

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<sup>39</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>40</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

Walker, as well as Dixon, Bryan, Gravesande et al, clearly recognised that the education system as it existed served as a detriment to Afro-Caribbean children's educational attainment and subsequent ability to succeed in employment.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, WIPA's founders felt that state institutions would not solve this problem. As such, they visualised that only fellow Afro-Caribbeans could work to eliminate this ethnically-biased educational achievement disparity. Identifying connections between schools and their significant detriment towards Black children's educational achievement was within general British trends of the era, as many schools in Britain similarly dampened, tempered or failed to recognise educational potential, as well as overtly denying Caribbean students' ambitions for racist reasons and/or as an internalization of racist values perpetuated by employers and institutions.<sup>42</sup>

In terms of forced consumption of Black intellectual inferiority in schools, Walker clearly linked schools not placing Black children in classes, and for examinations, that reflected their ambition and ability. WIPA's formation and activities were largely a result of resisting the racialisation of Black children as intellectually inferior, which its members contested. This ethnically-based Parents' Association's rationale and pre-cursors are consistent with Bullivant's recognition that solidarity within a social group can occur due to resistance to cultural dominance.<sup>43</sup> Children participating in WIPA's Saturday supplementary school, at least initially, questioned the concept of learning on a Saturday, a day associated with enjoyment and freedom from work. However, once they understood that they were being schooled from Monday to Friday and were being educated on Saturdays, many were willing and eager to participate, free from the Churchillian concept of school as an, '... *institution of control where*

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<sup>41</sup> NBHP/2003/71; Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley; Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>42</sup> Maureen Stone, *The Education of the Black Child in Britain*, p.251; Andy Forbes, 'The Transition from School to Work', p.286

<sup>43</sup> Brian Bullivant, *The Ethnic Encounter in the Secondary School: Ethnocultural Reproduction and Resistance; Theory and Case Studies*, p.189

*basic habits must be instilled in the young (having) not necessarily much to do with education.*<sup>44</sup> Supporting the argument that psychological divisions between school, learning and leisure had to be overcome in order to give young Caribbeans education that counteracted compulsory schooling:

*Black children may go to weddings and Christenings. But here, education wise, they were very dispersed so it was very odd for them to be Black children in education as a group, isn't it you know. They weren't used to that. That was a really different psyche. It wasn't a party. It wasn't a wedding. It wasn't a funeral. It wasn't a Christening. It was a big bit of education and it was on the sixth day of the week and they'd already done 5 days in the week. And they were visible minority making their way to a school that was in the community but wasn't particularly very Black ... but gradually the young people did! They started to get into their heads that, you know, this is cool, Saturday morning (supplementary school).*<sup>45</sup>

Afro-Caribbean people in this context transformed their expectations of socialising co-ethnically to include learning. This occurred simultaneously with disassociating learning from compulsory education in order to view supplementary school experiences as positive. Coard argues similarly in larger British Afro-Caribbean contexts.<sup>46</sup> However, despite relative autonomy from state institutional control, there was a gender imbalance amongst supplementary school participants:

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<sup>44</sup> Ronald Meighan, 'Back to the Future?'

<sup>45</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>46</sup> Bernard Coard, *How the West Indian Child is made educationally subnormal in the British education system: the scandal of the black child in schools in Britain*, p.39

*Our fight was to get the boys to come out to supplementary schools. It was interesting to see fathers' relationships with their girls, the dads bringing the girls to the school. It was quite interesting and in some instances there were brothers, yeah, their brothers, but it was the girls who came more regularly. And I think that's probably created some problems in later years because you can see the women achieving over and above the men.*<sup>47</sup>

This localised trend however has been persistent amongst Afro-Caribbeans in modern and contemporary eras, as Walker acknowledges by noting, 'In the Caribbean, the University of the West Indies, 66 percent of the students are women, yeah ... Yes, but you can see the start of it, can't you?'<sup>48</sup> Actually, this observation was an understatement, as only 18 percent of students at the University of the West Indies' Mona campus in Jamaica were males in 2007.<sup>49</sup> This gender imbalance as mentioned about the University of the West Indies also manifested itself amongst children of Caribbean origin in Britain. Tomlinson supports this contention by noting that Jamaican girls performed significantly better academically than boys, and were more likely to pursue higher education, in large part because Black girls were perceived differently than Black boys.<sup>50</sup> Also explaining this gender imbalance in local and larger British contexts is the British specific trend of excessively labelling Black children, particularly boys, as educationally sub-normal in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>51</sup> Walker noted that this occurred in Northamptonshire when referring to

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<sup>47</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>48</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>49</sup> 'UWI to introduce strategies to attract males – principal', *Jamaica Gleaner*, October 7, 2007 <[www.jamiaca-gleaner.com/gleaner/20071007/lead/lead7.html](http://www.jamiaca-gleaner.com/gleaner/20071007/lead/lead7.html)> (accessed 22 September 2010)

<sup>50</sup> Sally Tomlinson, *Ethnic Minorities in British Schools: A Review of the Literature 1960-82* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983), pp.41-42

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, p.43; Michael Syer, 'Racism, Ways of Thinking and School', p.90

Coard's similar conclusions.<sup>52</sup> Local Afro-Caribbean boys might not have participated in WIPA's supplementary school in equal numbers to girls in part because of race **and** gender labelling in their compulsory schooling experiences.

Despite these various dichotomies, WIPA tapped into Caribbean desire to learn outside formal education as well as being an avenue for parents to ensure Caribbean culture would be consumed by their children in order to maintain their culture whilst countering hegemonic denigration and devaluation of Black and/or Caribbean cultures and identities. Furthermore, WIPA's pioneering status locally helped to create parallel solidarity against White British cultural domination, particularly when other Northamptonshire minority ethnic communities:

*... spoke with us (from WIPA). The Gujarati community particularly, which were local (in the) eastern area (of Northampton). They spoke with us about setting up (a supplementary school which was created in 1977) and WIPA were in a very unique position about negotiating (with Northamptonshire County Council) for other schools... You had the Chinese, Gujarati, Bengali, Punjabi, yeah, Italian interestingly enough. They were there. And then over a period of time, you know how it goes, Polish, Greek. Polish! ...So West Indian Parents' Association can be so proud of that heritage because it was us who made it absolutely clear that as needs apply we might have been formed because of the huge underperformance, but for other young people to achieve (if)*

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<sup>52</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

*their parents identify a way (and) then nobody would support it.*<sup>53</sup>

WIPA helped other minority ethnic groups to set up their own supplementary schools. Helping other local ethnic minorities was also significant because it created and developed weak ties with such groups, generating local cohesion in ethnic minority and overall community senses. These cross-ethnic ties can be described as weak as opposed to strong because other than facing common experiences of racism and discrimination, there is no uniformity of common culture or experiences amongst people that are referred to as '*Black*' in Britain. This is because '*Black*' refers to people of South Asian origin in addition to those of African origin as well as an overwhelming majority of people having Caribbean roots.<sup>54</sup> Recognising weak ties used amongst local ethnic minority groups dovetails with Grannovetter's assertion that weak ties are indispensable in facilitating community cohesion.<sup>55</sup> The weak ties exemplified in supporting other minority ethnic supplementary schools implicitly recognised Afro-Caribbeans as a distinct group within the town and county whilst demarcating Afro-Caribbeans as contributors to the larger community.

In the context of WIPA supplementary schools and its consumption connections, provision of books and other educational materials for Caribbean children gave them ethnic pride. This worked to promote Caribbean culture whilst demarcating this local co-ethnic contribution to the overall community.

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<sup>53</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>54</sup> Ian Grosvenor, *Assimilating Identities*, p.10: Note: '*Black*' as an ethnic or 'racial' term does not refer to South Asians in the United States, nor is this accepted terminology amongst most South Asians in Britain. As such, classifying South Asians as '*Black*' is largely an intellectual rather than a pragmatic endeavour because this classification is based on the concept of '*White*' as a reference point whilst highly disregarding the diversity amongst people being called '*Black*' in British contexts. Supporting this claim is that, based on observations that the author has made in his more than 8 years in Britain that only a handful of people of South Asian origin in Britain have referred to themselves as '*Black*', all of whom were involved in historical/academic research in some capacity.

<sup>55</sup> Mark Grannovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', p.1378

WIPA deliberately encouraged children in its schemes to bring a friend. This was intentional on the part of the Association because it ‘... *introduced White children to Blackness indirectly*.’<sup>56</sup> White children were an estimated 20-30 percent of summer supplementary scheme participants, indicative of successfully implementing this intention.<sup>57</sup> This is evidence of the Association promoting Caribbean culture positively whilst rejecting anti-White or anti-British sentiment. However, this was not typical of British minority ethnic supplementary schools in this era, as most either were ambivalent towards non-co-ethnic children or did not want such children attending, particularly Whites.<sup>58</sup> What was also different in Northamptonshire in comparison to co-ethnics elsewhere in Britain was that indirect co-ethnic reinforcement occurred once Caribbean children discovered their peers from other minority ethnic groups were also participating in ethnically and/or linguistically based supplementary schools created soon after WIPA’s.<sup>59</sup>

### **Resistance to cultural dominance**

Despite many negative interactions Black people had with police locally and nationally in the 1970s, *societas leonina* did not exist in Northamptonshire. Within this backdrop, it is particularly notable that initial funding for WIPA’s summer supplementary scheme came from Northamptonshire Police Authority funds as opposed to the Local Education Authority (LEA), as education related finances and non-financial support for WIPA should have derived from the LEA on a *prima facie* basis.

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<sup>56</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>57</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>58</sup> Heidi Mirza and Diane Reay, ‘Spaces and Places of Black Educational Desire: Rethinking Black Supplementary School as a New Social Movement’, p.522

<sup>59</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

*Summer schemes started when there were, say in the '80s riots in London, yeah. There were riots in London spilling on to Birmingham. Yeah, that's it! So '81, '82 and it spilt, it came up the motorway, bypassed Northampton. There was unrest in Manchester, unrest in Birmingham, slight touches of it in Leicester. Police got nervous in Northamptonshire, 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 Road, 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?<sup>60</sup>*

Walker clearly recalled funding of the summer supplementary scheme being linked to larger social discord, including the 1981 Brixton Riots. The threat of raised ethnic tensions led to WIPA being recognised as an upstanding Afro-Caribbean community organisation which could contribute to defusing inter-ethnic social anxiety. Whether this police authority strategy helped to defuse local riot potential is disputable, but riots occurring that summer in Toxteth (Liverpool), Handsworth (Birmingham) and Chapeltown (Leeds), amongst other areas in Britain, did not happen in Northamptonshire.

Despite the primary intention of Northamptonshire Police Authority to keep Caribbean children off the streets as much as possible in the summer months, WIPA used this opportunity to promote Caribbean identity and consumption of Caribbean items to Caribbean people, as well as the larger community.<sup>61</sup> Having

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<sup>60</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>61</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

non-Caribbean children, particularly Whites, involved was by design, as was WIPA's desire to promote Caribbean-centric modes of consumption to Caribbeans and others. Although it is unclear whether the number of White children grew or declined over time, WIPA's opening its summer supplementary scheme to **all** children in Northamptonshire was a way of demonstrating that Caribbean people could provide positive value to the general community. Promotion of various aspects of Caribbean-centric consumption in WIPA's supplementary schemes also derived from the literal consumption of home-cooked Caribbean food, as well as having drumming workshops and other activities promoting assorted facets of Caribbean cultures. The overarching concept was that being Caribbean would at least be more acceptable to the general population alongside Caribbean cultures being promoted through education, food and other manifestations of culture. The inclusive desire of WIPA's leadership as expressed by its stalwart, Morcea Walker, was contrary to Bourdieu's concept that cultural outsiders strictly choose between hyper-identification with the dominant culture or ostentatious displays visibly associating with what identifies them as cultural outsiders.<sup>62</sup> There were simultaneous desires to be accepted by the White British majority alongside positive self-esteem about Caribbean culture. This was appreciated by recognising:

*... White children that associated with the Black children were themselves coming from homes of quality, not richness, but where it was perfectly alright to be with that Black child. And therefore the parents was allowing that child because as you can see from the pictures here, it's a young child. So it would have been that his parents would have had to allow him to come. He wasn't sneaking in. So I can only think that in all the melee of*

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<sup>62</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: The Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, p.95

*what was going on in society, there was some very good people around.*<sup>63</sup>

Aspiration for Caribbean cultures and people to be accepted by Whites generally, whilst recognising the goodness of at least some of the majority ethnic group, was viewed as important by WIPA's leadership. These simultaneous desires also reflected local Caribbeans' developing identities as Caribbean, Northamptonshire and British people through this educational consumption. Other groups of Northamptonshire Caribbean people, as well as Caribbean individuals acting independently, used memories of compulsory education to shape future consumption behaviour by seeking experiences antithetical to largely negative years of their childhood schooling. Other local Afro-Caribbean individuals and organisations had also done so, which succeeding sections of this chapter will address.

### **Collective counter-hegemonic consumption**

*'Money has provided us with the sole possibility for uniting people while excluding everything personal and specific.'*<sup>64</sup>

Social and economic exclusion of Caribbean young people in Northampton specifically, and Britain generally, in the 1970s and 1980s caused some younger Caribbeans to form Matta Fancanta Movement (MFM). Founders of MFM realized that the British socio-economic system they were experiencing served either to exclude them or place them on the economic periphery of low wage, low-skilled, insecure employment as a reflection of the projection of inferiority on Caribbean people that compulsory education and the economic and social

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<sup>63</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>64</sup> Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, p.345

system of Britain at the time wished to consign them to. Furthermore, desires to collectively learn more about Black history, as MFM members did both before and after they created the organisation, implicitly derived from striving to achieve independence from their parents. Such strivings were reflected by the perceived need for young Caribbeans to help themselves within a concept of having:

*The main plan (of MFM) was to make it a Black self help centre. It was a place for us to identify with, a place for us as youth to be able to meet. We had plans of setting up education.*<sup>65</sup>

The education Jabulani mentions was not merely about Black History, which was obviously important to MFM members. The education conceptualised was also vocational, perceived as crucial in an era when Jabulani estimated 50 to 70 percent of younger local Black people were unemployed at any one time in the immediate years before 1982 when he permanently left Northampton to live in Africa.<sup>66</sup>

*'The extremely significant power of money lends to the individual an independence from group interests.'*<sup>67</sup>

The lure of earning money and subsequent independence from their parents was counterbalanced with the lack of economic opportunities these Northamptonshire Caribbeans faced in terms of suffering from general national trends of significantly higher rates of unemployment for Black youth.<sup>68</sup> Also contributing to perceptions of ethnically-based discrimination in employment

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<sup>65</sup> Ras Jabulani aka Trevor Hall interviewed by George Watley, 10 September 2010,

<sup>66</sup> Ras Jabulani aka Trevor Hall interviewed by George Watley, 24 September 2010

<sup>67</sup> Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, p.342

<sup>68</sup> Sally Tomlinson, 'Race Relations in the Urban Context' in *Race Relations and Urban Education: Contexts and Promising Practices*, ed. by Peter Pumfrey and Gajendra Verma (London: Falmer Press, 1990), p.14

was the fact that Black British people had to have much higher qualifications for similar types of employment, or were much more likely to be unemployed despite having more qualifications than their similar White contemporaries.<sup>69</sup> MFM members realized that only by uniting they could they exert at least some control over their lives as a means of resisting cultural dominance. Future MFM members initially met at the Racecourse playing football and cricket, amongst other forms of socialising, in its large spaces.<sup>70</sup> Information about blues was shared in these interactions, which has been mentioned in Chapter 4. However, comprehending the cultural and social rationale underpinning blues is important to understand the role counter-hegemonic influences played in this form of consumption. Blues were not merely products of local circumstances, but were part of larger developments in Black British entertainment where:

*... a procedure of collective affirmation and protest in which a new public sphere is brought into being (with) consumption (being) turned outwards; no longer a private, passive or individual process.*<sup>71</sup>

Blues exemplified local and national Black British models of collective acquisition and manifestation of culture which worked in contrast to, and significantly because of, cultural denigration Caribbeans experienced in their compulsory schooling experiences, particularly for Caribbean young men. Despite relatively small numbers locally, collective consumption through, but not exclusive to, music was used simultaneously as a form of resistance to white British cultural dominance whilst solidifying local Afro-Caribbean identity through collective experiential consumption, eventually leading to MFM's formation.

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<sup>69</sup> Andy Forbes, 'The Transition from School to Work', pp.282-283

<sup>70</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley; Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley

<sup>71</sup> Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The cultural politics of race and nation*, p.210

Books and magazines of the Black/Caribbean diaspora were also shared amongst these young men at the Racecourse, ranging from the relatively mainstream African-American *Ebony* magazine to the obscure *Chic Caribbean* magazine. Also shared were some works by the Marxist Guyanese scholar Walter Rodney, author of *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, as well as J A Rogers' *100 Amazing Facts About the Negro*.<sup>72</sup> The Walter Rodney books were from the collection of Lee Bryant, the recognised leader of MFM in its early years. These books and magazines, as well as other similar Black literature and related reading material, would have been virtually impossible to obtain in local shops. Furthermore, such reading material would certainly not have been taught in schools in that time. Sharing these books alongside discussions about them helped to create and develop an informal, open-air '... *university of learning*.'<sup>73</sup> In doing so, the minds of these Caribbean youngsters were opened, understanding their existence:

*... in a country, predominantly White, being taught about White history, seeing images about White people all my life. All of a sudden these Black people (Rastafarians) were telling, and you listened to them and their kind of not only interpretation of history but what they knew about basic history. You are sitting there with your mouth open, your eyes widening. You know you going, you see that is interesting. I never knew that! 'Cause you wouldn't know, as a kid you wouldn't know.*<sup>74</sup>

Learning from Rastafarians amongst other co-ethnic peers helped many younger local Caribbeans to conceptualise the extremity of social and cultural oppression

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<sup>72</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

<sup>73</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

<sup>74</sup> Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley

that worked to their detriment. This was not confined to their individual experiences, but part of systematic denial of Black contributions to history best exemplified in their compulsory school experiences that taught them nothing about Black or Black British history.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, cultures perceived as non-British were still considered ‘*alien*’ in the 1970s.<sup>76</sup> Within these contexts, there was collective understanding of desiring an ethnically comfortable environment to learn practical skills. This eventually developed into MFM’s training programmes in electronics and printing for unemployed people.<sup>77</sup> Also implemented were computer courses towards the end of MFM’s existence, free for those on benefits.<sup>78</sup> Other learning opportunities made available, although informal and not directly vocational, were a Black arts festival, poetry and plays exhibition, as well as a rare Black film festival.<sup>79</sup> In addition, the September 1980 **New Ethnic** produced by many involved in MFM lists a series of talks about education organised by WIPA. Other talks included knowledge about obtaining training and employment, as well as a brief history of the Rastafarian movement.<sup>80</sup> These were some amongst other culturally celebratory, but simultaneously educational, activities.

Learning about various aspects of pan-African and/or Caribbean culture worked in contrast to the negative aspects of Caribbean cultural consumption, even by omission, experienced in compulsory schooling. However, MFM members and activities deliberately reconstituted positive Caribbean self-esteem to counter institutional obliteration and denigration of Black and Caribbean cultures. Consumption in MFM contexts was based on a collective model that valued

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<sup>75</sup> Peter Browne, ‘Rastafarians’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 7 June 1978

<sup>76</sup> Ibid

<sup>77</sup> ‘Training plan aids job prospects’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 22 January 1983

<sup>78</sup> ‘New Course is computer friendly’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 5 March 1991

<sup>79</sup> Tina Baker, ‘Black Festival in Northampton’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 13 October 1981; ‘A season for black performers’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 4 March 1988; ‘Four-week season of rare black films’, *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, 23 November 1990

<sup>80</sup> *New Ethnic*, September 1980, pp.4-6, 22

sharing information, experiencing culture together, particularly music, whilst promoting Caribbean culture as a means of resisting cultural dominance of White British cultures that largely relegated them to the lowest economic and social spheres. In compulsory education, they were taught to accept racialised views of their inferiority. In contrast, MFM members resisted cultural hegemony through its educational and social activities.

As a result of seeking self-reliance and a defined space reflecting ethnic identity within being recognised as members of the local community, MFM occupied an abandoned Salvation Army building on Northampton's Sheep Street in August of 1977 after failing to obtain support of the local council in acquiring the space requested. Under the laws of that time, it was legal for abandoned buildings to be used by another person or group as long as no damage to the building was done and no locks were broken. Despite the legality of MFM's actions, Northampton Borough Council and local police attempted to pressure MFM into giving up the building, which was resisted. Planning and actions related to this legal occupation were part of processes of, and related to, informally collective modes of learning whilst also being important in terms of its symbolism of working together using the rules of the cultural hegemon, as in its laws. Furthermore, the practical aspects of using collective cultural action to resist oppressive cultural domination working against them was not only in its name, but also formed its *raison d'être*.

Bourdieu refers to cultural capital as mainly referential to and towards the culturally dominant versus the dominated as a function of social differentiation that was the eventual goal of hegemony.<sup>81</sup> However, MFM founders were rejecting this model by attempting to create and develop their own cultural capital in opposition to the racialised institutions and social structures that

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<sup>81</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: The Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, pp.102-103

wished to exclude them. This was done without excluding White people from its events, an indication of intentions of create and develop cultural capital with the primary purpose of becoming strong members of the local community through having corresponding strong ethnic identity. Furthermore, cultural capital is not one-dimensional. Through social aspects of consuming Caribbean and other forms of pan-African cultures, MFM sought to create a separate cultural space without excluding non-co-ethnics that would be expected to have occurred if Bourdieu's concept of hyper-identification applied to MFM totally. Furthermore, the absence of significant hyper-identification symbolises developing, or desires to develop, British and Northamptonshire identities through sharing Caribbean and Black cultures in various formalised and informal educational settings, particularly related to sharing various aspects of these cultures with White people. Cultural capital as expressed and shared within this organisation was based on knowledge of, and pride in, Caribbean and pan-African cultures where individual esteem in the group was based on knowledge of Caribbean and/or pan-African music, foods, books, etc. within the context of living in Northamptonshire and Britain.

### **Individual counter-hegemonic consumption**

Individual Northamptonshire Caribbeans also worked in various ways to resist British cultural dominance. Some individuals were influenced by their solo actions towards collective consumer activities reflecting ethnic identity. However, at particular times when individuals were, or perceived themselves to be ethnically isolated, influences to purchase and/or consume items based on buttressing Caribbean and/or Black identities manifested. Such consumption included acquiring and using music and books that portrayed people of the African diaspora positively. Doing so affirmed and reaffirmed a psychologically uplifting ethnic identity without direct collective (re)affirmation at the time such

consumption occurred, countering hegemony individually during these specific instances and timeframes.

Pat Sinclair exemplified individualised counter-hegemonic behaviour during her early years in Northampton through her expressed desires to maintain her ethnic identity as a Caribbean and Black person in the 1970s and 1980s. In consumption terms, counter-hegemony manifest through visiting London bookshops that sold Black literature. This was done to maintain cultural capital as a Caribbean and Black person whilst expressing disenchantment with many local co-ethnics not as politically motivated or educationally knowledgeable as her.<sup>82</sup> Adding to this from a strictly educational standpoint is that Sinclair was clearly knowledgeable about Coard's book. Recalling Coard in addition to local, national and international events during that era led her to narrate:

*Now from about the '60s, just to go back to my formative years in education, in the '60s when I began to be aware of what was happening, I was quite political in terms of I knew about Martin Luther King. I knew about Malcolm X and this was in the '60s. I was reading about them. I was quite young, but certainly what interested me was the topics of equality, inequality and justice and watching what was going on in America and seeing it on the TV. What was happening with the civil rights movement in America reflected some of the thinking that I had in terms of how Black people were treated in this country. Maybe not as overtly, but certainly it was there all the time ... I did buy a lot of books in the '70s ... Well one author that we really delved into was J.A. Rogers, who wrote 3 volumes of books and it's called ... **The World's Greatest Men of Colour**. There's also another book*

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<sup>82</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

*called **Amazing Facts, 100 Amazing Facts about the Black Man** CLR James' **The Black Jacobins, Grounding with my Brothers** with Rodney, Walter Rodney. Those were political books, but we also read things like **Soul on Ice**, which was one of the, Eldridge Cleaver. Read a lot of American authors, about what was happening there. Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale and the Black Panther movement going on there and some of the pamphlets out, they actually wrote at the time. And those sorts of books, Martin Luther King, what was happening. And certainly I read, Malcolm X, and that was absolutely pivotal one for me.<sup>83</sup>*

The ethno-cultural isolation felt in Northamptonshire was not simply due to local factors. The combination of individual experiences before relocating, as well as national and international events and movements led Sinclair to reflect on **all** these issues when commenting on her rationale for simultaneously maintaining her knowledge of Black history and literature whilst solidifying such knowledge due to also being frustrated by her mostly politically unaware local co-ethnics, at least during her initial years in the county.<sup>84</sup> Also, part of her frustration with local Caribbeans derived significantly from having been organisationally active in the South East London Parents' Association and the Black Power Movement in London during the 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>85</sup> This prior activism was in significant contrast to the lack of social and political activism Sinclair perceived locally. Despite the dichotomy between her activist sentiment and the perceived lack thereof upon arriving to Northampton in 1974, she somewhat changed her views of local Caribbeans by the mid-1980s when she developed friendships with politically and socially like-minded Caribbeans including Walker, Mike Prescod, Ivan Bryan and Joe Dixon, all of whom were

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<sup>83</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

<sup>84</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

<sup>85</sup> NBHP/2003/40

active players in either WIPA or WACA.<sup>86</sup> She recognised these select people as being politically and educationally aware, especially notable in contrast to a town and county she perceived to be, '... *very, very sleepy. It seemed like something in the deep South, one of those deep south little hick towns sort of thing you know.*'<sup>87</sup>

Furthermore, Sinclair's experience of reading authors like CLR James and Walter Rodney differed from MFM founders such as Bryant and Cohen because collective reading of similar books occurred for the MFM group, but did not for her in Northampton. Also contributing to this collective reading was the psychological sense of community in the 1970s-1980s that existed for Cohen and Bryant et al, but did not for Sinclair. This locally created psychological sense of community happened in large part because of more acute negativity towards being Black as the younger Northamptonshire-based men experienced in schools, through interactions with the police, as well as social ostracism because of being Black **and** young. Due to gender and not experiencing locally-based discrimination, Sinclair did not have these specific experiences. Furthermore, she was married with a child soon after arriving to Northampton, highlighting the division between her and the mostly single younger Caribbean men who had a similar localised psychological sense of community. Locally-based sense of community was developed through reading Rodney, J.A. Rogers and **Ebony** at the home of Lee Bryant, recalled by Cohen immediately after recounting his experiences of being barred from nightclubs.<sup>88</sup> Recollecting these authors and reading material after his account of ethnically-based discrimination exemplifies Cohen's stream of consciousness connecting barring from nightclubs with learning ethnically uplifting information through the mentioned authors and magazine. Stream of consciousness is not only theoretical, but can

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<sup>86</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

<sup>87</sup> Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

<sup>88</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

be practical as Billy Joel's 1989 *We Didn't Start the Fire* song illustrates.<sup>89</sup> Joel and Cohen both used stream of consciousness to share the problems they saw with others despite differences in actually communicating their dilemmas with the world as they visualised it.

However, psychological sense of community amongst young local Caribbean people through facing similar ethnically-based discrimination was not solely male-based. Northamptonshire-born June White-Gulley's recollection of a life-altering moment in her compulsory education experience at 11 years old in 1968:

*Each junior school so many from each junior school went to the grammar school, right, so if they said like the first fourteen from Military Road out of the 'a' class will go to the grammar school, so I come like eighth or ninth in the class, right, even if I came tenth. But I came like about eighth or ninth and the girl next to me was Carol Hubbard she come like tenth or 11th, and then the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, they all went to grammar school but I didn't go. So I knew from then that something was wrong because if 14 of us, or 12 of us go, and I come in that, and they all went and I wasn't allowed to go. So from that age I knew something was wrong, something was terribly wrong and my parents was very shocked that I hadn't passed my eleven plus ... I should have really gone to the grammar school. It might seem like somebody's gonna say, 'oh she's got a chip on her shoulder', but I ain't got a chip on me shoulder, it's something that happened in life, and I think it happened to a lot of other*

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<sup>89</sup> Billy Joel, *We Didn't Start the Fire* (Columbia, 1989)

*Black children as well, but the parents at the time were not aware of what was really taking place.*<sup>90</sup>

Additionally, White-Gulley recalls the combination of her nursing and entertainment experiences whilst living in London as a nurse in between her childhood and adult life in Northamptonshire:

*I used to go to a blues. A blues is a party. They call it illegal party, but it not illegal. The party where we could go to that we weren't barred from. And I used to go to the Harrow Road Blues, they call it the graveyard blues. Why? Because it was next to Harrow Road Cemetery and then I found out after I qualified as a nurse, that Mary Seacole, who is Mary Seacole? You know what? And when I found out ... You know she's buried at the Harrow Road graveyard where I used to be at the blues without a headstone. My journey to London, to become a nurse at the Nightingale School, I've read everything on Florence Nightingale from when I was 7 years old ... I done home nursing, then I done pre-nursing, then I done orthopaedic nursing, then I done general nursing. I never heard about Mary Seacole ... So the music took me to Mary Seacole. (laughs) But it was Florence Nightingale that brought me down to London. Look at that!*<sup>91</sup>

The combination of retrospective understanding of ethnically-based discrimination she suffered but fully understood belatedly, combined with knowledge of Black British history White-Gulley felt should have been taught

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<sup>90</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley

<sup>91</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley

in the childhood school experiences. This inspired her to learn much more about Black and Black British history, albeit initially triggered away from Northamptonshire as an adult. Furthermore, learning about Seacole within the context of going to a blues simultaneously added to the irony of White-Gulley's historical discovery because this was learned within the context of going to blues due to ethnically-based barring from other nightlife entertainment.

Further contributing to White-Gulley's simultaneous feelings of ethnic alienation and historical awakening was her childhood desire to learn extensively about Florence Nightingale whilst being told nothing about Mary Seacole in her compulsory educational experiences in the 1960s and 1970s. This experience, as well as being in her view denied a grammar school place because of ethnically-based discrimination, led White-Gulley to feel cheated of this knowledge. White-Gulley perceptions of being ethnically discriminated against is consistent with statistics from 1968 indicating that 1.58 percent of West Indians in secondary schools were in grammar schools in comparison to 20.33 percent of '*non-immigrants*'<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, discovering Mary Seacole's historical importance by chance during her nursing training led her towards unearthing other aspects of Black and Black British history after returning to Northamptonshire, including working extensively to support Northamptonshire Black History Association. Rationale for this ethnically-based historical perspective was clearly recognised by White-Gulley as an impetus for her relatively belated involvement in local Black and Black British history.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> H.E.R. Townsend, *Immigrant Pupils in England: The L.E.A. Response* (London: National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales, 1971), p.57

<sup>93</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley, 19 October 2009

## Conclusion

Relative isolation in both co-ethnic terms amongst some Caribbeans, as well as in comparison to local Whites due to being one percent or less of the population of Northamptonshire, helped shape future consumption in terms of education as consumption and educational as a tool in transforming non-educational consumption, particularly leisure. Forced consumption of ethnocentric education, even by omission, often led to future consumption habits and behaviours antithetical to cultural indoctrination received during compulsory education. Another residual effect of these detrimental experiences in compulsory education is that future desires to seek out books, music and other types of Caribbean and/or pan-African cultural artefacts significantly resulted from resistance to discrimination against Caribbeans. These examples support Brine and Waller's argument that identities are often constructed in resistance to opposition.<sup>94</sup>

Seeking and obtaining ethnically-based cultural books and leisure, as well as gaining cultural pride, does not exclude aspiration incorporating some social values of the dominant socio-ethnic group(s). Cultural objects such as food and books, but also music and other non-tangible aspects of consumerism were used to mark **accepted** space valued by Afro-Caribbeans whilst respected by non-co-ethnics. Parallel ethnic solidarity can also augment minority ethnic pride, both within minority groups and between minority ethnic groups generally vis-à-vis the dominant socio-ethnic group(s). In Northamptonshire the consumption of supplementary school education was aided by separate and diverse minority ethnic groups eventually having similar schemes. This helped local Afro-Caribbeans to gain self-esteem and ethnic pride by participating in a supplementary school scheme whilst being visible as an ethnic group in

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<sup>94</sup> Jacky Brine and Richard Waller, 'Working-class women on an Access course: risk, opportunity and (re)constructing identities', p.103

supporting other like-minded organisations in the local community, creating and developing weak ties in the process. Such weak ties also solidified identity in terms of Caribbeans' ethnic minority status locally.

Individual local Caribbeans also used their consumption habits to resist cultural hegemony, which was sometimes of use to other co-ethnics subsequently.

Locally, some individuals specifically read Caribbean, African and African-American books and/or magazines as solo efforts at particular times in their lives to discover more about people of African origin. This in some cases later led to solidaristic activities to learn and share Caribbean and/or pan-African culture with both co-ethnics and non-co-ethnics. In some cases, the time between individual and solidaristic efforts was relatively minimal, but in others the gap was significantly longer. The intense use of education as a transformative means of demonstrating positive ethnic identity through various uses of education was clearly evident amongst many local Caribbeans.

Individual **and** group resistance to cultural hegemony whilst responding to forced consumption of Caribbean and/or Black inferiority vis-à-vis White British cultures occurred at multiple points. However, such resistance did not operate strictly within Bourdieu's binary of cultural outsiders either hyper-identifying with, or in contrast to, cultural hegemony.<sup>95</sup> Rather, significant aspects of educationally related Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption operated between the diametric poles espoused by Bourdieu and without fully hyper-identifying with being Caribbean, Black and/or British as Bourdieu's theories indicate should have generally happened regarding cultural outsiders.<sup>96</sup> This chapter has illuminated many dimensions of how local Caribbean consumption functioned to resist state-supported and socially sanctioned

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<sup>95</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: The Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, p.95

<sup>96</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: The Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, p.95

denigration of their cultures through various individual and collective uses of education. Education as a theme of consumption correlates highly with intersections of Caribbeans' identity as Caribbean, Black and British people within local dimensions. Furthermore, comprehending connections between compulsory schooling/education and future consumption adds to understanding the multiple manifestations of identity Northamptonshire Caribbeans intersected within, and performed through, their consumption.

## **Chapter 6: Cultural Currencies**

### **Introduction**

Another factor connecting identity with consumption is the creation and development of various cultural currencies. Through understanding how cultural currencies were produced and deployed by Northamptonshire Caribbeans, a greater understanding of its uses as means of simultaneously resisting whilst incorporating local Caribbeans within aspects of cultural hegemony will be obtained. This will be done through analysing how Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans used and exchanged various aspects of Caribbean, Black and British cultures in order to place themselves in diverse co-ethnic and inter-ethnic local and national groupings through using cultural currencies that facilitated their identity-related consumption.

In order to understand theoretical dimensions of cultural currency, connections between cultural currency, economic concepts and supporting literature involving monetary currencies and flight to quality will be delineated and analysed. Through understanding connections between monetary philosophies and cultural currency, significant understanding of culture as systems of exchange will be obtained. Also, these monetary concepts will be used to help develop frameworks for understanding cultural currency concepts deployed afterwards in the chapter. Understanding monetary and cultural currency theories alongside actual cultural currency use amongst Northamptonshire Caribbeans will facilitate significant comprehension of how it was used to concurrently resist and fit within cultural hegemony.

Concepts and implementations of cultural currency are important to conceptualise in order to appreciate significant connections between consumption and identity. Through three prisms involving cultural currencies,

acquisition and sharing, proclamations of status, as well as cultural currency flight to quality, this chapter will delineate and analyse Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption through these dimensions. Furthermore, multiple forms and perceptions of identity influenced the use and exchange of cultural currencies, which will also be addressed in this chapter. Understanding the cultural currencies used and exchanged by local Caribbeans provides another component through which to conceptualise connections between multiple forms of local Caribbean identity and consumption.

### **Theoretical frameworks of currency and flight to quality**

How can understanding theoretical frameworks of monetary currency and financial flight to quality augment comprehending the role cultural currency plays in the creation and development of culture? Cultural currency revolves around performances constrained by cultural meaning and identity.<sup>1</sup> Another interpretation dovetails monetary currency with usage of time by creating '*dual currency*' used to support cultural resilience.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, cultural currency has been linked to being an, '... *intellectual rather than a material property ... defined by social relationships and obligations.*'<sup>3</sup> Implied in these meanings 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,

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Arno, 'Cobo and tabua in Fiji: Two forms of cultural currency in an economy of sentiment' *American Ethnologist*, 32 (2005), p.46

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lietaer and Stephen Demeulenaere, 'Sustaining Cultural Vitality in a Globalizing World: The Balinese Example' (2010) < [http://www.lietaer.com/images/iise5\\_postscript.pdf](http://www.lietaer.com/images/iise5_postscript.pdf)> (accessed 13 March 2012), p.3

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Arno, 'Cobo and tabua in Fiji: Two forms of cultural currency in an economy of sentiment', p.46

particularly social and economic capital.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, cultural capital acquisition is largely inward-looking, primarily concerned with families and other narrowly-based social groups desiring to reproduce and transmit their cultural capital through matrimonial, fertility, economic, and educational strategies designed to perpetuate familial status or ossified social stratification cross-generationally.<sup>5</sup> Also adding to these concepts of cultural capital are Bourdieu and Passeron's assertion that educational systems help to reproduce structure of social stratification as a means of legitimising class differences whilst maintaining '*social order*'.<sup>6</sup> In terms of connecting educational and other inward-looking reproductive forms of cultural capital, this form of capital in all its manifestations maintains and strengthens its value through holding it strictly within the family or the narrow social group. As such, cultural capital is primarily used as a barrier to keep those without inherited cultural capital from acquiring it, maintaining the social standing of high-status families and/or significant social stratification in the process.

In contrast, cultural currency addresses how people use knowledge to create various, and often simultaneous, types of social cohesion. Cultural currency can be conceptualised as aspects of culture that bind people together as opposed to cultural capital that is largely divisive and barrier-based. This chapter will focus on cultural currency as opposed to cultural capital because cultural currency is primarily about how culture is used rather than acquired. It is through understanding how cultural currency was deployed by Northamptonshire Caribbeans that greater knowledge of their consumption will be obtained, particularly related to the various aspects of their consumption shared with others, Caribbeans and/or non-Caribbeans. In terms of cultural currency and

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<sup>4</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 1984; pp.81, 87, 102

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason on the Theory of Action*, 1984; p.19

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Sage Publications, 1990), pp.164, 192

consumption connections, succeeding sections of this chapter will analyse how consumer items and non-material forms of consumption were used to create and exchange cultural currencies. Delineating and analysing cultural currencies facilitates understanding connections between consumption and identity through comprehending how social and cultural influences and aspirations shape consumption acquisition, sharing and experiences.

In defining cultural currency, Taylor states that it, 'describes the information we acquire and then trade – or give away – to start, maintain, and nurture relationships with our fellow humans.'<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Carruthers identifies cultural currency circulation as a medium of exchange within the contexts of verbal and intellectual expression whilst Shafer notes that it has to be spent in order to be obtained.<sup>8</sup> Media enterprise/business contexts also augment the prior interpretations by noting that exchanging ideas is a form of cultural currency.<sup>9</sup> This consensus strongly indicates that cultural currency **must** be shared to be valuable.

Another cultural currency concept involves sharing knowledge as a mechanism to proclaim status.<sup>10</sup> Having a defined list of knowledge and/or physical insignia could also be considered forms of cultural currency.<sup>11</sup> Based on a

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Taylor, 'Seeking Social Currency', *The Artful Manager*, 28 August 2008 <<http://www.artsjournal.com/artfulmanager/2008/08>> (accessed 13 March 2012); Jack Shafer, 'What's Really Killing Newspapers: They're no longer the best providers of social currency', *Slate*, 1 August 2008 <[http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/press\\_box/2008/08/whats\\_really\\_killing\\_newspapers.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/press_box/2008/08/whats_really_killing_newspapers.html)> (accessed 13 March 2012)

<sup>8</sup> Jack Shafer, 'What's Really Killing Newspapers: They're no longer the best providers of social currency'; Beth Carruthers, 'Cultural Currency' <<http://culturalcurrency.ca/AboutCulturalCurrency.html>> (accessed 13 March 2012)

<sup>9</sup> Maria Sururr, 'The cultural entrepreneurship lifestyle' (2008) <http://www.mediaenterprise.co.uk/2008/02/29/maria-sururr-the-cultural-entrepreneurship-lifestyle/> (accessed 13 March 2012)

<sup>10</sup> Suzanne Howard, 'Stories as Cultural Currency', *Ideo* (2009) [www.patterns.ideo.com/images/uploads/pdf/PATTERNS\\_currency\\_vol1.pdf](http://www.patterns.ideo.com/images/uploads/pdf/PATTERNS_currency_vol1.pdf) (accessed 11 August 2010)

<sup>11</sup> Jim Emerson, '101-102 Movies You Must See Before ...', *Chicago Sun-Times*, 20 April 2006; C.H. Kwan, 'Towards Asian Currency Stability', *Tokyo Research Institute of Economy, Trade & Industry, IAA (RIETI)* (2004) <[http://www.rieti.go.jp/en/rieti\\_report/037.html](http://www.rieti.go.jp/en/rieti_report/037.html)> (accessed 13 March 2012)

summary of the prior mentioned literature, 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. Providing this definition will enhance development of conceptual lucidity that will be elaborated on as this chapter progresses. As a starting point, Cline's assertion that cultural symbols are important in the creation of an individual sense of self should be appreciated.<sup>12</sup> Cultural symbols and corresponding identity should be further analysed to examine how the mechanisms underpinning cultural currency usage reflects distinct identities in situational, individual and collective contexts.

Through understanding how a monetary currency symbolises cultural currency, a greater comprehension of how both reflect actual and desired identities will be obtained. Also, analysing connections between these forms of currency and identity will help to understand how the concepts of cultural currency were deployed by local Caribbeans as a reflection of identity. To provide some context, 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.<sup>13</sup> However, sentimental

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<sup>12</sup> Austin Cline, 'Common Arguments Against Gay Marriage: Moral and Religious Arguments', about.com (2010) <[www.atheism.about.com/od/gaymarriage/p/ContraGayMarria.htm](http://www.atheism.about.com/od/gaymarriage/p/ContraGayMarria.htm)> (accessed 13 March 2012)

<sup>13</sup> Yvonne van Everdingen and W. Fred 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*

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.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, individual concerns of personal mortality could lead to preferences for cultural symbols perceived as '*mine*' or '*ours*'.<sup>15</sup>

National monetary currencies are symbols of national fitness and autonomy, as well as collective positive self-esteem, national differentiation and continuity.<sup>16</sup> 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 encompassing various 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 their money to investments

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*Economic Psychology*, 19 (1998), pp.725, 721-740; David Routh and Carole Burgoyne, 'Being in two minds about a single currency: A UK perspective on the euro' *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 19 (1998), pp.743, 741,754

<sup>14</sup> Yvonne van Everdingen and W. Fred van Raaij, 'The Dutch people and the euro: A structural equations analysis relating national identity and economic expectations to attitudes towards the euro', p.725

<sup>15</sup> Eva Jonas, Immo Fritsche and Jeff Greenberg, 'Currencies as cultural symbols – an existential psychological perspective on reactions of Germans toward the Euro', *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 26 (2005), p.144

<sup>16</sup> Katja Meier Pesti and Erich Kirchler, 'Attitudes towards the Euro by national identity and relative national status', *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 24 (2003), pp. 294, 293-299

perceived to be safer during times of turbulence.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>

The connection 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. Succeeding sections of this chapter will illustrate and illuminate how Northamptonshire Caribbeans used consumption in particular ways to improve their cultural currency valuations.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Afro-Caribbean identity was created in Britain, largely as a result of ethnically-based ostracism, including, '... *overt contempt for blacks during the late 1940s and early 1950s.*'<sup>19</sup> Such hostility led to people of Caribbean origin to organise and develop an ethnicity as Caribbeans that did not exist in the Caribbean itself. These factors led many Afro-Caribbean people to create this identity with novel cultural currencies being used to manifest it. Just as the euro's creation to manifest a pan-European identity through this monetary currency was done in large part to compete with American

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<sup>17</sup> Dmitri Vayanos, 'Flight to Quality, Flight to Liquidity and the Pricing of Risk' (2004) <<http://www.nber.org/papers/w10327.pdf>> (accessed 13 March 2012), p.1-2, 32; Bulent Guler and Umit Ozlale, 'Is there a flight to quality due to inflation uncertainty?' *Physica A*, 345 (2005), pp.603-604, 603-607; John Dale and Mark Powell, 'Flight to Quality', *J.M. Finn & Co. Charity Asset Management Newsletter*, March 2008, pp.1-2

<sup>18</sup> Melik Kaylan, 'The Art Market's Flight to Quality' *Forbes*, 29 November 2000, <[www.forbes.com/2000/11/29/1129lifestyle.html](http://www.forbes.com/2000/11/29/1129lifestyle.html)> (accessed 16 August 2010); James Goodwin, 'A Flight to Quality And Beyond' *Arts Research UK*, (2008) [http://www.artsresearch.org.uk/Art\\_Investment\\_in\\_March\\_2008.pdf](http://www.artsresearch.org.uk/Art_Investment_in_March_2008.pdf) (accessed 14 March 2012) (pp.1-2)

<sup>19</sup> Gladstone Mills, Foreword in Lloyd Braithwaite's *Colonial West Indian Students in Britain*, pp. x-xi

hegemony<sup>20</sup>, cultural currencies created and used by local Caribbeans existed in large part as a means of resistance to British and/or 'White' cultural hegemony. Such use of cultural currencies by local Caribbeans will be analysed in succeeding sections of this chapter.

### **Acquisition and sharing**

An integral part of cultural currency use and exchange involves the acquisition and sharing of it. As established in the author's definition of cultural currency provided in the last section, knowledge can also be considered a form of cultural currency. In terms of using information as cultural currency by local Caribbeans, allotments are an example. Allotments were discovered locally by word-of-mouth information about how to obtain them.<sup>21</sup> More generally however, allotments have a centuries-old history, existing in roughly their current form since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century St. Ann's Allotments in Nottingham credited as being the oldest in Britain.<sup>22</sup> General historical and local Caribbeans' usage of allotments correlates because both state allotments existed to supplement, or more correctly, ameliorate low wages.<sup>23</sup> Many Northamptonshire Caribbeans had allotments, including an example of one being passed from George Cleghorn to an unidentified friend, with Cleghorn receiving some of its yield from this friend after he had relinquished his garden, most likely due to old age.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Li Wenhao, 'Currency Competition Between Euro and US Dollar', *Business Institute Berlin* (2004) <[http://www.mba-berlin.de/fileadmin/doc/Working\\_Paper/working\\_paper\\_18.pdf](http://www.mba-berlin.de/fileadmin/doc/Working_Paper/working_paper_18.pdf)> (accessed 13 March 2012), pp. 5, 17; Breffini O'Rourke, 'Dollar And Euro Compete For Global Trust', *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 28 June 2005 <<http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1059556.html>> (accessed 13 March 2012)

<sup>21</sup> Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley

<sup>22</sup> 'Oldest Allotments in Britain', BBC, (2009)

<[http://www.bbc.co.uk/nottingham/content/articles/2009/06/04/st\\_anns\\_allotments\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nottingham/content/articles/2009/06/04/st_anns_allotments_feature.shtml)> (accessed 25 January 2012)

<sup>23</sup> 'Oldest Allotments in Britain', BBC, (2009); Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley

<sup>24</sup> NBHP/2004/142; Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

In addition, family connections were cited as being strengthened through allotments because, accordingly to one interviewee, ' *It's something for the whole family to do because it's quite a good form of recreation.*' <sup>25</sup> Outside of family links, allotments helped to develop communal feelings amongst local Caribbeans through giving each other food grown on them, especially fresh pumpkin used in various forms of Caribbean cuisine.<sup>26</sup> Alphanso Bryan had an allotment and his brother Ivan Bryan had a double allotment between himself and his wife. Both Bryan brothers were cited by Morcea Walker as giving her food from their allotments, which partly helped to develop their friendships.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Ivan Bryan used his family allotments to provide support to ACES through giving this organisation some of its produce.<sup>28</sup> In cultural currency terms, allotments facilitated providing opportunities for developing friendships and family connections through working the plots as a family, as well as giving away some of its yields to friends and/or organisations, solidifying personal and co-ethnic group connections as a result. Taylor defines cultural currency as information we give away in order to develop personal relationships.<sup>29</sup> These allotment examples support but transcend this definition because not only information was used in terms of discovering how to obtain allotments; yields from these allotments were also used to cement friendships whilst providing support to a co-ethnic organisation in the case of Ivan Bryan with ACES. The cultural currency aspects of Northamptonshire Caribbeans' usage of allotments rests not only on sharing information about the allotments, which was in-line with general British trends in this era, but also in the sharing of allotment yields both amongst individual co-ethnics, as well as being used to support at least one local Caribbean organisation, ACES. In summary, information **and** material items can be given away as forms of cultural currency to nurture personal

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<sup>25</sup> Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley

<sup>26</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.41

<sup>28</sup> NBHP/2003/23ai-aii

<sup>29</sup> Andrew Taylor, 'Seeking Social Currency'

relationships with others, as the allotment examples of sharing information about them, as well as its yields, illustrates. Simultaneously sharing information and material items provides a significant additional layer to Taylor's cultural currency assertion mentioned in the prior section.

Cultural currency also was used in relation to blues. As mentioned in chapters 3 and 4, discovering information about these blues required Caribbean or Black people to give information regarding the places and times of them to others, usually to other co-ethnics. In cultural currency terms, this information was only valuable when shared with others, consistent with Shafer's assertion that cultural information has to be spent in order to be valuable as cultural currency.<sup>30</sup> If blues are to be analysed in cultural currency terms, spending this currency occurred when information about blues was shared as part of the social relationships Caribbeans had, locally and otherwise. The latter point is supported more generally by Arno in his argument that cultural currency is at least partly defined by social relationships.<sup>31</sup> Various types of social relationships occurred amongst local Caribbeans in the sharing of information about blues with the consensus that this information was used to pull other co-ethnics towards this form of entertainment, celebrating being part of partaking in blues as a celebration of Caribbean identity through enjoying Caribbean and Black musical forms and cuisine.

Actually experiencing blues also had cultural currency manifestations. Although BBC did play some Motown and other African-American music, reggae, calypso and hip-hop were ignored. Supporting this assertion is Shabba Ranks' *Pirates' Anthem* complaints about the BBC, as well as acknowledgment of

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<sup>30</sup> Jack Shafer, 'What's Really Killing Newspapers: They're no longer the best providers of social currency'

<sup>31</sup> Andrew Arno, 'Cobo and tabua in Fiji: Two forms of cultural currency in an economy of sentiment', p.46

resistance to BBC's failure to play Caribbean music through the pirate radio movement in Britain:

*Blime you chap who turned the radio up? (in an English accent)  
... Them a call us pirates, them a call us illegal broadcasters,  
them a try to stop us but they can't. One station, them a run  
England, two station them a run England, three station, it's a  
prison nation. Everybody want to listen to the B station ... Down  
in England we got lots of radio stations playing the people's  
music night and day. Reggae, calypso, hip-hop or disco, the  
latest songs today is what we play ... BT (British government) try  
to stop us, but they can't ... Passing laws, they're planning  
legislation, trying their best to keep the music down ... We only  
play the music others won't, on and off, off and on, on and off  
and on.*<sup>32</sup>

Shabba Ranks asserts that Caribbean music was not being allowed to be played in Britain despite it having some popularity. However, akin to blues being in part a response to social exclusion from pubs and clubs, Ranks' acknowledgement of the pirate radio movement in England is a response to the failure of the BBC, as well as the government, to allow popular Caribbean music to be played in the 1980s and earlier. This symbolises some of the dichotomies between Caribbean and British cultural currencies in this era. Also, blues and the pirate radio movement manifest themselves in cultural currency terms because both were not fixed, in many cases because of police pressure. Knowledge of blues and the pirate radio movement both used cultural currency in the form of sharing information about these forms of entertainment, usually

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<sup>32</sup> Shabba Ranks, *Pirates' Anthem* (New York: Epic, 1992)

with other Caribbeans. Gilroy asserts similarly to Shabba Ranks in noting Black Britain did not have significant avenues to play Black music until the 1980s pirate radio movement, with even fewer opportunities beforehand.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Gilroy argues that Black cultures in Britain in the 1980s and earlier used music in the following manner:

*Consumption is turned outwards; no longer a private, passive or individual process it becomes a procedure of collective affirmation and protest in which a new authentic public sphere is brought into being. ... Consumption takes places at times and locations which are expressive of deeper struggle.*<sup>34</sup>

Although blues were usually held in private homes, the public dimension of blues is indisputable in large part because they were normally open to anyone who knew about them, as well as having money to pay entrance costs and to purchase food and drink. In cultural currency terms, blues were important because listening to music and eating food in the home of a fellow co-ethnic that would have been a relative stranger otherwise. Furthermore, blues were symbolic of sharing culture because other forms of consumption were restricted by the BBC playing very little Black music that Caribbeans wished to listen to outside of some African-American music whilst being frequently barred from pubs and clubs. The ‘*underground*’ nature of blues provided a backdrop for another form of cultural currency. Also connecting cultural currency with blues is Gilroy’s argument that Black ‘*underground*’ entertainment such as blues was part of:

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<sup>33</sup> Paul Gilroy, *Small acts: thoughts on the politics of black cultures*, p.252

<sup>34</sup> Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The cultural politics of race and nation*, p.210

*... the critique of the economy of time and space which is identified with the world of work and wages from which blacks are excluded and from which they, as a result, announce and celebrate their exclusion. In these patterns of consumption, the night time is the right time.*<sup>35</sup>

Blues were part of co-ethnic celebration of resistance to ethnic exclusion. Black people in Britain used their cultural currency in terms of sharing information regarding blues overwhelmingly amongst Black people whilst holding such events largely away from White people they saw as frequently antagonistic to Black people. The cultural currency of blues required sharing the entire experience together in the process of gaining intra-ethnic cultural currency through the entire experience of blues from both informational and experiential perspectives. Local Caribbeans were part of this through the plethora of examples of partaking in Northamptonshire blues, as well as those held outside the county.

Sharing or giving away information as a form of cultural currency is not exclusive to intra-ethnic cultural currency. WIPA having 20-30 percent White children in its summer supplementary scheme with the deliberate intention of introducing 'Blackness' to them is indicative of using the strong intra-ethnic cultural currency of celebrating various aspects of Black/Caribbean cultures to gain inter-ethnic cultural currency.<sup>36</sup> Resulting cultural currency gains correlated with levels of intra-ethnic cultural currency valued inter-ethnically. USC deliberate use of the word 'United' in its name was also intended to use strong intra-ethnic cultural currency to obtain strong inter-ethnic cultural currency through simultaneous unity amongst Caribbean people whilst wishing

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<sup>35</sup> Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The cultural politics of race and nation*, p.210

<sup>36</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley

to be united with the larger community.<sup>37</sup> Reflecting this dual use of cultural currency was celebrating Caribbean cultures and sporting success in ways that displayed co-ethnic strength alongside allowing White people in the Club, including local police officers. Furthermore, sharing intra-ethnic cultural currency in this manner also served to proclaim the status of local Caribbeans within Northamptonshire, which the next section will address.

### **Proclamation of status through cultural currency**

Howard argues that cultural currency can be used through sharing knowledge in order to proclaim status.<sup>38</sup> In terms of local Caribbeans' usage of cultural currency in this manner, two elements can be identified; individual declarations of status as important individuals in the Afro-Caribbean community, as well as the overall status of Afro-Caribbeans both locally and nationally in terms of them collectively being contributors to Northamptonshire and Britain generally. Also of important mention will be how celebrating co-ethnic strength through such proclamations of status affected co-ethnic and inter-ethnic cultural currencies.

Individuals' proclamation of status as alpha members of the local Caribbean community include Mike Prescod's claim that his presence was requested by parents of Black children that were arrested. This was part of his testimony that portrayed this image.<sup>39</sup> June White Gulley's repeated mention of her being the first Afro-Caribbean police officer in Northamptonshire symbolises her desire to portray herself as a local co-ethnic leader.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, declaring that a

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<sup>37</sup> Alphonso Bryan interviewed by George Watley; Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley; Joseph Dixon interviewed by George Watley

<sup>38</sup> Suzanne Howard, 'Stories as Cultural Currency'

<sup>39</sup> Mike Prescod interviewed by George Watley

<sup>40</sup> Gulley did not mention this during the author conducted interview, but has repeated this claim on numerous occasions to a variety of audiences.

great aunt was the founder of the first Black church in Bristol whilst claiming to witness a 1973 Bob Marley performance in Northampton when no other Caribbean person interviewed claimed to have witnessed, indicates June White Gulley's deliberate portrayal of herself as a very important local Afro-Caribbean person.<sup>41</sup> Also implicit in this portrayal is that the testimony she gave during her interview should be given greater credibility because of her multiple claims of connections to groundbreaking aspects of Afro-Caribbeans in Northamptonshire and Britain. Prescod's and Gulley's portrayals are part of their impression management akin to Goffman's assertion that individuals use (self) presentation to maintain and develop collective solidarity through consensus constructed images.<sup>42</sup> Their portrayal sought to use the cultural currency of their information and connections as part of management impression that sought to highlight their alpha roles in the local Caribbean community. In summation, information was shared to maintain important status as Northamptonshire Caribbeans. This ties in with Taylor's assertion that cultural currency is given away to maintain and nurture human relationships alongside Arno's contention that cultural currency is defined in large part by social relationships correlating with such currency.<sup>43</sup>

The assemblage of goods can also be used to proclaim status as respectable Afro-Caribbeans. Locally, the author witnessed this through interviews conducted in participants' homes. In cultural currency terms, the Afro-Caribbean front room represented the ability to offer hospitality, particularly with the prominent display of various filled bottles of alcohol in the living and/or dining room. Such alcohol would either be rum known in the Caribbean (for example the Barbadian Cockspur or the Jamaican Appleton brands) or

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<sup>41</sup> June White Gulley interviewed by George Watley; NBHP/2002/4

<sup>42</sup> Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, pp.88, 108

<sup>43</sup> Andrew Taylor, 'Seeking Social Currency' ; Andrew Arno, 'Cobo and tabua in Fiji: Two forms of cultural currency in an economy of sentiment', p.46

relatively expensive brands of spirits such as Chivas Regal or Canadian Club. Demonstrating this symbolic ability through the display of alcohol was important to Caribbeans because:

*That was our task wasn't it? We've come from a far land, people could drop in anytime. The shame would be if we couldn't offer them, as I did you, a hot drink or a glass of rum or, you know, a glass of something. And that tradition is passed down.*<sup>44</sup>

The cultural currency aspect of displaying alcohol prominently in the home reflected the ability of the host Caribbean person to share culturally accepted or respected goods with his or her friends or family. This representation was not in the display of any single item. Rather, it was the combination of items on display that represented this ability amongst Caribbeans. More generally with Caribbeans in Britain, cultural currency was distinctively deployed in their homes through the combination of clearly visible Caribbean and/or relatively expensive alcohol displayed in glass cabinets and/or a rolling drinks trolley with a matching ice bucket frequently shaped like a pineapple or some other tropical fruit.<sup>45</sup> Shame was the inverse form of cultural currency as mentioned in the earlier quotation. The failure to symbolise the ability to provide hospitality through lacking such a display would indicate the hosts' minimal cultural currency and corresponding low social status as Caribbeans.

Another layer connecting proclamation of status and cultural currency is using such proclamations to maintain and cultivate the status of Afro-Caribbeans as contributors to Northamptonshire specifically, as well as Britain more generally. Also within this connection is that such proclamations of status also reflected

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<sup>44</sup> Morcea Walker interviewed by George Watley, 23 August 2011

<sup>45</sup> Michael McMillan, *The Front Room: Migrant Aesthetics in the Home*, p.44-46

Caribbean strength from Northamptonshire and national perspectives. Supporting this argument is Ulric Gravesande's statement that:

*I think I need to make sure that history is told properly (about the United Social Club) ... And we had from then moved all throughout the Midlands and people would come to Northampton, you know, from these other places, Black folks. And they would say man you all are doing so good with this thing. We must go back and they learn from us and they went back, Coventry. They had one in Nottingham. I could remember Birmingham came down even and Birmingham was big! There were lots of Black people there, even before Northampton, but they hadn't had this unanimity because we were very small and we were able to do it. And they went back and they did successfully.<sup>46</sup>*

In cultural currency terms, Gravesande's proclamation of status derives from claiming that Northamptonshire Caribbean people through USC created the impetus for co-ethnics elsewhere in Britain to develop similar organisations, with local Caribbeans being pioneers in this regard according to the gist of his testimony. Despite there not being any corroborating evidence confirming Gravesande's claims, mentioning such claims is clearly a proclamation of the status of Northamptonshire Caribbeans as contributors to co-ethnic culture in Britain. Sharing this information with the knowledge it was being recorded for public consumption was a proclamation of status consistent with Taylor's assertion that knowledge sharing dedicated towards proclaiming status is a form of cultural currency.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ulric Gravesande interviewed by George Watley

<sup>47</sup> Andrew Taylor, 'Seeking Social Currency'

Proclamations of status as a form of cultural currency were also somewhat more subtly mentioned by participants. In terms of language, Horace Cohen mentioned Caribbean and Black influences on British dialect and eating by noting:

*I heard Levi Roots said that even in some areas of London now he hear the White youth have got the slang of the Caribbean. I think even me personally I can see a young White youth on the street. I can relate to him quicker now with the music influence that gone in him because he's got the lyrics already. He said to me, yo man. What's up man? And you know what I mean, spoken a hundred miles an hour ... And he would say to me, like, what's gwan in? Which was in the Caribbean, what's going on? ... But gwan, and he's turned it now and say what's gwan in. So you know what I mean, as soon as I see them I can relate to them ... When it come to food now they sort of like, they love the Caribbean food. I mean even when I go to London, I go to London at least once a month for my sister and brother and you go into a Caribbean restaurant and every nationality sitting down in there eating.<sup>48</sup>*

The key word informing the analysis of Cohen's proclamation of status is relate. Cohen could relate to White youth when they used Caribbean dialect because of the common link of appreciating similar music. This is important is cultural currency terms because noting how Caribbeans have influenced at least some British people in terms of dialect is a proclamation of status. Cohen is stating that Caribbeans have contributed to British language usage in this context.

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<sup>48</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

Furthermore, Cohen's noting large numbers of British people eating Caribbean food, as in restaurant food as he mentioned, is a sign that Caribbeans have contributed to the eating tastes of British people generally. This latter point is consistent with other interviewees that noted many White people loved eating Caribbean food; particularly curry goat, plantain and rice and peas.<sup>49</sup> In cultural currency terms, sharing this information as various participants have, are proclamation of status manifestations used specifically with the intention of impressing on the interviewer and the consumers of this history that Caribbeans have made these contributions to Britain, increasing their co-ethnic collective status in the process.

Proclamations of status as forms of cultural currency can also be unstated or softly stated, with such proclamations being implicit as part of the impression management aligned with Goffman's assertion that individuals desire to look '*presentable*' to others when seen by them.<sup>50</sup> The two longest interviews conducted exhibited the most facets of these unstated or softly stated proclamations. The polish of Morcea Walker's diction and eloquence during interviews, as well as in numerous interactions the author had with her, reflects status as a highly experienced and qualified teacher well-respected in the local community. This, combined with the over four hours of interviewing Walker, gives the impression that her status as a professional, well-respected local Caribbean is justified, strengthening the value of such information she gave during interviews. Such information were proclamations of status in personal and co-ethnic terms as an alpha member of the local Caribbean community. These proclamations of status were a reflection of, whether intentional or unintentional, Walker's portrayal of a respectable image as a professional local

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<sup>49</sup> Churchill Ellis interviewed by George Watley; Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley; Pat Sinclair interviewed by George Watley

<sup>50</sup> Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, p.126

Caribbean woman whilst the knowledge she had of local co-ethnics generally would have added weight because of her status in the community.

Pat Sinclair, the other interviewee the author interviewed for over three hours, also demonstrated unstated and relatively softly stated proclamations of status through sharing knowledge. Sinclair shared more knowledge of national and international Black issues than Walker. Through sharing such knowledge, she clearly gave the impression of being very informed about Black history, especially through the books she read, as well as experiences she had in London as an activist in the Black Power movement and South East London Parents Organisation.<sup>51</sup> In cultural currency terms, the impression management both Walker and Sinclair clearly exhibited sought to proclaim the status of Caribbean and Black people as intelligent contributors to local and national history whilst presenting themselves as very knowledgeable through not only the information they gave, but also in their expressed eloquence and clarity. Such proclamations of status connections with cultural currency also derive from the intention of both participants to present this information for public consumption in ways that would appeal to non-Caribbeans, seeking to increase the inter-ethnic cultural currency of Caribbeans through helping non-Caribbeans to understand the strong cultural currency local and national Caribbeans possessed whilst portraying Caribbean and Black people in Britain as intelligent contributors to Northamptonshire and Britain.

### **Cultural currency flight to quality**

In addition to using proclamations of status as cultural currency, individuals and informal groupings of Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans practiced cultural flight to quality as a reflection of their identities as Caribbean, Black and British

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<sup>51</sup> NBHP/2003/40

people, with such reflections having cultural currency manifestations. Already established in chapter 4 are the feelings two important MFM members, Cohen and Jabulani, had in terms of alienation towards Britain. However, flight to quality concepts help to delineate and analyse aspects of Afro-Caribbean culture developed in post-War Britain that reflected the inability of many Caribbean people to be comfortable socially in Britain. Flight to quality will be deployed within particular concepts involving cultural currency. This deployment specifically relates to how Caribbeans acquired and used cultural currency as a reflection of fears of losing their identity and/or social value as Caribbean, Black and/or British people.

An example of cultural currency acquisition and usage relates to local sound system entertainment. Northamptonshire's link and contribution to the Afro-Caribbean sound system challenge cup circuit commenced 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 Hall <sup>52</sup>, Junior Mayhew and Eddie White, competed nationally against sound systems including V-Rocket of Nottingham and others in Derby, Coventry, Oxford and Birmingham. <sup>53</sup> 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. <sup>54</sup> The other half was purchased by a London-based person named Shaka, with an unofficial non-compete agreement between these purchasers that allowed the

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<sup>52</sup> 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.

<sup>53</sup> June White-Gulley interviewed by George Watley; Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

<sup>54</sup> June White-Gulley interviewed by George Watley

Northampton-based entertainers to perform in the Midlands and Shaka to do so in the Home Counties and London.<sup>55</sup> Local individuals who took part in producing the sound system culture 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. In cultural currency flight to quality terms, sound systems existed and developed because those producing and partaking in these events sought to celebrate Caribbean and Black identities and cultures in Britain in part to flee from the ostracism they experienced in other aspects of their lives, especially denial and denigration of Caribbean and Black cultures expressed in numerous facets of British society, including in compulsory schooling of which the earlier chapter perspicaciously illustrated.

These sound system events also helped to develop intra-ethnic cultural currency by:

*... generat(ing) 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.*<sup>56</sup>

In other words, these sound systems were not merely about entertainment, but helped to develop social and political networks through the common cultural currency of simultaneous struggles against ethnically-based discrimination. These networks in national contexts helped to create and develop intra-ethnic cultural currency through cultural flight to quality reflecting embryonic

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<sup>55</sup> Ras Jabulani interviewed by George Watley, 10 September 2010

<sup>56</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley

identities as Afro-Caribbean people with Northamptonshire Caribbeans playing an important role.

Contrasting with entertainment experiences, Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbean acquisition and exchange of intra-ethnic 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 feel starved of Black history and created a strong impetus to learn more about Black history in order to gain intra-ethnic cultural currency.<sup>57</sup>

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-third and one-half of Afro-Caribbeans were in exogamous marriages and partnerships from the 1980s onward.<sup>58</sup>

Elimination of severe social exclusion commencing significantly in the 1980s with high rates of exogamous relationships indicates that intra-ethnic currency became relatively less valuable whilst inter-ethnic cultural currency that paid

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<sup>57</sup> Horace Cohen interviewed by George Watley; June White-Gulley interviewed by George Watley; Weekes Baptiste interviewed by George Watley; NBHP/2002/1; NBHP/2004/140ai-aii

<sup>58</sup> Harry Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience*, p.17; Mary Chamberlain, *Family Love in the Diaspora*, p.219

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 inter-ethnic nightlife organised by Afro-Caribbean people in the 1980s and afterwards than before. Further evidence of inter-ethnic cultural currency gaining value at the expense of intra-ethnic cultural currency is the decline and demise of WIPA and MFM by the 1990s, with USC's occurring much later, mainly because of the vestige of past cricket success.

Furthermore, many individual local Afro-Caribbeans moving from adolescence to adulthood, in contrast to the men 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 ethnically invisible through their qualifications and job performance, which is consistent with Fanon's racial epidermal schema indicating that many Black people wished for transparency within Europeanised or 'White' societies.<sup>59</sup> In cultural currency flight to quality terms, some local Caribbeans sought 'White' or other perceptually British cultural currencies because these were perceived to be more valuable than 'Black' or Caribbean cultural currencies. Lloyd Kelly exemplifies this when 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?*

*(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*

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<sup>59</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p.112

*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.*<sup>60</sup>

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. Because of this, Kelly desired cultural currency that reflected his British identity, as opposed to his Jamaican, Caribbean and/or Black identities because the former was seen to be more valuable than the latter ethnic identities. Another example of desiring ethnic invisibility through job performance 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*

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<sup>60</sup> Lloyd Kelly interviewed by George Watley

*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.*<sup>61</sup>

Although ethnically-based discrimination was not directly mentioned, both the author and this interviewee knew that such discrimination 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.<sup>62</sup> Striving for employment success is not bound to ethnicity in itself. However, feeling the necessity of having to work significantly harder than others due to ethnocentric attitudes, or perceptions thereof, manifests itself in the mindset of someone attempting to overcome ethnically-based discrimination by aspiring to become ethnically invisible as a Black person through superior job performance. The flight to quality this participant exemplified through earning a qualification because of the discrimination she faced is indicative of wishing to gain 'White' cultural currency through educational success, reducing the perception of the negativity associated with 'Blackness' as experienced in her life. 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 ethnic transparency as a means of dealing with discriminatory social and institutional structures.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, Fanon's conceptualisation notes Black desire for ethnic invisibility manifests itself by wishing for others to

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<sup>61</sup> Myra James (pseudonym) interviewed by George Watley

<sup>62</sup> The author and Myra 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, particularly in employment, before and after the interview. These factors led to the unsaid or implied in the prior quotation.

<sup>63</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p.112

not see their colour or other ethnically-based characteristics which serves as a functional means of dealing with European originated ethnocentric value systems.<sup>64</sup>

In many individuals' cultural currency rationale, flight to quality predicated itself on local Afro-Caribbeans valuing inter-ethnic cultural currency more than strictly intra-ethnic cultural currency. The individuals in Northamptonshire who valued their intra-ethnic cultural currency most highly were significantly more likely to move to either metropolitan areas like London, Birmingham etc. where there were greater concentrations of co-ethnics, or they left Britain permanently to seek higher cultural currency valuations as Black and/or Caribbean people. 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.<sup>65</sup> Using Jamaican patois by a British-born person as this example illustrates, is consistent with Reynolds' assertion that this occurs when Caribbean people felt alienated from British society.<sup>66</sup>

In less extreme terms, understanding how **Ebony** and **Soul Train** were used as cultural currency is important in analysing the dimension of these African-American links to local Afro-Caribbean consumption. The cultural currency flight to quality dimension of this media rests on the desire for this magazine and television programme because of perceived threats to Black cultures in Britain. Chapters 3 and 4 established the extent of penetration **Ebony** and **Soul Train** had amongst local Caribbeans, as well as the psychological sense of

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p.116

<sup>65</sup> Jabulani has performed in England as Ras Jabu. See Ras Jabu interviewed by Slaggy Yout, <<http://vimeo.com/4378152>> (accessed 13 March 2012)

<sup>66</sup> Tracey Reynolds, 'Caribbean families, social capital and young people's diasporic identities', p.1095

community importance in terms of having connections with Black people, even if outside of Britain. These Black cultural icons were important because both were shared to maintain and nurture social relationships amongst local Caribbeans, with Taylor and Shafer noting these factors as crucial in their definitions of cultural currency.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, the national and international dimensions of maintenance and nurturing relationships also had cultural currency manifestations because **Ebony** was used by hairdressers from London in order to share this aspect of Black culture with their provincial co-ethnics whilst **Soul Train** was used amongst family internationally to share and nurture appreciation for Black people and beauty through this music video programme. Furthermore, **Ebony** was also used more strictly as cultural currency by local individuals to share learning about many aspects of Black cultures generally in order to cultivate relationships with co-ethnics based on celebrating Black cultures and people. Most specifically, cultural currency as manifest through these two cultural icons based their values on the amount and in the dimensions of which they were shared. Furthermore, cultural currency values correlated with positive identities as Black people, increasing their mutual strength in the process. In cultural currency flight to quality terms, **Ebony** and **Soul Train** were sought in large part because of the threats local Caribbeans visualised that worked in detriment to portraying Black people and cultures positively.

For some individuals with weaker Black and/or Caribbean identities, cultural currency flight to quality predicated itself on obtaining the dominant culture's cultural currency. Becoming '*English*' manifested itself by, '*... fitting in and going with the crowd.*'<sup>68</sup> Desires to seek the dominant culture's currency were so extreme in one case that fear of rejection from nightclubs led to learning

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<sup>67</sup> Andrew Taylor, 'Seeking Social Currency'; Jack Shafer, 'What's Really Killing Newspapers: They're no longer the best providers of social currency'

<sup>68</sup> Lloyd Kelly interviewed by George Watley

*... 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.*<sup>69</sup>

Despite frequent racist rejection, this extreme attempt to obtain White British cultural currencies exemplifies Bourdieu's theory of hyper-identification with the dominant culture due to being a cultural outsider.<sup>70</sup> Despite the regular threat of rejection because of discrimination, Kelly made consistent and persistent efforts to avoid any potential reasons for being denied entry into Northampton nightclubs even though he knew ethnicity was the actual reason for such repeated rejection. Kelly's forgetting about these experiences results significantly from seeing himself as fully British. However, his actions then powerfully recognised his significantly strong desire to hyper-identify with cultural hegemony.

## Conclusion

Cultural currencies acquired and exchanged by Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans reflected a myriad of circumstances and forces affecting the value of

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<sup>69</sup> Lloyd Kelly interviewed by George Watley

<sup>70</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p.95

such multiple but intersecting currencies. Cultural currencies, unlike their monetary counterparts, **must** be shared to have value. Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans significantly shared various aspects of their culture in large part to demonstrate ethnic pride. Such cultural currencies were often used to obtain regional and national cultural currencies that helped them become genuine parts of local and national communities. Local organisations sought in various ways to use intra-ethnic cultural currency as a means of acquiring and utilizing other cultural currencies, having used strong intra-ethnic cultural currency in exchange for inter-ethnic cultural currencies.

However, use of strong co-ethnic cultural currencies was not universal amongst local Afro-Caribbeans. In practice, some local co-ethnic desires for full integration were reflected by seeking to disappear ethnically through immersing themselves into learning, obtaining qualifications and working harder to succeed in employment because of institutional and societal ethnically-based prejudice. Those Afro-Caribbeans exercising cultural currency flight to quality did so primarily by seeking ethnic invisibility through acquiring various aspects of White British culture, as well as qualifications and potential employment which reflected wishes of invisibility as Black people. Despite differences amongst local co-ethnics in acquiring and sharing cultural currencies, Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans used a rationale of cultural exchange akin to economic models of monetary trading in order to share and exchange a plethora of cultural currencies 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. Overall, cultural currencies' values correlated highly with perceptions of identity.

Cultural currency conceptualisations facilitate understanding of consumer behaviour because it reflects honorific elements of consumption Veblen argued were crucial in determining acceptability to consumers.<sup>71</sup> This chapter adds to Veblen's largely elitist-based assertion through analysing how honorific qualities of items and non-material consumption were defined by ethnicity. Analysing consumer behaviour through cultural currency concepts highlights many identity related concerns implicit and explicit throughout this chapter and the thesis as a whole. Furthermore, understanding connections between ethnicity and concepts of cultural currency facilitates greater comprehension of the significant role identity played in Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption. Understanding cultural currency manifestations augments analysing honorific elements of local Caribbean consumerism in large part because the ethnic dimensions underpinning consumer decisions based its honorific elements significantly on perceptions of the social and intrinsic values of being Black, Caribbean and/or British. Differences in perceptions of cultural currency valuations of aspects of Black and/or Caribbean cultures derived largely from the value, or lack thereof, placed on being Black and/or Caribbean. However, cultural currency values correlate with how identities were perceived, subject to what Rutherford refers to as the, ' ... *interrelationships of differences marked by translation and negotiation.*'<sup>72</sup> Although Rutherford was not referring to cultural currency specifically, the difference in cultural currency valuations of aspects of Black Caribbean and/or British culture amongst local Caribbeans varied because they translated such valuations differently as they individually negotiated their places in local and British society.

Understanding cultural currency assists analysis of consumption because this currency helps to explain the importance of the social and cultural aspects that

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<sup>71</sup> Thorsten Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, p.157

<sup>72</sup> Jonathan Rutherford, 'A Place Called Home: Identity and the Cultural Politics of Difference', p.26

influence consumption. Cultural currency usage is underpinned by sharing, unlike monetary currency which is valued mainly when acquired or displayed without any facet of sharing with others. Northamptonshire Afro-Caribbeans significantly shared their cultural currencies as Black and/or Caribbean people, giving them positive co-ethnic identity. Eventually their co-ethnic cultural currencies were also recognised and valued inter-ethnically. On the other hand, a minority of local Caribbeans did not share nor recognise Black and/or Caribbean cultural currencies, reflecting their perception of these being less valued than '*White*' and/or British cultural currencies. Whatever differences there were amongst individuals' cultural currencies, such valuations reflected the importance, or lack of importance, which individuals and groups placed on their Black and/or Caribbean identities.

## Final Conclusion

Local Caribbeans' consumption interacted with their identities as Caribbean, Black, British and Northamptonshire people. Chapter 3 captured this interaction through 'typical' and 'atypical' aspects of Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption that encapsulates the essence of the multitude of influences connecting consumption with identity. Identities as Black, Caribbean, British and Northamptonshire people intersected, which Chapter 3 illustrated through using the 'typical' and 'atypical' typologies to delineate and analyse how such intersecting identities correlated with their consumption. Permutations of identity as analysed through these typologies were also linked to Northamptonshire residence and experiences outside the county; regional, national and international. Furthermore, McMillan's *The Front Room* provided examples of general Afro-Caribbean material consumption in Britain. These examples were used in this thesis as a reference point to delineate similarities and some differences between national and local Caribbeans' consumer manifestations, particularly as displayed in the home. In addition, changes in consumption over time were revealed through developing the concept that consumption amongst the younger generation of local Caribbeans deviated more widely than their parents' generation in terms of integrating with, whilst segregating from, general Northamptonshire Caribbean and distinctively British aspects of consumption.

Chapter 4 expanded on identity and consumption connections by revealing how the consumer networks of Northamptonshire Caribbeans interacted with their individual and collective senses of community they felt part of as Black, Caribbean, British and Northamptonshire people, individually and collectively. Within this concept, local Caribbeans seeking and having weak ties with Whites and other minority ethnic groups was developed in this chapter, particularly

related to how consumer networks of Northamptonshire Caribbeans were influenced by such ties. Intergenerational differences in consumption were also captured in Chapter 4 through analysing how the combination of strong or weak identities as Black, Caribbean, British and Northamptonshire people deviated more significantly amongst the younger generation than their parents' generation as reflected through their various consumer networks. This intergenerational difference is an important variation within the change in consumption over time theme addressed in Chapter 3.

Education as consumption and education as it shaped consumption were simultaneously important in understanding the interaction between the multiple manifestations of identity as exhibited by Northamptonshire Caribbeans. Connections between education and consumption, particularly related to ethnicity, have been significantly unexplored previously. Chapter 5 transcends this gap in knowledge by demonstrating how education as consumption was significantly underpinned by local Caribbeans constructing identities in resistance to larger institutional and social forces that often worked against them. WIPA's supplementary school programmes, as well as MFM's various uses of more informal learning, illustrated how local Caribbeans used education to resist ethnically-based discrimination they experienced. However, education was not generally used by Northamptonshire Caribbeans to hyper-identify with being Caribbean and/or Black, contradicting Bourdieu's theory that cultural 'outsiders' either hyper-identify with their 'outsider' culture or with cultural hegemony.

The penultimate chapter cultivates concepts involving cultural currency, significantly underexplored in academic contexts. In Chapter 6, cultural currency theories and applications are expounded upon in order to analyse how the social and intrinsic values and combinations of being Black, Caribbean,

British and from Northamptonshire; interacted with Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption. The concept that culture must be shared to have value was illustrated through demonstrating how local Caribbeans shared various aspects of their culture co-ethnically and inter-ethnically; done purposefully to help Caribbeans gain co-ethnic strength whilst working towards gaining respect from non-co-ethnics, particularly Whites. Cultural currency is another prism through which connections between identity and consumption can be viewed; enhancing understanding of how Northamptonshire Caribbeans translated the values of their identities as Black, Caribbean and British people from Northamptonshire, singularly and collectively. This thesis makes an important contribution to conceptualisations of cultural currency and its role in cultivating positive development of the ethnic identity of a minority ethnic group. Greater knowledge of connections between consumption and identity has been developed through understanding the cultural currency local Caribbeans used and created.

Clearly manifest Caribbean and/or Black identities often occurred because of desires to resist the ethnically-based discrimination Caribbeans experienced in various aspects of their lives. Such resistance played a significant role in sparking the creation and development of USC, MFM and WIPA. All three organisations have been extensively analysed because their manifestations of consumption exemplified the rationale of, and purpose for, their existence. These organisations existed for simultaneous reasons of desiring social and educational spaces due to ethnically-based social ostracism whilst celebrating Caribbean identity. The practicalities and conceptualisations underpinning local consumer behaviour reflected and shaped the creation and development of Caribbean ethnicity in Northamptonshire, as well as interpretations of British identity as reflected through consumption.

It is notable that no Northamptonshire Caribbeans' organisations exhibited any ethnically-based barring or exclusion akin to what Black people experienced locally and nationally. Northamptonshire Caribbean organisations celebrated Caribbeanness without ostracising other ethnicities. Furthermore, other socialisation such as blues organised by Caribbeans did not ostracise or exclude anyone from partaking in their events, as local Caribbeans generally sought to include everyone. Significantly influencing this inclusivity was the concept that, amongst many local Caribbeans, having strong knowledge of Black and Caribbean cultures whilst celebrating this would lead to non-Caribbeans having greater respect for Black and Caribbean cultures. Cultural currency as defined and analysed in Chapter 6 illustrated this teleology through recognising and analysing the dimensions of how local Caribbeans used their cultures as a means of exchange in order to obtain greater respect as local and national cultural contributors.

In addition to organisational manifestations of consumption, individuals and non-organisational groups were influenced by their multiple, intersecting identities as Black, Caribbean and British people in their material and non-material consumption. Permutations of identity as Caribbean, Black, British and Northamptonshire people were influenced by their life experiences that played out through their consumer behaviour. Northamptonshire's significance is that it combined relative co-ethnic isolation in terms of Afro-Caribbeans being less than one percent of the county's population alongside consumer networks and influences that developed and were fostered between local Caribbeans and fellow Caribbeans/Black people elsewhere in Britain, as well as internationally. The combination of these factors interacted with Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption. Adding to understanding the blending of co-ethnic local isolation with national and international interactions and influences is that boundaries between Northamptonshire and elsewhere were relatively porous; dependent on

the frequency and scope of interactions local Caribbeans had with friends, family and others away from Northamptonshire. Furthermore, the psychological sense of community felt by local Caribbeans frequently operated asynchronously to non-Caribbean Northamptonshire people more specifically, as well as British people generally. The combination of these factors led to particular types of consumption that reflected idiosyncratic blends of ethnic identities reflecting distinct psychological senses of community felt by local Caribbeans within the concept that relatively porous boundaries between Northamptonshire and elsewhere influenced consumption through the interactions local Caribbeans had with those living elsewhere.

Within the multitude of identity-related influences on Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption, they both were integrated into, as well as contributed towards local consumption amongst the county's population generally. Such integration reflected the adaptability of local Caribbeans to their consumption possibilities that not only reflected residence in Northamptonshire, but also their interactions with co-ethnics elsewhere in Britain and internationally. Many Caribbeans contributed to overall local consumption through being proud of Caribbean cultures, desiring to share this with non-co-ethnics. They wished to be seen as cultural contributors to local, and by extension national, culture through celebrating Caribbean modes of consumption with the larger Northamptonshire population. In addition, local Caribbeans helped to shape material availability in shops, as well as prices of some items such as the increased cost of pig trotters and oxtail after Caribbeans arrived into Northamptonshire in significant numbers.

An additional and surprising finding was that some local Caribbeans spoke in clearly Jamaican accents and dialects indistinguishable from Jamaican-born people. Reynolds also notes the existence of this phenomenon for British-born

Caribbeans.<sup>1</sup> This is notable because the author never heard, or heard of, any North American-born Afro-Caribbeans using Jamaican or any other Caribbean accents or dialects in his childhood or adult life living in New York City. Travels elsewhere, including multiple travels to Toronto, have not uncovered any Caribbeans using Jamaican or other Caribbean accents and dialects. This use of Jamaican accent and dialect connects with identity, or more correctly lacking identification with being British despite being born and/or experiencing a significant part of childhood in Britain. However, the clear use of Jamaican accents and dialect existed amongst three interviewees, as well as other Caribbeans the author has spoken with in Britain. This is particularly notable because Caribbean, or more specifically Jamaican, accents and dialect were used by some British-born Afro-Caribbeans, but not by any North American-born Afro-Caribbeans in the author's extensive life experience living and working in places with a large proportion of Afro-Caribbean people.

Another aspect of identity influencing this historiography is the positionality of the author. His Caribbean background, as well as living in Northampton before commencing research, helped to create and develop affinity with participants, NBHA and the general Northamptonshire Caribbean community. Also, remembering the numerous anecdotes of his late father, as well as from pre-research conversations with some local Caribbeans; assisted this thesis through related references used in this work. In more general contexts these remembrances provided greater insight through which the author understood and analysed various aspects of this research. The author's extensive critical engagement with his positionality is rarely done in historiographical terms related to its significant scope and dimension as it influenced the research and its findings. It is suggested that researchers should delve significantly deeper than is traditionally done regarding the multiple facets of their positionality

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<sup>1</sup> Tracey Reynolds, 'Caribbean families, social capital and young people's diasporic identities', p.1095

regardless of initial perceptions of insiderness and/or outsidersness. Through doing so, researchers should acknowledge and overcome positionality-based limitations whilst recognising and taking advantage of any potentially useful positionality-related benefits. Furthermore, readers of historiography would be able to delineate and evaluate reported findings based on a careful examination of the author's detailed positionality. In its complete scope, this could potentially provide another important analytical prism through which to examine any social science research that involves researchers interacting with research participants.

The use of primary and secondary sources, as well as information obtained from other interviewees both during and before the author's interviewing timeframe, augments the importance and historical relevance of the author-collected oral histories. Oral history as recorded and documented by the author worked alongside primary and secondary sources, as well as prior NBHA interviews, to capture a broad range of history and historical interpretations available contemporaneously. Furthermore, the combination of these varied sources of data alongside often synchronous interpretations of such information ensures that findings reflected the full range of data available to the author. A devil's advocate could argue that oral history like that the author has collected merely reflects re-shaped, constructed memories geared towards particular interpretations of history narrators desired to portray. However, individual oral histories such as have been collected, dovetailed with archival documents, newspapers, magazines, music, other primary and secondary references, ephemera, as well as other interviewees both during the timeframe of interviewing and beforehand. Author-collected oral histories worked alongside all these mentioned types of references to develop the robust historiography illustrated and analysed throughout this thesis.

As with any research, there are limits that should be acknowledged. Most importantly, only survivors were interviewed both in terms of actually living both in that earlier era, as well as living in or visiting Northamptonshire between 2009 and 2011. During the timeframe of interviews, there was a gap of up to 50-plus years at the extreme poles between participants' life experiences and their recorded recollections. In this sense, participants had to '*survive*' through permanent or semi-permanent residence in Northamptonshire. Hiondiou recognises that simultaneously surviving a historical event and decades afterwards has the potential to provide elements of selectivity that hinders capturing a representative sample in collecting oral histories.<sup>2</sup> This research also had this limitation because not only some potential interviewees died between the 1980s and the timeframe of interviewing, but also many potential interviewees moved away from Northamptonshire and were unavailable to be interviewed. Due to these factors, the sample of interviews is not representative.

Local Caribbeans that either left Northamptonshire or died could have provided different and/or dissenting voices to those interviewed. However, this can only be acknowledged whilst not commented on in any detail because interviews that have not occurred cannot be analysed unless explicit reasons for not participating were given. However, a glimpse of potential differences between Northamptonshire Caribbean '*survivors*' in comparison to their '*non-survivors*' can be gleaned from Ras Jabulani's acknowledgement that his father moved permanently back to Jamaica because of his disillusionment and disappointment with England whilst his mother remained because of fearing shame with family if she returned to Jamaica without any trappings of material success.<sup>3</sup> It is possible that '*non-survivors*' could have provided different historical accounts than '*survivors*' in terms of capturing this disillusionment in greater detail.

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<sup>2</sup> Violetta Hiondiou, 'What do starving people eat? The case of Greece through oral history', p.116

<sup>3</sup> NBHP/2002/1

However, this point can only be acknowledged as a possibility instead of an actuality because no '*non-survivors*' were interviewed.

Hiondiou acknowledges that participants could choose to omit some forms of consumption, either unintentionally or due to embarrassment.<sup>4</sup> The author acknowledges similar limitations with participants because of the possibility that some if not many interviewees could have failed to mention certain forms of consumption due to unintentionality or embarrassment. For example, Joe Dixon implicitly alluded to prostitutes going to The Mitre, but specifically never mentioned the word prostitutes or whether he or other Caribbean men procured prostitutes there. However, because of the OHR a non-Caribbean person was interviewed and clearly mentioned prostitutes deliberately frequenting The Mitre to obtain Black American soldier customers. As Caribbeans also visited The Mitre, it is at least theoretically possible that some Caribbean men also acquired prostitutes at this pub but would not want others to know this, particularly participants that were married. Also acknowledged is that other forms of consumption could have been omitted from participants' narratives due to potential embarrassment. Narratives were somewhat limited by this unsaid factor.

Another crucial factor limiting acquiring data is that of self-selectivity. Over 90 percent of interviews were of people exhibiting '*strong*' identities as Caribbean and/or Black people. It is acknowledged that it is highly likely that significantly less than 90 percent of local Caribbeans had, or have, such '*strong*' Caribbean and/or Black identities. The difference between the cross section of participants and those choosing not to participate could rest on this key point. However, as interviewees must opt-in for their voices to be recorded, only those wanting to be heard have been recorded. This should not be perceived as a weakness, rather

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<sup>4</sup> Violetta Hiondiou, 'What do starving people eat? The case of Greece through oral history', pp.124-125

a reflection of the self-selectivity of any research using oral history short of participants being forced or coerced to speak. Even under such circumstances, it is highly doubtful a free-flowing, honest account of historical events reflecting genuine participants' interpretations would be forthcoming. History in the post-modern age can only be written and recorded by those that choose to speak, which is different to the trite quotation that history is written by the victor. Oral history, just like any form of contemporary historiography, is written by those choosing to speak. This historian was limited to these positive decision makers.

Issues surrounding self-selectivity also were reflected in the practical connections between identity and consumption. If more voices of those with weaker Caribbean identities had been obtained, the delineation between strong and weak co-ethnic identity, as well as corresponding consumption, could have been made whilst analysis would have been aided significantly if this occurred. More generally, it is argued that any identity-related research has the potential to be fundamentally flawed in favour of voices reflecting strong identification with the particular group being researched unless rigorous efforts are made to obtain voices of those affiliating with weaker group identity.

In terms of future research, five key strands are identifiable. Firstly, similarities and differences in the consumption of a given minority ethnic group should be delineated and analysed in greater detail. More specifically, differences and/or similarities in consumption between metropolitan and provincial co-ethnics should be delineated and analysed. Furthermore, it would be insightful if future research could analyse cross-regional similarities of specific minority ethnic group or groups in the same country.

Secondly, connections between education and consumption need to be analysed more thoroughly and rigorously. Although Bourdieu mentions some links

between level of education and some aspects of future consumer manifestations, he does not analyse how race and ethnicity influences future consumption, particularly in terms of consuming ethnically-based discrimination in learning and facing it whilst partaking in compulsory schooling. It would be perspicacious if future research delineated and analysed more definitive connections between education and consumption, particularly if racist and/or heavily indoctrinary compulsory schooling was consumed.

Thirdly, concepts of hyper-identification with dominant cultures or what could be regarded as counter-cultures should be further analysed. Bourdieu presents hyper-identification along binary lines. If Bourdieu theory is taken to its logical conclusion, the analysis of Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption should have discovered that hyper-identification occurred because of the existence of co-ethnic organisations. However, non-co-ethnics were accepted within local Caribbean organisations and/or during their events, indicative of lacking hyper-identification. Future research could create and develop polar scales of hyper-identification amongst dominant or counter-cultural groups allowing for individuals or groups to be placed within such poles as opposed to being placed on either side solely, as Bourdieu's theory of hyper-identification asserts. In such a 0-100 or left/right polar scale, various individuals and/or groups could be placed within such a scale based on multiple influences on their hyper-identification and/or factors which could weaken polaristically interpreting hyper-identification. Doing so would give a greater perspective to Bourdieu's argument whilst also supplementing it.

Fourthly, prior research has not identified connections between intra- and inter-ethnic cultural currency valuations as exemplified by a minority ethnic group being able to gain acceptance and respect for their cultures through using cultural currency in order to obtain space and recognition for their specific

ethnic cultures. Future research could identify and analyse the dimensions of how a minority ethnic group use co-ethnic cultural currency to obtain inter-ethnic cultural currency, particularly relative to the dominant socio-cultural group.

Lastly, accents and dialects of Afro-Caribbeans born in Europe or North America should be examined to analyse their identity or lack of affinity with their countries of birth. Future research could determine whether there actually were differences between British-born and North American-born Caribbeans' use of Jamaican or any other Caribbean accents or dialects. If discovered, it could be determined if using such accents and dialects could be functions of lacking affinity with being American or Canadian. If not discovered, connections between use of Jamaican or Caribbean accents and dialects in Britain, as well as failure of co-ethnics doing so in North America, could unearth differences between the Afro-Caribbean experiences in these countries and whether using such accents and dialects differently reflects greater difficulties for Afro-Caribbeans in Britain vis-à-vis North American contemporaries to be accepted and respected in their countries of birth.

This thesis has illuminated similarities **and** differences between Northamptonshire Caribbeans and co-ethnic contemporaries elsewhere in Britain whilst establishing the county's node in the consumer networks of co-ethnics nationally. Furthermore, this thesis sheds significant light on provincial dimensions of Caribbean consumption in Britain that have been lacking beforehand. Identities as Caribbean, Black and British people were central in shaping many aspects of Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption with strong correlations and interactions between identity as reflected by consumption and the shaping of identity through consumption. The local combined with the national and international to create a distinct blend of

consumption that combined the uniqueness of Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption alongside recognising connections between local Caribbeans' consumption and their co-ethnics elsewhere in Britain and overseas. The mixture of local, national and international influences on consumption manifest because of strong synergy between identity, or more correctly identities as Afro-Caribbean, Black, British and Northamptonshire people that reflected and shaped their consumption. The reflection through, and shaping of, consumption due to oscillating interpretations of these various identities, individually and collectively, are indivisible from the other akin to the 'chicken or the egg' analogy. Just as we cannot conclude whether the chicken or the egg comes first, it would be an artificial division to claim that identity was either shaped by, or reflected through, consumption because consumption was highly influenced by both factors simultaneously.

This work contributes to the body of literature on consumption, the history of Black and Caribbean people in post-War Britain, as well as connections between education and cultural currencies in terms of influencing Caribbeans from both consumer and general historical perspectives. Through recognising and analysing all these elements encompassing Northamptonshire Caribbeans' consumption, we can fully appreciate how this ethnic group simultaneously transformed into Caribbean and/or Black British people through their consumption whilst recognising their distinctiveness as Caribbeans from Northamptonshire.

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## Appendix A: participant consent form



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
**Black History**  
P R O J E C T

### Clearance Note and Deposit Instructions

The purpose of this deposit agreement is to ensure that your contribution is added to the Black History Project's collection/archives in strict accordance with your wishes. All materials (the recorded interview, transcripts and any other materials provided by you) will be preserved as a permanent public reference resource in the Northamptonshire County Records Office and for potential use in research, publications, websites/CD-ROMS, education, lectures, exhibitions and broadcasting.

*I hereby assign the copyright in my contribution to the Northamptonshire Black History Project:*

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Print Name: .....

Address: .....  
.....

E-mail: .....

Telephone: .....

Interviewer: .....

Signed: ..... Date: .....

For Office Use ONLY:

Full name of contributor: .....

Accession Number: .....

Entered in database (date): ..... By: .....