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By

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By

Geraldine Brown

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To my children Rachel, Kyle and Gabriella

Our children cannot dream unless they live, they cannot live unless they are nourished, and who else will feed them the real food without which their dreams will be no different from ours?

Audre Lorde, 1984:38

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My warmest thanks and appreciation to

Abstract

In this thesis I adopt an auto/biographical approach to explore the relationship between 'race' racialisation, racism and 'urban gun crime' ('UGC'). I specifically focus on the views and experiences of community activists from African Caribbean communities (ACC) in two localities in the West Midlands. The auto/biographical approach reflects a central motivation for this focus: a concern about the normalisation and popular usage of the term 'UGC' within political and media discourse and the limited attention given to how it reproduces specific racialised notions of the Black criminal 'other' and their communities. Hence, despite, in the UK 'UGC' being put forward as a generic term to capture illegal possession and use of firearms arms (Silvestri, et al., 2009; Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009), it is indelibly linked to Black communities, more specifically to young Black men, who are characterised as workless, fatherless and violent. I was concerned about how this image contributes to a specific understanding and a dominant conceptualisation that informs policy responses underway across a number of inner-city communities (Wood, 2010; Young, 2010; Joseph and Gunter, 2011). In the UK limited attention has been afforded to understanding how 'race,' racism and a process of racialisation are implicated in this specific construction of 'UGC' and ever present in terms of how they dominate the initiatives put forward (Joseph and Gunter, 2011). Utilising critical ethnography, my research presents an insider understanding of 'UGC', informed by meanings and the actions uncovered from men and women who, like me, share a racialised identity and genealogical link to the Caribbean. The empirical data is analysed through a Black feminist theoretical framework enabling an intersectional approach, which examines 'race' alongside social divisions such as gender, class and differences informed by religious belief. The research uncovered a number of insights related to ACC understanding and responses to 'UGC', illuminating the systemic failures that arise as a result of the unwillingness of the state and others in positions of power to consider alternative ways of understanding the relationship between ACC and 'UGC'. The thesis sheds light on the ongoing attempt by ACC for self-definition and to fight racism and the challenges and tensions that exist between Black community organisations and statutory bodies. Thus this thesis offers a unique critical understanding about 'UGC' from the margins.

Chapter 1: Introduction

> Storytelling is a universal human experience through which we learn, maintain culture and community, and bridge collective realities with individual experiences. (Bell, 2010:131)

> Without community, there is no liberation only the most vulnerable and temporary armistice between an individual and her oppression. (Lorde, 1984:159)

I preface my introduction with two concepts which are central to this thesis; 'storytelling' and 'community' are both significant to how individuals and groups experience the social world. Bell (2010) posits that there are universal benefits in telling stories. She argues that in telling stories, not only can we learn about our connections to and with others, we may also gain important insights into ontologies which are often hidden. Lorde (1984) draws attention to how, for some, the notion of community plays a pivotal role. She asserts that, whilst community is something often aligned to individuals' notions of belonging, community can also be an act of resistance, which is invoked by individuals and groups in fighting for freedom and justice. In this thesis, I tell a story about 'urban gun crime' (UGC) from an insufficiently explored vantage point. To this end, I aim to offer an understanding about 'UGC' informed by an analysis of the meanings and the actions uncovered in accounts shared by men and women who, like me, share a racialised identity and genealogical link to the Caribbean

and can be located within or position ourselves within an African Caribbean 'community'.

There are numerous tensions associated with the organisation and allocation of individuals and groups into a 'community' and in Chapter Three, I provide an analysis of the multiple ways of understanding a concept that has been described as ubiquitous (Bell and Newby, 1974; Anderson,1983; Bauman, 2001; Frazer, 1999; Anderson, 1983; Delante, 2006; Blackshaw, 2010). In this thesis, 'community' is utilised as it is by Lorde (1984) as a means of capturing what is shared by individuals or groups engaged in collective action and as a means of illuminating patterns associated with feelings of disempowerment and alienation induced by perceptions of group fragmentation. This thesis is based on a review of relevant literature and empirical work that centres the voices of African Caribbean men and women. The empirical data is analysed through a Black Feminist framework allowing for an intersectional approach, which enables an examination of 'race' alongside social divisions such as gender, class and differences informed by religious belief. I also take an auto/ biographical approach.

In this chapter I set out the scope of my study. I outline the factors that led to my decision to focus on the area of 'UGC', my position in relation to the topic and the benefits to be gained from research that examines 'UGC' from a specific position. The introduction is set out in five interconnecting sections.

1.1 Dominant Discourse: 'Urban Gun Crime'

The central motivation and focus of my thesis was precipitated by concern about an increasing normalisation and popular usage of the term 'UGC'. There is no uniform or overarching definition offered for how we understand the term 'UGC'. In the UK, 'UGC' is a generic term routinely used to encompass all instances in which firearms which may include shotguns, airguns and imitation firearms are used illegally. Further, it is a term not only used in relation to the illegal use of a firearm, but is also used in association with the illegal possession of firearms (Silvestri, et al., 2009; Wood, 2010; Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009). Silvestri et al. (2009) argue that in recent years, there has been a growing popularity in the usage of the term 'UGC;' its coinage and increased usage may be perceived as testament to growing public anxiety stemming from a spate of injuries and deaths of a number of young people and children in a few of Britain's metropolitan cities and the substantial attention such incidents have received in the media. This interest in 'UGC' has been supported by a research community offering a plethora of evidence which helps to perpetuate public and media perceptions that the UK has become the gun capital of Europe, in terms of the propensity for such crimes to occur when compared to the UK's European counterparts and, in doing so, legitimated comparisons of the current situation in the UK with trends witnessed in the USA (Hales, 2006; Pitts, 2007; Bullock and Tiley, 2008; Pitts, 2008). What may be suggested is that, in recent years, the phenomenon of 'UGC' has been elevated as not merely a key criminal justice problem, but as 'a national crisis' (NCIS 2003: 67). Consequently, within certain localities in the UK 'UGC' is earmarked as an issue of increasing public and political concern.

In response to the perceived crisis, 'UGC' has been the subject of much political attention (HM Government, 2008 HM Government, 2009; HM Government, 2010; Home Office, 2010; Home Office, 2011; Home Office, 2013a; Home Office, 2013b; HM Government, 2013, Home Office, 2014). This attention has included legislative changes and the introduction of more punitive sentencing for various firearm offences. In 1997, under the newly elected New Labour Government, there was the introduction of section 287 and 293 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, inserting a new provision into the Firearms Act 1968. This also witnessed the introduction of section 52A, which prescribed a minimum sentence of five years imprisonment in a case of an offender aged 18 or over, or a minimum sentence of three years detention under 91 of the Powers of Criminal court (Sentencing) Act 2000 (long-term detention) for any offender aged 16 at the time the offence was committed (Taylor, 2004). In October 2012, the Home Secretary, Theresa May, announced that there was strong support for the Government to take an even tougher stance on control of prohibited firearms:

> The Government is clear that individuals who manufacture, acquire or purchase, sell or transfer or possess for sale or transfer prohibited guns for criminal use should face a punishment commensurate to the level of harm their actions cause to society. Their actions have a disproportionate effect in our communities and it is right that they should face tougher sentences (Home Office, 2012).

These legislative changes form part of a political attempt to tackle the illegal use of firearms and, in so doing, address the problem of 'UGC.' Hence, alongside the introduction of more punitive sentencing there has also been the introduction of a wider range of preventative strategies that include targeted interventions and increased scrutiny of those suspected of being involved in 'UGC' or of those assessed by practitioners working in the criminal justice system and other public agencies as potentially at risk of involvement in 'UGC' (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009; Young and Wood, 2010; Joseph and Gunter, 2011:4). As such, it is possible to view political, media and the research community as implicated in the validation of a dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC.' Further, this dominant conceptualisation informs strategies implemented across a range of arenas such as; education, youth service, housing and health with an aim at its amelioration (Aldred et al., 2008; Bullock and Tilley, 2008; Pitt, 2008; Sampson, 2008; Pitt, 2009). In effect, across a number of metropolitan cities a concerted attempt has been employed to prevent specific groups of young people getting involved in 'UGC' which Joseph and Gunter (2011) argue has led to the introduction of a 'dizzying array of programmes and initiatives aimed at tackling youth crime and other associated problems of marginalized youth'. They assert that, the introduction of new legislative powers and community based interventions are the upshot of academic and policy driven research which has major implications for Black youths. A political and media driven perception of 'endemic' serious youth violence, has led to widespread anxiety about 'dangerous' black youths living in Britain's major urban localities (Joseph and Gunter, 2011:3).

This dominant discourse is underpinned by a focus on tackling 'gangs' as a key factor in the war against 'UGC'. This reflects how 'gun culture' and/or

increasingly 'gang culture' are the two central explanations which have shaped policy responses across institutions and remain the bedrock for popular understanding (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009). For example, in 2007 the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) produced a report in response to a request from the Home Secretary following a number of gun related fatalities. In the report, they draw attention to the challenges in trying to understand the causes of 'UGC' and acknowledge that answers 'are not straight forward' (2007:4).' Nonetheless, the extract below provides a useful insight into how they perceive the central issue:

> Young people, whom are mainly male, and teenagers, often operating within an organised or semi organised group, using lethal or potentially lethal force, primarily through guns and knives, against other young people, where the motive may or may not be related to gain, but symptomatic of a developing culture of violence (ACPO, 2007:5).

Interestingly, such ideas are not unique to ACPO, but shape thinking across the wider criminal justice system (CJS) and the framework to understand 'UGC' put forward by ACPO's represented an adaptation of the framework used in the same year by the Youth Justice Board (2007).

Whilst there is no explicit attention to 'race' explanations linking 'UGC' to youth, 'gangs,' are dominated by a perception that perpetrators are male, Black, workless, fatherless and violent. This view has gained momentum and now

frames discussions, implicitly and explicitly and underpins a dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' (Wood, 2010; Young, 2010; Joseph and Gunter, 2011). However, interestingly this lens is also being extended to encompass young women with growing political concern about what is perceived as a growing 'gang' culture, 'gang' membership and 'gang' activity amongst girls/young women (Batchelor, 2009; HM, 2011; 201; Firmin, 2011; Brown, 2012; Young, 2012).

'Gun crime' is a term traditionally associated with 'gangs' and 'gang' related violence in North America, which mirrors the fact that much of the research in this area has been conducted there (Silvestri et al., 2009). The perceived similarities between the UK and the USA often stem from the fact that the firearm related offences which have captured public, political and media attention have been those which have occurred in certain localities and been attributable to young people living in specific communities and which dominate political and media attention and debate. Joseph and Gunter (2011) suggest that the fixation of attention on the fatalities and injuries taking place amongst young people in urban localities has led to regenerating widespread anxiety about 'dangerous' Black youths, which is partially reflective of perceptions of the problem encountered in North America. Further, this has led to the focus of much of the attention in the UK informed by international research, on proposed solutions adapted from work conducted in the USA (Silvestri et al., 2009; Young, 2010).

This is not to ignore the development of studies in the UK offering a British perspective questioning the effectiveness of drawing simple comparisons with

the situation and solutions put forward in the USA (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009; Silvestri et al., 2009). But what has become evident is that the term 'UGC' has been adopted in the UK and is now commonly accepted (often uncritically) and normalised within everyday discourse irrespective of the lack of an overarching explanation and an over-reliance on specific evidence from elsewhere (Hallsworth and Siverstone, 2009). It would be disingenuous to ignore research that shows that firearm offences are not uniformly experienced across the UK. Statistics of firearm offence in England and Wales in 2010-2011, show that, offences are geographically concentrated. Around three in five (59%) of these offences recorded in 2010/11 occurred in just three police force areas – Metropolitan, West Midlands and Greater Manchester. In comparison, just under a quarter (24%) of the population of England and Wales reside in the areas covered by these three forces (Smith et al., 2012). Routinely, research evidence identifies that this type of crime is often to be found in certain types of urban localities (Squires, 2007; 2008, Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009; Silvestri et al., 2009).

Research shows that Black homicide victims are geographically concentrated in the same three police force areas. This in part reflects the geographical concentration of Black and other Minority Ethnic groups in these areas, with 62 % of Black people in England and Wales residing in these three force areas. It also reflects the increased risk of being a victim of homicide in an urban area (Hales, 2006). Consequently, the aim here is not to deny the reality in that there are young men in ACC who are both victims and protagonists and as such there is a need to understand and find solutions. However, for me, there is also a need to critically examine the extent to which 'UGC' reproduces ideas associated with 'race' and how this is influential in shaping how the perceived

'crisis' is understood. It is possible to view the current situation as being informed by a hegemonic interpretation of understanding by policy makers and major institutions and how this informs their response. Yet, there is a lack of attention to how 'race,' racism and a process of racialisation are explicit and implicated in a specific construction of 'UGC,' ever present in terms of how they dominate the initiatives put forward. As such, there is a need to examine the role that 'race' plays in the construction of the problem and the ideas put forward for its amelioration. This is essential if we are to better understand the role of such processes and it is this that precipitated my interest in the topic.

1.2 'Urban gun crime': limitation of the dominant discourse

As Squires (2007) highlights, historically issues associated with use of firearms or prevention of the illegal use of firearms is not devoid of ideology. He argues that gun control policies are often not informed by a rationalist policy process which is based on examination of relevant evidence, but is heavily influenced by a highly political (and public) response to particular incidents. Thus the resulting actions tend to be guided by a desire to do something in response to horrific incidents rather than an outcome of research evidence. Squires (2007) draws attention to how attempts to address gun control are often driven by a particular political and ideological approach which has implications for issues such as individual freedom, citizenship rights and social discipline. In the UK, it is possible to see evidence of this in the aftermath of a number of high profile gun related homicides in which public anxiety and politics have played a key role in legitimating certain forms of political action.

The pressure for the state to act has led to action that has included extending the police's power to stop and search and the introduction of a specialist 'Gang Unit' within the police alongside the resourcing of a range of community based initiatives (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009). As a result, many institutions have been directed to engage in initiatives to address the 'problem' of 'UGC'. In recent years the urban landscape across a number of England's major cities has included the establishment of Crime Disorder Partnerships, Youth Offending Teams and the voluntary sector organisations all working locally to implement central government guidance to develop and deliver initiatives aimed at preventing young people's involvement with firearms (see Silvestri et al., 2009). However, a key to how this has translated into practice is that these initiatives are informed by a discourse in which 'UGC' equates with 'gangs' and an outcome of a 'gang' related culture (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009).

Whilst there is a plethora of research by criminologists that has attempted to offer explanations and put forward solutions to the problem of 'UGC', this body of work primarily focuses attention on the Criminal Justice System (CJS), key protagonists and practitioners (see Young, 2010). To date, 'UGC' has received limited attention within sociology (Squires, 2007) and scant consideration has been afforded to exploring and understanding the views of those implicated through their racial or racialised identity or on the role that 'race' occupies in the construction of policy and relayed through the various conduits to its intended targets. Currently, there is little commentary detailing the relationship of 'UGC' to the lives and the actions taking place within African Caribbean families and the wider communities or what learning can be gained from a focus that centres on understanding their experiences. Consequently, it is an attempt to address

such limitations that underpinned my study and is the central objective of this thesis.

1.3 Telling an Alternative Story

W.E.B. Dubois (1903) argued that when White society has attempted to address and understand issues that impact on the lives of Black people it has positioned them within a framework in which Black people are constructed as a problem. It is this that frames a common sense understanding within White society of what it means to be Black and it is this that also shapes how certain issues are understood. It is possible in the 21st century to suggest that such an analysis remains relevant and aspects of this can be seen in recent attempts to address 'UGC' in the UK.

> Between Me: and the other World there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through difficulty of framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? They say, I know an excellent coloured man (sic) in my town, or I fought at Mechanicville; or do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduced the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, how does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word (Dubois, 1903:1).

Dubois reminds us of an inbuilt tension which poses a challenge to how the lives of Black people are often understood by White society. He notes that a common feature has been, and I argue continues to be, how Black people are often viewed within a framework where they occupy a deficit position. This position is characterised by a number of negative connotations historically derived and constituted and reconstituted through processes whereby they are constructed as a problem. For Dubois, it is this default position that is used to understand their lived reality. As such, it is possible to suggest that it is a deficit model that frames and shapes and is used in a dominant discourse that has become normalised in our understanding of the issue of 'urban gun crime.' Whilst Dubois is writing at a particular time and in a specific context there is much that can be gleaned from his work. He suggests that one of the biggest challenges resides in how a common sense perception around difference itself often leads to a failure to ask questions of fundamental importance. Arguably, the outcome in terms of the subject matter under investigation here is an attempt to illuminate this potential disjuncture between an existing dominant discourse and in the narratives of those within ACC who to varying extents have a vested interest in work on this agenda.

As previously stated, my interest in 'UGC' stems from an initial concern about how the term was normalised within popular discourse. My apprehension was driven by what I viewed as a lack of critical attention particularly as I perceived that it was far from neutral but conveyed something specific about the potential perpetrators and the victims associated with this type of crime. Whilst 'UGC' is presented as a generic term, its aetiology with gangs and violence in the North

American context rests on an understanding that is heavily racialised. An example of this is portrayed in the North American *The Wire*, which presents a specific image of the type of individuals at the root of certain problems in which group violence and the use of guns is part and parcel of a way of life. It is a similar image that is used and underpins ideas about those involved in 'UGC' in the UK. Wood (2010) describes this image in the British context as, young' Black male teenage 'gang' member who is routinely armed, engaged in a range of criminal activity and is threatening and dangerous.

I started my doctoral research in 2007 as a part time student. Prior to this there had been a spate of firearm related incidents some of which resulted in fatalities. Indeed, 2007 has been earmarked as a decisive year for the issue of 'urban gun crime, for example, Heale (2012:xii) states that:

> 2007 was the year that the notion of youth street gangs really entered the public's consciousness in the UK. In terms of the overall number of homicides it was not an exceptionally violent year, but what caught the public's attention was a series of high profile killings of teenagers which in their brutality and callousness seemed to mark a worsening of the problem.

Embarking on my studies I was aware from reading and listening to media reports and from conversations with others that the image often presented tended to be consistent with the violent murder of a young person, often male, from an African Caribbean descent, single parent household who lived in an

inner city locality. The perpetrator was similarly described. I was conscious too of how such incidents ignited substantial public anxiety and for a period became a key focus of a particular type of media attention. I was not immune to these reports. I too experienced a number and range of anxieties. I had observed how public and political anxiety increased in the aftermath of high profile incidents (such as the murder in 2003 in Birmingham of Charlene Ellis and Letisha Shakespeare; two young Black women) and served to provide political legitimacy for a dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' that located the problem firmly within working class Black communities. Prior to starting my doctoral research I had read a range of media reports which increased my anxiety further. On the 16th February 2007, an article published in the *Daily Mail* by Richard Price stated:

> Inevitably, the high incidence of family breakdown in the black community leaves thousands of boys with no male role model, no discipline at home and no moral compass with which to navigate the troubled waters of a South London adolescence… *The fact is that no one in the police wants to talk about gang warfare in South London, because the last thing senior officers want is to give credibility to this breed of savage young men who are capable of horrific violence unfettered by the most basic concepts of morality.*

This anxiety was not solely fuelled by the media but also by a vociferous political narrative, which also accompanied it. This led me to questioning how this conceptualisation contributed to the sanctioning of certain types of institutional responses that also informed community action and what were the views and

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experiences of the African Caribbean men and women working in the wider African Caribbean community.

1.4 **Positioning myself: the personal and the political**

> I came to see my work as being part of a larger process, as one voice in a dialogue among people who had been silenced (Hill Collins, 1990:xiv).

My experience in conducting research has brought to the fore why it is imperative for researchers to ensure that reflection and reflective practice is a key component of what we do. Letherby (2003; 2013) draws attention to the position that reflexivity occupies in the doing and understanding of what is done and the myriad of ways that we are present and often connected to the research we undertake. The outcome is an auto/biographical thesis. The decision to adopt this approach is a way of ensuring that the reader is left in no doubt as to how my thesis and the research on which it is based, centres the stories not only of those who participated in the study, but simultaneously provides the reader with a snapshot of my own story. Embedding my autobiography and adopting auto/biography provides a means of capturing the multiplicity of ways in which my identity, whether externally or internally inscribed, intersects with the subject under investigation, the theoretical approach utilised and the stories told by participants. Hence, in carrying out research as a Black woman, a feminist from African Caribbean descent within the African Caribbean community, my research will not only allow me to provide an understanding

about the topic under investigation, and my connection to the men and women participating in this research, but also tells the reader something about me in terms of my multiple identity, political and philosophical position and my relationship and connection to this thesis (Stanley, 1993).

I did not explicitly set out to locate myself so visibly in my research, but my decision was informed by what unfolded during my research journey. My experience illuminates my position as an 'insider within' status and the intersection of aspects of my identity with those participating in my study. My visibility is testament to the connection experienced (both positively and negatively) in my interaction with my participants and the stories uncovered, which illuminate our connection and where we share a common lived reality, yet simultaneously tells the reader about the heterogeneity to be found amongst us. Consequently, writing my thesis auto/biographically serves as a means to make explicit the myriad of ways I experienced a connection throughout the process. It is a reminder of how our research interests may frequently originate in personal experience and its social context and as such there is an auto/biographical dimension that we need to acknowledge (Letherby, 2003; Singh, 2007; Martin, 2008). As Marshall and Rossman (1995) point out, auto/biography, hence experience and emotions, frequently plays an important role in research from the selection of research topics to the formation of research questions and interpretation of responses. Yet, such admissions were once rarely acknowledged as part of conventions of academic endeavour and were presented at a distance, as if our topics emerged solely from the literature and our research questions engaged purely with theoretical issues rather than personal debates. Such a position would be disingenuous in terms of failing to make explicit how my subjectivity is ever present; shaping all aspects of the

research process (Letherby, 2003; 2013). The story presented below is illustrative of this.

1.5 Our story: aspects of what we share

In July 2013 whilst writing this thesis I bumped into Marcia in a local supermarket. Marcia and I had previously worked together for a number of years on the factory floor for a multinational confectionary company. Whilst we did not spend time together outside of our workplace, we would converse with each other, on our way into work, in the changing room, during break times and at the end of our shift as we made our way home. The topics of our conversations would include work related issues, factory gossip and exchanges about our families; more often than not about our children.

Prior to our recent encounter I had not seen Marcia for a number of years. She told me how she had now achieved over 20 years of service for the company, while I had left after having completed approximately 10. In the latter stages of working for the company I had completed an undergraduate degree while working part time, and at the time of taking my redundancy in 2000 I was enrolled in the first year of a part time Masters Programme. Marcia and I recounted how the last time we met each other it was about four years previously at a funeral of a mutual, and my best friend, Angela, who was also a fellow work colleague. On the day of our encounter I had just started to draft the introduction to my thesis, and afterwards it seemed clear to me that recounting our conversation was a necessary thing to do and an obvious place to start as it

provides an insight to my approach to writing this thesis and more importantly an indication of my connection to it.

Marcia and I are both Black women, of African Caribbean descent, have shared work related experiences and are mothers who live in similar types of neighbourhoods. Marcia and I both have two children, a boy and a girl, we are both unmarried and both our parents originate from the Caribbean. However, I no longer worked on the production line, had completed an undergraduate and post graduate degree, was working towards my doctorate and now worked in the academy.

We had much to catch up on. We briefly spoke about work, but much of our conversation was about our children. Both Marcia's and my daughter accompanied us to the supermarket. My daughter was aged five at the time and Marcia's daughter was aged 18 years old and had that week completed a travel and tourism course at a local college. Her daughter explained how excited she was to now have time away from studying and how much she was looking forward to gaining some kind of employment in the travel industry.

Our conversation then turned to our sons. She remembered that my son and her daughter were around the same age; my son was 19 years old. I explained that he was approaching the end of a gap year and getting ready to start life as a university student. Marcia expressed her joy about my son's academic achievements, just as I was pleased when she told me about her son, who was a little older, in his mid-twenties was also 'doing well.' Having completed

statutory education and college he was now happily employed. She looked at me and said; 'aren't we lucky! It could have been so much worse! Our sons have survived! We should be proud and congratulate ourselves because it could have been so very different with everything that is going on.' For a short while Marcia and I looked at each other and no words were spoken. The silence was significant in what it conveyed.

This encounter with Marcia illuminates how 'insider knowledge' of being a Black woman, a mother from an African Caribbean background, living in or having lived in a common neighbourhood, bridges something of the difference between researcher and researched, and recognizes our shared experiences, while not ignoring our difference. Martin (2008) adopted an auto/biographical approach in her doctoral research as a means of illuminating her connection to the personal and the social, and combined her inquiry into a cultural phenomenon, which enabled her to share her own personal experience and reflection on its socio-cultural context.   In sharing Marcia's story, I want to make explicit my connections in relation to being co-participant as well as researcher who is part of the community I am researching.

Marcia and I share an anxiety as mothers of young Black men. We appeared to be breathing a sigh of relief that, to date, our sons had not come to the attention of the criminal justice system, had survived school without being excluded and relief also that we were not having to deal with any direct anxieties that result from the activities that tend to be used to characterised the lives of young Black men. Marcia expressed how thankful she was that things had turned out 'O.K'., how proud she was of her son and mine, how proud we should both be of our

achievements as mothers due to the additional challenges experienced as a mother to Black boys; challenges, not necessarily of our making. She exclaimed how we had obviously done something right and that we were very fortunate!

My encounter with Marcia was a timely reminder of why positioning myself within my study was important and the factors which precipitated the choice of topic for my doctoral research and of those informal conversations I have had with members of my family, friends and others in the wider community. I was reminded of the concern and anxiety underpinning these conversations, the anger expressed about the image of us portrayed within a political and media discourse in which 'UGC' appeared to be synonymous with a subculture of young people, living in certain urban localities within certain metropolitan cities. For me, 'UGC' evokes an image whether 'real' or 'imagined' about our young Black men, our Black families and our community, hence, about 'us'. Bochner (2001: 138), challenges 'the myth that our research is divorced from our lives, that it has no autobiographical dimension, that what we do academically is not part of how we are working through the story of our own life.'

As previously stated, my choice of topic also reflects a personal quest to illuminate and understand my own anxieties. I wanted to critically examine whether the extent to which political and public discourse reproduces and normalises certain racial ideas. I wanted to consider the experiences of and feelings held by African Caribbean men and women with respect to 'urban gun crime,' in order to ascertain whether they too held fears and concerns. I also felt it was important to simultaneously provide a space for voices which are often missing to be heard. Exploring my personal concern around 'UGC' provided me

with an opportunity to develop my sociological imagination.   As Mills (1959) posits, one of the most helpful ways in which the 'sociological imagination' works is in the juxtaposition of personal troubles and public issues. Utilising my sociological imagination, I embarked on research that allowed me to 'hear first-hand' from men and women within the African Caribbean community, to undertake research that placed them at the centre of the production of knowledge and a project grounded in an epistemology able to recognise the significance of 'race', gender, racism, power and oppression.   As Jhappan (1996:30) argues, 'our material situations, life opportunities, social positionality, and dominant discourses do profoundly shape our experiences and understanding of the world and our place in it.'

I embarked on research that sheds light on my own anxieties and confusion as a mother, sister and aunt of young Black male teenagers and as a member of the African Caribbean community. It affords the opportunity to offer a vehicle for voices which are currently missing from discourses around the issue to be included. My thesis is a culmination of an endeavour built on centring the voices of men and women from ACC involved or with an interest in community based activities. Whilst their level of engagement varies, for ease of identification in this thesis, this group is defined as community activists. Focusing my gaze in this way allows for an examination of the conceptualisation of 'UGC' from the 'bottom up' acknowledging how these voices can often be silenced or subordinated:

> Whilst the material conditions of 'race', class and gender
> oppression can vary dramatically, it can generate some uniformity

in the epistemologies of subordinate groups. Thus the significance of an African centric feminist epistemology may lie in how such an epistemology enriches our understanding of how subordinate groups create knowledge that fosters resistance (Hill Collins, 1991:206)

My decision to focus attention on African Caribbean community activists is my attempt to contribute to a broader understanding of 'UGC' and illuminate their resistance and their responses to the very issue in order to see what can be learnt.

I started with several key questions:

- How do community activists construct and give meaning to 'UGC'?
- What is the role of community and family in shaping understanding of 'UGC'?
- How does the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' impact on how community activists get involved in initiatives associated with 'UGC'?
- What factors are absent and/or misunderstood in how 'UGC' is conceptualised within political and media discourse?

Much of the academic work around the issue of 'UGC' has focused on the experiences of certain groups of young men and been carried out within a specific framework (Hallsworth and Silverstone, 2009). This raises concerns as it renders invisible the role of 'race' in this process. Accordingly, institutional approaches to 'UGC' ignore racism and racialisation and the very fact that such factors are implicated in the lives of the young men who are often the primary focus of many of the interventions. Equally important is how spectres of these young people's lives are disregarded as it is easy to overlook, unless it is to problematise, relationships within African Caribbean communities (ACC) and families. This leads to a failure to incorporate space to capture how 'UGC' or the dominant conceptualisation underpinning a popular understanding of 'UGC' does not merely impact on individuals' but is something that has wider ramifications. This is not to suggest that there has been a total absence of the voices of ACC in research exploring 'UGC.' However, the dominant conceptualisation is powerful in the way in which it presents a way of thinking and understanding 'UGC' by means of an analysis that starts from a specific 'deficit' position (Gilroy, 2003; Joseph and Gunter, 2011). By this, I mean a position that over focuses on the individual and their problematic cultural practices and this becomes a starting point in which perceived issues within ACC tend to be located (Lawrence, 1989; Gilroy, 2003, Sveinsson, 2008; Patel and Tyrer, 2011). This thesis is my attempt to address the paucity of attention afforded 'race,' racialisation and racism in relation to 'UGC.' This endeavour is undertaken by focussing attention on members of ACC working both formally and informally in their local communities. In doing so, I pave the way to exploring the relationship between 'race' racism and racialisation in how participants understand and engage in action associated with 'UGC.'

Summary and reflections: why the need for an alternative story?

The dominant conceptualisation associated with 'UGC' rests on assumptions rooted in ideas associated with cultural practices in which notions of culture are rarely neutrally deployed but reflect various ideas over time (Gilroy, 2003, Sveinsson, 2008; Joseph and Gunter, 201; Patel and Tyrer, 2011). In relation to Britain's Black communities, such as those with a history traceable to the Caribbean, what is revealed is how ideas traceable to slavery and colonialism have shaped long standing perceptions that are still evident today in contemporary discourses which recast the Other (Miles, 1989; Miles and Brown, 2003). Gilroy (2003) describes 'UGC' as the sum of an evolutionary process in which explanations associated with 'UGC' reflect 'a predictable chorus in the pronouncing of anti-social Black culture as the primary factor.' So, Gilroy contends that, 'UGC' has facilitated a space for the reaffirmation of a particular set of causal factors:

> Inner-city pathology, family breakdown, fatherlessness and chaos
> are served up yet again. This pathology also includes the type of
> music that is perceived as popular within the Black community and
> the genres of rap and hip-hop are also singled out for blame (*The
> Guardian*, Wednesday 8 January 2003, comment story)

Gilroy (2003) draws attention to the longevity of certain themes which remain powerful in shaping ideas and are in need of continuous interrogation. Against this context, not surprisingly, cultural explanations become an easy way out of

attending to the more difficult task of unravelling issues associated with 'race' and the myriad of social, political and economic factors underpinning the experienced of ACC. Gilbourne (2008) shows how cultural references frame our understanding and the attempts implemented to address the poor outcomes experienced by African Caribbean children. Similarly, Glynn (2013) highlights how such references are used routinely to shape understanding around the disproportionate number of African Caribbean young men within the CJS. Research by Keating (2007) identifies how Black men are disproportionately represented in mental health statistics and the complexities that arise when we link mental health with issues of 'race' culture and ethnicity.

There are certain similarities between the narrative unfolding around 'UGC' and that associated with the moral panic that surrounded the 'street mugger of the 1970's (Hall et al., 1978). Thirty four years ago, Hall et al in their ground breaking book, '*Policing the Crisis'* presented an analysis which established how the alarm associated with street mugging misdirected popular attention towards sensationalised street crime whilst hiding and mystifying its 'deeper' causes. In focusing their attention, not on young Black male muggers, but on the system and structures surrounding them they showed how mugging should be viewed as a social and political phenomenon, rather than just a particular form of street crime. Hall et al. (1978) identified the importance of taking time to explicate how the crime of mugging reflected a set of wider concerns. It is possible to see 'UGC' as the construction in which, once again, we are presented with a crime imbued with certain sets of cultural ideas, synonymous with a notion associated with a disintegration of the 'social order and an indicator of the British way of life coming apart at the seams (Hall, 1972).

Today, 'UGC' can be understood as sharing aspects of the crime of mugging of the 1970s. It can be viewed as a testament to a 'problem' that a racial minority wrought on the lives of the white majority. This can be seen in how 'UGC' is increasingly used as an euphemism and serves as a means for the re-emergence of a set of ideas. These ideas serve to facilitate the reconstruction of the young dangerous, criminal Black man while simultaneously stigmatising the communities and families in which they are located. 'UGC' becomes part of a wider process to reconstitute an historical process of othering. It is the amalgamation of such ideas whether implicit or explicitly conveyed through what I perceive as markers of a particular world view, that resulted in me wanting to explore an alternative way of understanding ' UGC' to examine how the issue was conceptualised by individuals within ACC.

Watching media reports and listening to policy pronouncements and conversations with family, friends and others from ACC raised a series of questions. I came to view 'UGC' as not merely something out there and something that touched the lives of others. As a Black woman, mother, sister and aunt to young Black men and someone with an interest in community activism and issues associated with social justice, the conceptualisation of 'UGC' had implications for me. I had an emotional and intellectual response to what was unfolding. It raised a number of anxieties and confusion and served as a reminder of the multiple ways that Black people experience disadvantage. I felt an imperative to uncover the meaning that others like me gave to the situation that existed and consider what that meant in terms of action needed.

As I detail in Chapter Six, my research brings clearly into focus how I and my participants share a racialised identity and exist as racialised beings where our social reality is impacted by the imposition of a fixed racialised identity (Dubois, 1903; Fanon, 1967; Hill Collins, 1998; Naples 1999; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Hence, whilst I acknowledge the fluidity of identity, I am also subject to how a process in which the ontological self is also constructed and infused with meaning by others. Further, this is irrespective of how class and gender unravels in complex ways and with varying outcomes depending on our racialised status (Rollock, 2012). To this end, regardless of the various ways we as individuals construct our identity and despite a wide range of ways we choose to live our lives, we share a connection, an experience of being 'othered' by the machinery that constructs and continually reconstructs us. As Mirza (1997) says, we continue to habit a reality where 'belonging', and who we really are, continues to be judged by the colour of our skin, the shape of our noses, the texture of our hair, and the curve of our bodies. In effect, 'our perceived genetic and physical presence; to be Black (not white), female and 'over here' in Scotland, England or Wales, is to disrupt the safe closed categories of what it means to be British: that is to be white and British' (3). Thus our Blackness becomes pivotal as a means of constructing a shared identity a connection that is not the outcome of an inscribed natural identification but representative of a political kinship (Sandoval, 1991).

Letherby (2003, 2013) argues that all research is ideological. As a Black woman researching as an insider I am mindful as she further points out that, 'as social scientists we cannot separate who we are as we are part of the world we study' (2003:6). For me, it is essential that the knowledge I produce includes a capacity to understand, resist and challenge the racialised conceptualisation of

'urban gun crime.' The dominant and current conceptualisation re-enforces and confirms particular sets of ideas about ACC, African Caribbean family life and our young people. It is these ideas that shape institutional responses.

As a Black feminist researcher, who is privileged to have an opportunity to engage in research and hold a position within the academy, I navigate between two worlds; as a Black woman working and researching in what remains a White dominated institution and as a woman who lives and is part of a wider Black community. This is challenging as I am continually reminded of and in some circumstances encounter the prevalence of racism both inside and outside the institution. Thus, there is a political goal driving my doctoral research and my research needs to be viewed as a political act and not merely action to generating new intellectual insights (see Sivanandan,1990; Singh, 2007).

As previously discussed, political concern has led to a specific conceptualisation of 'UGC' and the introduction of a range of national and local initiatives. Yet, media reports on the Right and Left of the political spectrum albeit with varying emphases hold a specific perception of the dangers posed by 'UGC.' with little attention afforded to trying to illuminate the processes at work that help to shape public understanding and may in turn alleviate some of the public anxiety. Crime committed with firearms in itself is not a new phenomenon (see Greenwood, 1972, Squires, 2007). Greenwood (1972:4) challenges what he perceives as a media driven misconception that gives an impression that; '*in the distant past criminals rarely used guns yet they do so [today] with frequency.' S*tatistics show a more complex picture in which 'UGC' is identified as relatively rare and since 2003 there has been a substantial decrease in the number of firearm offences recorded by the

police (ONS, Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending June 2013). Moreover, not all young Black male youths, their families and communities are implicated in such crimes. Yet, rarely is there space to hear about the impact on the wider community, families or on the lives of the mothers who have directly lost a loved one (Lawson, 2013)

Whilst for Hallsworth and Silverstone (2009) a principle issue is to interject a level of complexity into the analysis of gun crime in terms of a taxonomy of the different criminal groupings that use firearms, for me, what is missing are the voices of those for whom debates and explanations of 'UGC' impact on their lived reality. As such, there are three key issues that have formed the rationale for my focus on this area.

- The need to explore how 'gun crime is conceptualised within African Caribbean communities

- To explore the actions that are underway within African Caribbean communities

- and to explore what we can understand by focusing attention on 'race' and its by product 'racism'

1.7 The structure of the thesis is as follows

The literature review is divided into four discrete but interrelated chapters and sets out the theoretical framework central to shaping the analysis of the

empirical work conducted. In Chapter Two, I provide an analysis that explicates the longevity of certain assumptions implicated in how we understand the 'Other' through a critical interrogation of the concept of 'race.' The aim is to show how discourses associated with 'race' are refracted through a dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC'.

In Chapter Three I extend this critical analysis to the concept community in order to show how community is far from a neutral term and when used in association with African Caribbean communities embodies a set of assumptions in which 'race' is employed. Chapter Four, draws attention to how 'race' is implicated in the construction of the African Caribbean Family and how this is reproduced within the realm of Family Policies and the dominant understanding to 'UGC' and shapes institutional responses. Chapter Five details the overarching framework for the study.

Chapter Six, details my methods, methodological approach and dilemmas encountered in undertaking my research. In doing so, I highlight the auto/ biographical practices and processes of my research journey.

In Chapter Seven, I present key findings detailing how my research participants' lived reality informs a conceptualisation of 'UGC' that is rooted in perceptions and experiences in which 'race' racialisation and racism are key features that shape their conceptualisation of 'UGC'. Chapter Eight presents data detailing the relationship between 'community' and the issue of 'UGC.' In Chapter Nine, I present data exploring participants' views of family and their experiences of

family life and consider this in relationship to 'UGC.' In Chapter Ten, I present the data detailing the strategies and approaches deployed by various actors within African Caribbean communities in response to the issue of 'UGC'. In Chapter Eleven, I conclude with the key findings arising from my research and provide some final reflection on my doctoral journey.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.0 Introduction

> Wherever colonialism is a fact, the indigenous culture begins to rot. And among the ruins something begins to be born which is not a culture but a kind of sub culture, a sub-culture which is condemned to exist on the margin allowed by a European culture. This then becomes the province of a few men, the elite, who find themselves placed in the most artificial conditions, deprived of any reviving contact with the masses of the people. (Cesaire, 1956:203)

> Ah, yes, as you can see, by calling on humanity, on the belief in dignity, on love, on charity, it would be easy to prove, or to win the admission, that the black is the equal of the white. But my purpose is quite different: What I want to do is help the black man to free himself of the arsenal of complexities that has been developed by the colonial environment. (Fanon, 1968:30)

The opening quotes by Cesaire and Fanon draw attention to how the differentiation of people rooted in an historical legacy associated with notions of 'race' prevail and continue to shape, inform and impact on individuals' every day social reality. Ceasire (1956) alerts us to how the historical colonial legacy confirming a division of people into categories denoting superiority and inferiority

is legitimated and sustained through the performance of 'race.' The outcome is the sanctioning and maintenance of an unequal distribution of power between individuals, groups and populations. Fanon (1968) also alluded to the processes that go into both constructing and maintaining the division of human beings along colour lines, raising a concern in relation to the impact of this construction on Black bodies both physically and psychologically. For Fanon (1968) the battle to achieve equality requires not merely focused attention externally on the systems and structures implicated in maintaining and sustaining oppressive structures, but also necessitate Black people looking internally in order to understand psychological conductors of oppression.

In this, the first of four background, context and literature chapters I begin the process of exploring the extent to which 'race' is reflected in a dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC'. The aim here is to advance the idea that 'race' continues to be a useful tool for both understanding and responding to certain sections of society in Britain today. In offering this position, I am not suggesting that ideas associated with 'race' are fixed or that there have not been changes in how it is perceived. Rather, my aim is to embark on an examination that considers how 'race' is reproduced in how we understand notions of community and family and how such ideas are refracted through the realms of 'UGC'. In so doing, I suggest that there is a need to draw attention to how racism shaped through a historical process of racialisation rooted in theories of 'race' are played out in the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' in which specific notions of community and family are employed. In the four discrete, but interrelated background chapters I set the foundation of my analysis by outlining the context, concepts, theoretical perspectives and themes which are central to shaping the analysis of the empirical work conducted. I adopt an approach to reviewing the

literature that draws attention to the symbiotic relationship between each chapter, inasmuch as each chapter relies, directly impacts upon and is influenced by the others.

In this chapter I explore theoretical ideas associated with the concept 'race.' In theorising the concept 'race,' this chapter lays the foundation for understanding how implicitly and explicitly 'race is a principle vehicle implicated in a dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC'.

2.1 Theorising the concept 'race'

Singh (2007) offers a cautionary note about the potential dangers one may encounter when theorising 'race'. He suggests that the need for caution stems from the elusiveness of 'race' and the subjective locations of those attempting to theorise the concept. Further, he acknowledges how writing about 'race' requires a high degree of self-reflexivity, which he identifies as the need to be; 'aware of where and how one is situated in a social nexus that can result in potential and actual benefits or debits being accrued from the many discourses of 'race' (2007:25). Singh (2007) highlights why it is important when researching 'race' to take into consideration the relationship between one's ontological, epistemological position and methodological approach and how this shapes the decisions taken when engaged in social research. In my introduction I set out the relationship of my identity to the subject matter under investigation. I explained why, as an African Caribbean woman, researching ACC my work is far from a neutral and objective endeavour. This is because my

auto/biography intersects with those of my participants and this is implicated in the study carried out. My relationship to the literature also needs to be understood as an integral part of this process too. My review tells the reader something not only about the topic under investigation, but also about the author too. This is because, whether explicitly or implicitly, who I am informs my selection, analysis and interpretation of the literature included. There is a plethora of work captured under headings such as; 'race' 'race' relations, racialisation. Due to concern to address the charge of essentialism and calls to address and understand difference, this work is further expanded and also includes work around identity and ethnicity. This body of work comes from a range of perspectives; Post- colonial, Marxist, Weberian Structuralist, Post Structuralist and Feminist. Consequently, there has been a diverse body of work that has contributed to how the concept 'race' has been theorised, understood and contested. The review presented here is an indication of my engagement with the literature and how for me an outcome has been to identify what I view to be the key ideas and themes and continuities stemming from this.

Before outlining some of the key ideas that have informed theories of 'race' it is essential to set out how 'race' is utilised in this study. Whilst often within common parlance 'race' is employed as a descriptor referring to a given attribute, here 'race; is used not merely as a descriptive term, but one that is analytical in that it is used to describe a process of power, which impacts on people 'in different but significant ways' (Patel and Tyrer, 2011: 2). Theoretical work examining 'race' spans a range of academic disciplines. Patel and Tyrer (2011) concede that this work can be found in a proliferation of research reports, journal articles and books in the sciences and social sciences. Moreover, they suggest that the sheer volume of work highlights the significance of 'race'

thinking to understanding the social world, it's adaptability to changing historical, social and economic environments and how 'race' remains a source of contestation within the academic community (see Hall et al, 1978; Husband, 1982; Gilroy, 1983; Mirza, 1983, 1997; Sivanandan, 1990; Anthias and Yuval Davies, 1992; Mason, 2000; Miles and Brown, 2003). Mason (2000) contends that 'race' remains an important focus because it is still considered as something 'real' by many in society and viewed as an entity which both organises and constructs human behaviour.

Hall (1980) suggests that literature that focuses on 'race' can be organised loosely under two broad themes; the economic and the sociological. He contends that specific ideas have dominated explanations and offers two key ways of understanding 'race'. The first examines 'race' through its relationships to the political economy. Within the 'economic' camp a common (albeit widely interpreted) explanation views economic structures as playing a central role in social formations.[1] To this end, the economic camp examines the relationship between ideological formations and the role of the capitalist state. Explanations for racism are sought via understanding the link between social formation and social class. A source of contestation within this broad group is the significance given to the role of ideology, culture and social institutions and their relationship to the modes of production and the relative positioning of 'race' and other divisions such as gender or that of class, defined in terms of individuals' relationship to the mode of production (Singh, 2007).

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[1] See Althusser, 1971; Jessop, 1982; Sivanandan, 1982; Miles, 1983; Phizacklea and Miles, 1980; Miles and Brown, 2003.

Hall (1980:18) argues that the sociological camp offers a 'mirror image' and the explanations from this perspective serve as a means of offering an oppositional view. Sociologists refute the monocausal economically determined understandings of 'race.' Indeed, the primacy given to economics is often perceived as a fundamental limitation of explanation emanating from economists. Hence, within sociology 'race' is held to be complex and multifaceted and a product of a wide range of factors. This broad perspective acknowledges that the economic plays a part in the construction of 'race', but asserts the need to also focus attention on factors such as; ideology, culture, identity and ethnicity. Thus, writers from this perspective apprehend 'race' through a lens that focuses attention on the incorporation of these complex formations. For Hall (1980:18), the literature associated with 'race' reflects such multi-dimensional aspects in which 'race' is presented as constituent of several different structures; something that is pluralist in emphasis even if it is not explicitly plural in the theoretical sense'. Nonetheless, he also acknowledged that there are limitations in presenting such a diverse, extensive and contested body of work under the rubric of 'economic' or 'sociological'. However, his framework helps in navigating through a difficult and challenging terrain and is used here as a means of capturing my position in terms of how I see the economic and sociological explanations as complimentary and not mutually exclusive. Hence, the literature presented in my review draws on work spanning the economic and the sociological as this enables us to better capture how 'race' is implicated in 'UGC'.

To this end, there is scope to see how a focus on capital and representation together provides a valuable insight to the focus of research, as Hall (1980) argues 'race' essentially needs to be understood as a 'modality' of class.

Hence, while 'race' can be relatively autonomous at the levels of ideology, it is imperative that it is also located within capitalist power structures and the politics of class. Consequently, this illuminates how explication of the role of 'race' in relation to 'UGC' necessitates consideration of how 'race' is defined through its relationship to the 'economic' and accounted for via the 'sociological.' Such an approach elucidates the interconnection between theory, politics and ideology as all these play a significant role if we are to capture material and racial reality that shapes the lives of those living within ACC.

> ...the way forward is for us to know how different racial and ethnic groups were inserted historically, and the relations which have tended to erode and transform, or preserve these distinctions through time – not simply as residues of previous modes, but as active structuring principles of the present organisations of society (Hall, 1982:54)

This is important because theory has a direct or indirect practical consequence (Hall, 1982). Further, such structuring principles are played out in the mechanisms that shape the process of racialisation. Gilroy (2000) also presents us with a valuable means of organising the work of those writing about 'race.' He contends that there is a tendency for such writing to be shaped by two distinct perspectives. The first sees the case for 'race' thinking as a way to explain away human differences. This rests on writers' adoption of a primordialist or essentialist view of human societies, with the potential to fix or eternalise specific racialised identities. The second perspective adopts an approach to 'race' rooted in the struggles against slavery, European imperialism

and colonialism. For those writers adopting this perspective, the endeavour rests on the confrontation of the idea of 'race' as a means of illuminating the insufficiencies of 'race' thinking, and the underlying values put forward. Moreover, from this perspective we can find a clear rejection of the notion that humanity can be separated out into immutable groups called 'races' and that some are inferior to others, thus providing the justification to dominate. To this end, my literature review draws attention to the insufficiencies of 'race' thinking and how these are embedded within a dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC'.

Singh (2002:72) states that, 'it is only through a critical examination of historical trajectory that we can begin to discern the scope and relevance of any proposed future action.' In a fast and changing world where ideas seem to come, go and evaporate, it is critical to establish a foundation and context rooted in a historical understanding of the social production of 'race'. The question then one needs to confront is where to draw the line in history (Hall, 1992). Hall (1992) offers a useful insight and suggests that one of the most interesting things about the past is not the date of a specific event, but 'what are the ideological, social and political points of intersection and rupture that shape the social world and our perceptions of it'. Hall (1992) posits that for contemporary debates about 'race' and ethnicity 1492 is one such period. This is because it signalled a period in which the process of racialistion can be identified as sanctioning the eventual division of the globe into spurious things called 'nations' and 'races' (Singh, 2002). Far from being fixed in a particular historical juncture, 'race' can be understood as a concept that is fluid and infused with a myriad of thinking over an extensive period of time (Miles and Brown, 2003). A helpful, yet not unproblematic, way of demonstrating this fluidity is revealed when organising ideas that have informed 'race' in a taxonomy indicative of particular key

ideological, social and political periods. This is because it offers a means of capturing different trains of thought associated with 'race,' and the longevity of ideas that have influenced thinking about social relations and also allows for an illustration of how these ideas are historically positioned (Solomos, 1989). To this end, the literature below explores ideas associated with 'race' during two key periods namely, the Scientific phase and the post war period. It is important to note that these are not discrete phases as there are overlaps and connections between the three periods presented. However, it is possible to suggest that irrespective of how ideas have been either disrupted or maintained, certain distinctions are visible over time and remain as structuring principles of contemporary society (Solomos, 1989). Hence, each period reveals specific connotations in regards to 'race' that resonate irrespective of the period and specific historical context and, continue to influence thinking today. Lawrence (1982:48) argues that in contextualising a concept such as 'race' it is possible to see how 'the past is alive, even if transformed, in the present'.

2.2 Scientific Phase (18th to 19th Century)

Although ideas about human difference can be traced back to the Greco Roman (332 B.C-A.D. 395) and Religious (16th and 17th Century), the specific division of populations drawing on the notion of 'race' is suggested to be a much more recent phenomenon (Blum, 2002). The genesis 'race' is often attributable to thinking from the 16th century (Banton, 1977; Miles, 1982; Miles and Brown, 2003; Gilroy, 2004). This is a period in which the classification of populations along racial lines is readily accepted (Miles and Brown, 2003). They further state

that 'race' was a Western construction that enabled the identification of the Other (Miles and Brown, 2003).

> Much of western European history conditions us to see human difference in simplistic opposition to each other: domination/subordinate, good/bad, up/down, superior/inferior. In a society where the good is defined in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need, there must always be some group of people who, through systemized oppression, can be made to feel surplus, to occupy the place of the dehumanized inferior (Lorde, 1980 in Lorde, 1999:162)

The period stemming from the 18th to the 19th centuries (Husband,1982) represents a significant historical juncture leading to a scientific validation of 'race' through a European body of thought emanating from the European Enlightenment. The late 18th century, is identified as issuing in a paradigm shift in thinking about difference (Mason, 2000). Mason describes the context leading to this as a period where logic and the authority of science became influential leading to pseudoscientific explanation based on the division of people on the basis of racial difference. Hughes (1990) suggests that of major importance is that this period revealed fractures in religious authority. He describes it as a period where European thought was gradually set free from a theological straightjacket due to some going in search of intellectual answers as a means of providing 'a new certainty' about knowledge of the world. However, the dominance of scientific ideas was not totally divorced from Christian beliefs (Reddie, 2009). Reddie (2009:26) suggests that religion maintained an

important role in exporting a White supremacist inspired version of Christianity on to the oppressed body and mind of the Black slave. Further, he contends that this is an issue that Black people continue to deal with in terms of a dialectical struggle between living with a religious code that asserts freedom and coming to terms with the very fact that this identity has also brought with it servitude and oppression.

Gilroy (2004) views this as a period where science became influential and the European Enlightenment provided legitimacy for an understanding of 'race' that was located in the human body. Hence, the connection between 'race' and biology was scientifically proven. Mason (2000) highlights that, confirmation of such ideas can be seen in the writing that emanated during this period and by the mid-19th century, there was firm support of European Enlightenment ideas in the work of people such as Immanuel Kant (1724 -1804), David Hume (1711-1786), Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and Francis Galton (1822-1911). A common feature of these European Enlightenment thinkers was the unquestionable acceptance of a hierarchy of human beings tied to human biology (Patel and Tyrer, 2011).

The Scientific period is important in terms of how differentiation between Africans and Europeans was viewed in terms of European scientific notions of inferiority and superiority. Europeans simultaneously, if only implicitly, defined themselves in reference to the discourse of 'race,' albeit, with a different evaluative connotation. Miles and Brown (2003) state that the self and other were similarly encapsulated in a common world of European meaning and the outcome was the construction of difference. Here we see those with dark skins

validated through science to be naturally inferior to the natural superiority of the White populations of Northern Europe. Indeed, this fundamental premise of inferiority and superiority is evident when considering the brutality visited on Black bodies legitimated by Christian doctrine and sanctioned by European states that profited from the Atlantic slave trade.

Kundnani (2007) characterises the 18th Century as a period in which the domination of the slave trade, justified by science, represents the beginning of the mass diffusion of the modern concept of racism. He further suggests that in this period we see the start of a new national ideology, one which benefited imperialism and was propagated by an army of:

> Writers, philosophers, economists, scientists and politicians, the church and their missionaries, empire societies, children's and women's organisation… the purveyors of popular culture, including magazines and the formal education system (Kundnani, 2007:12)

Kundnani (2007) interprets this period as witnessing the enactment of states, who through their machineries such as; laws, conventions, practices, institutions and ways of thinking, legitimated the brutality of those designated as 'others' justified on a spurious European notion of superiority and inferiority. Alland (2002:10) describes scientific racism that emanated from this period as a 'pernicious phenomenon'. Thus, it's a period that cements ideas, for a complex set of reasons, leading to the construction of categories of 'race' performed

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under the rubric of science with an ultimate goal of justifying racist practices, which condoned slavery and on its subsequent demise colonisation.

Singh (2007) asserts that the very fact that 'race' was verified to be 'real' meant that rationally one must conclude that racial purity could only be maintained through reproduction between Europeans. Consequently, he suggests that 'out breeding' or the mixing of 'races' was perceived as a significant threat (32). Indeed, he further argues that hybridity ultimately grew to be the Achilles heel of scientific racism and the fear of 'hybridity', of the 'intermixing' of 'races', continues to be a source of contention in contemporary racist thought. Moreover, the concern with the degeneration of Europeans on encountering those deemed to be less evolved crystallized into eugenic movements and concern about the purity of the European bloodline manifested in campaigns for increasing European birth rates (Dawson, 2000). Another important dimension identified by Mirza (1997) is the ways in which gender was also implicated in racial thinking. She argues that gender was a mechanism used in ascribing characteristics to Black bodies and this facilitated a specific representation of Black women and Black men, which also 'produced and created the sustenance of a patriarchal, colonial and new post-colonial discourse'(5). Hence, she concludes that the image of Black women portrayed, offered confirmation of their inferiority. This was built on a characterisation of Black women as lacking agency, self-determination and as passive victims who only existed when assigned with meaning by others (6). Carby (1987) describes how Black bodies occupied oppositional positions in which they were also intractably bound to that of White bodies. Subsequently, while the construction of Black women's sexuality and femininity was one of deviance, White women were endowed with features such as purity and considered as the prize of the Western World

(Carby,1987). Black men were similarly negatively assigned images which took the form of being as beastly, primitive and as sexual predators, which Carrington (2000) describes as part of this process built on the objectification of Black bodies in which Black men were reduced to the sum of their sexual organs. In addition, Black men were perceived as generally 'lacking' in morals, values and an expression of this Kennedy (1997) argues, is that the reputation of Blacks has been 'besieged' by beliefs about predispositions toward criminality that can be traced back to the enslavement of Africans in the United States (in Welch, 2007:276).

2.3 Post Second World War Phase (period from 1945)

Challenge to the idea of a scientific basis for 'race' did not start in the post war period, but can be seen in the work of writers prior to the Second World War (see Du Bois, 1868; Brown, 1839; Washington, 1856). Nonetheless, the Second World War is instrumental in terms of representing an important shift in thinking in relation to the dominant conceptualisation of 'race' as science (Miles and Brown, 2003). After the Second World War there was increasing resistance to scientific notions of 'race' from post-colonial, anti-slavery and anti-capitalist struggles. The impetus of such movements during this period forms part of the Western International communities' response to the atrocities of the mass murder of Jews and other minorities, on the ground of racial impurity, during the first half of the 20th century (Husband, 1982). This period spearheaded the international academic community's rejection of the supposed scientific basis of 'race' and racial difference and the attempt to move away from understanding 'race' in relation to human biology. Miles and Brown (2003) assert that rather

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than the study of 'race' being accepted as a standalone factor in scientific enquiry, to understand issues associated with 'race' the focus of attention was directed to uncovering the relationship between 'race' and wider social, ideological, psychological and historical factors. This period arguably represented a paradigm shift in thinking about 'race' leading to a demise of the political validation of science, which dominated 'race' thinking, and turned the lens to thinking about 'race' in terms of a social rather than a biological construct. Hall (1980) argues that the rejection of 'race' as a marker of human biological and/or moral superiority and inferiority has been crucial in allowing the concept to be understood through sociological categories such as ideology, social construction or as a set of discourses. Consequently, 'race' becomes 'racialisation,' in which meanings become conferred on physical or cultural difference (Miles, 1989; Miles and Brown, 2003).

This period led to the dismissal of a pseudo-scientific legitimacy for the organisations of populations based on an ideology denoting Black inferiority and White superiority, human as opposed to sub humans. Yet, this did not see the end to 'race' and the ideas underpinning its development (Afshar and Maynard, 1994; Mason, 2000; Gilroy, 2004; Kundnani, 2007). Afshar and Maynard (1994) challenge the idea that the post war period merely ushered in a new age marked by the amelioration of 'race'. Nor as Kundnani (2007) asserts should it be perceived as a period signalling the end to racism.

Kundnani (2007:15) sums this up as a period as one that offered 'the pretext for its transformation'. Accordingly, he characterises this period as one representing a reproduction rather than the end of the idea of 'race.' Thus, the

post war period signalled a shift in focus from 'race' as biologically determined to attempts to uncover the underlying social, ideological, psychological and historical processes implicated in the construction of 'race'. However, he asserts that 'race' continued to be used as an explanatory framework for behaviour and an example of this is the moral panic of the 1970s around 'mugging' (Hall et al. 1972). Arguably, the moral panic around 'UGC' is further testament to this view.

The post-war period marked an important juncture in thinking about 'race.' Gilroy (2004) contends that in the aftermath of the Second World War it is a period regarded as one of nation building, geo-political realignment and attempts to address racial difference both between and within states. This facilitated a shift in thinking about 'race', the outcome of which was an invisibility of 'race' in the development of many aspects of geo-politics. Nonetheless, the reality was that rendering 'race' invisible did not equate to the absence of 'race' (Gilroy, 2004). Hence, 'race' as a means of differentiating between people and populations, as detailed above, still prevailed. Marking this shift was an institutionalisation of 'race' that served as a means of legitimating racism. An example of the institutionalisation of politics is presented in the work of Williams' (1989) analysis of the establishment of the British Welfare State and major institutions in the post war period, she suggests that its development can be viewed as testament to how 'race' was embedded in the very fabric of this significant nation building project. Williams (1989) asserts that the catastrophic impact of the Second World War created the conditions for the elevation of an aspirational discourse setting out a new settlement for British people and British way of life dominant all areas of civic society. She charts how building this vision required labour and how post war period immigration was actively

encouraged from Britain's former imperial colonies, such as the West Indies, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Black immigration to Britain took place mainly in the 1950s and 1960s, during which time people were encouraged to come to Britain to supplement the labour force. She describes this as a period of economic boom – in many cases the idea was that Black people would take low paid jobs within the expanding public services, such as the NHS and transport. Williams (1989) notes that Black people were immediately segregated within the broader labour market in which they generally occupied lower status jobs, often with the worst working conditions and the lowest level of pay. The outcome is that Black people in Britain have been at greater risk of poverty and deprivation. Moreover, Williams (1989) contends that the exclusion of Black service users from welfare provision in Britain is not just a product of racist discrimination, but at a more general ideological level runs much deeper.

Williams' (1989) analysis of the post war construction of the British Welfare State alerts us to how at the time of its very development it embodied specific ideas about 'race' and gender and consideration of its intended or unintended beneficiaries. This period represented a transformative phase for the notion of citizenship and an expansion of the relationship between people and the state in which Britishness was once bound to White superiority (Kundnani, 2007) and also conveyed specific gendered ideas about its relationship to men and women (Williams, 1989). Kundnani (2007) claims that the legislative process is a mechanism used to convey difference, for example, the 1948 Nationality Act confirms that citizens of the commonwealth nations were to be British subjects rather than citizens. This legislation can be viewed as fuelling a belief that that being White was a pre-requisite to being 'truly' British. Consequently, political processes during this period facilitated an alignment between ideas of 'race' and

nation alongside the reorganisation of nation around a concept of White identity (Kundnani, 2007). For that reason Kundnani (2007:20) contends that the post war developments around 'race' represented a shift that was 'no less racist than the imperial notion of a racial hierarchy it had displaced'. The significance of 'race' and politics is discussed later in this chapter

2.4 A shift in terminology: moving from 'race' to racialisation

Thinking about 'race' during the post war period represented a vehement shift from talking about 'race' to talking about racialisation (Murji and Solomos, 2005). Moreover, racialisation increasingly became the term used to understand issues associated with social formation. This development can be clearly seen within the discipline of sociology, in which Racialisation was used as a means of examining the role of 'race' and issues associated with ethnicity (Murji and Solomos, 2005). However, similarly to 'race,' the term racialisation is heatedly contested (see Banton, 1977; Miles, 1983; Anthias and Yuval Davies, 1992; Miles and Brown, 2003). Nonetheless, the concept racialisation is widely utilised in discussions about racial and ethnic relations and as a central tenet in analysis of racial phenomena. Murji and Solomos (2005) note how the concept racialisation is the outcome of the shift in thinking about 'race' from one biologically determined to one that aims to focus on explicating the processes underpinning the construction of ideas about 'race' that come to be regarded as meaningful and acted upon. As such, here it is important to provide a closer look at the concept.

There has been a substantial critical engagement with concepts such as 'race' and 'race' relations; however, racialisation has received far less systematic attention (Barot and Bird, 2001). The term racialisation is far from new, but one with a genealogy traceable in the UK from the late 19th century (Barot and Bird, 2001). Barot and Bird (2001) claim that it is in the second part of the 20th century in which the concept racialisation becomes a prominent term used within Sociology of 'Race' and Ethnic Relations. More importantly, they suggest that this reflects a shift from the focus on 'race' to a focus on racialisation precipitated by an acknowledgment that 'race' still matters and as a means of conveying how 'race' continues to impact on the lived reality of specific groups in society. An example of this can be found in the work of Banton's (1977) in which we see the shift to the use of racialisation, by the academic community, as a means of addressing concerns associated with use of the concept 'race':

> The conception of racialisation has been taken up by sociologists as a way out of difficulties caused by the multiplicity of meaning given to the word 'race.' To say that differences were racialised is to say that they were interpreted in the light of prevailing racial theories without entering into any debate about the validity of these theories (Banton, 1977:35).

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There are tensions associated with the term racialisation. This is because similarly to 'race,' racialisation is informed and shaped by different bodies of thoughts (Miles, 1983; Anthia and Yuval Davies, 1992; Banton, 2002; Miles and Brown, 2003; Murji and Solomos, 2005). In conjunction with 'race', racialisation is a term that is heatedly contested and there are longstanding academic

debates as to whether racialisation represents a problematic, a process, a concept a theory, a framework or a paradigm (Small, 1994:33). Whilst racialisation is a term that gained prominence in the post-war period in the UK, Barot and Bird (2001) contend that racialisation has its roots in thinking from the 19th century. For example, Toynbee (1918; 1948) sought to question whether racialisation should be considered a phylogenetic myth that had 'real' consequences, which served to reaffirm racial inequalities. Keith (1931) offered a reductionist interpretation located in biological notions of difference, in which, racialisation was explained as a response to concerns associated with the desacralizing tendency of democratic states. Here we see the notion of 'mixing' being tantamount to racial purity. The longevity of such ideas cannot be ignored and continue to dominate debates today and are reflected within sociology from the 1970s onwards (Barot and Bird, 2001).

Hence, we find variations in explanations associated with racialisation, but it is arguably Miles' (1983) work that offers the most comprehensive analysis. For Miles (1983), racialisation represented a re-emergence of the dialectic of 'self' and 'other' in terms of the attributed characteristics of the 'other' reflects the contrasting characteristics of 'self' and vice versa. Miles (1983) asserts that mirroring the concept 'race,' racialisation too enacts a process of 'othering' in which populations are ascribed with certain characteristics. Once these characteristics are allocated they are drawn upon in strategies that sift and sort people into categories. These are categories that are not neutrally employed but are positioned in a hierarchal structure with the primary intention of differentiating populations based on an assumption of inferiority and superiority. The outcome is that, whether directly or' indirectly, the lives of certain groups are ordered and shaped by a process of racialisation (Miles, 1983). However,

Banton (1977) takes a different view and argued that, a pre-requisition for racialisation rests on the presence of 'race.' There is a close association between scientific theories of racial typology and racialisation. Writers like Reeves (1983:100) distinguish between 'practical and ideological racialisation, using the former to refer to the formation of 'racial groups' and the latter to refer to the use of 'race' in discourse. For Reeves (1983), the discourse of 'race' entered British political discourse and, in turn, becomes reified in legislation form 1945. Others such as Omi and Winant (1986) use the concept racialisation to signify the extension of racial meanings to previously racially unclassified relationships, social practices or group. Racialisation, Omi and Winart (1986: 640) argue 'is a historically specific ideological process', a definition that corresponds closely to Reeves (1983) concept of practical racialisation. Anthias and Davies (1992) call for a more nuanced analysis of racialisation which acknowledges the intersection between class, ethnicity, 'race and gender and state processes. Important to note here is the varying perspectives of racialisation with minimal agreement between commentators. We find differences associated with how racialisation is used as a way of referring to a representational process in which social significance is attached to certain biological (usually phonotypical) human features. On this basis, people possessing certain characteristics are designated as distinct collectives. In so saying, a common theme is how the process of racialisation begins with the emergence of the idea of 'race' and continues for the duration of the employment of the idea of 'race' to categorise the world's population (Barot and Bird, 2001).

2.5 Summary and reflections

In this chapter, I have presented an analysis of literature associated with 'race.' I have taken the decision to organise the literature within a taxonomy stemming from what I identify to be key junctures associated with thinking about 'race.' This allows me to illuminate the longevity of certain ideas which have informed and continue, albeit in different forms, to shape 'race' thinking. My aim is to demonstrate how 'race' still holds significance. Yet, Gilroy (2004) maintains that there is a need to revisit aspects associated with political and moral debate related to 'race.' He advocates a return to making 'race' visible due to an overwhelming tendency to ignore the reality that comes from the presence of 'race.' Hence, for Gilroy (2004:15) 'race' occupies only 'minimal presence in today's incomplete genealogies' of the global movement for human rights, which are inclined to imaging that conflict between 'race' and more inclusive models of humanity was concluded long ago. A re-occurring development in the post war period since the concept 'race' was put under a U.N.E.S.C.O. micro scope, has been a lack of attention afforded to the concept (Gilroy, 2004). Yet, as I suggest in Chapter One, 'race' thinking is uncovered when one examines an issue such as 'UGC.' Thus, it is possible to view 'UGC' as a euphemism that tells us something not solely about a criminal act, but illuminates a broader range of issues and relationships. There is value to examine explicitly or implicitly, real or imagined, the extent in which 'UGC' relays something about the perceptions held by major institutions about Black people and their actions and Black people's relationship to them. Uncovering an alternative story, which situates 'race' and the process by which groups undergo a process of racialisation, is central to this thesis.

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In setting out evidence of the longevity of ideas subsumed within the concept 'race,' it is possible to uncover the legacy of specific stereotypes and caricatures of the non-Western 'Other' and to consider how such representations continue to reverberate in European thought and culture to the present time (Said, 1978; Malik, 1996; Shire, 1997). Shire (1997:70), contends that 'race' today continues to draw on what he terms an 'old repertoire', a repertoire that denotes notions of a hierarchy of 'races' albeit delivered in different forms. Consequently, the notion of a White axis of power remains and continues to operate today, only it is now informed by new ways of thinking about the relationship between populations. Furthermore, thinking associated with 'race' is firmly entrenched within common sense parlance and Lawrence and Wishart (1971:48) describe this as representative of ideas adapted over time and place:

[A]...contains elements from the Stone Age and principles of a more advanced science, prejudices from all past phases of history at the local level and intuitions of a future philosophy which will be that of the human 'race' united the world over.

Accordingly, the literature presented indicates how aspects of 'race' thinking are maintained and reproduced and visible in ideas in how we apprehend notions of difference.

Focusing attention on 'race' and racialisation helps to illuminate the processes that feed racism. Additionally, it opens the way to examining how racism is

implicated in systems and structures of British society and shapes Black people's experiences (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1982). Such a focus is essential as racism is not merely an ideology, but can be viewed as rooted in a history of racist practices within the British State, the British dominant classes and the British working class whose ideas are conditioned, if not determined, by historical developments (ibid). The characterisation of young Black men and African Caribbean communities (ACC) as a criminal 'other' is not new. As such, there are certain continuities in thinking about 'race' which demonstrate how ideas informing a dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' are not new but form part of a legacy one of which was uncovered and detailed by Hall et al. (1978).

Thirty four years ago, Stuart Hall and his colleagues demonstrated how 'mugging' misdirected popular attention towards sensationalised street crime whilst hiding and mystifying its 'deeper' causes. They focused their attention, not on young Black male muggers, but on the system and structures surrounding them. For them, mugging needed to be explored as a social and political phenomenon, rather than a particular form of street crime. Their analysis remains relevant and facilitates thinking about 'UGC' as conveying the hallmark of a moral panic, described by Hall et al. (1978) as evident when:

> The official reaction to a person, groups of persons or series of
> events is out of all proportion to the actual threat offered, when
> 'experts' in the form of police chiefs, the judiciary, politicians and
> editors perceive the threat in all but identical terms and appear to
> talk with one voice of rates, diagnosis, prognosis and solutions,

when the media representatives universally stress ' sudden and dramatic increases (in numbers of events) and 'novelty' above and beyond what a sober realistic appraisal could sustain, then we believe it appropriate to speak of the beginnings of a moral panic (Hall et al. 1978:16).

'Race' is a fluid concept and needs to be viewed as something in continual flux which is produced and reproduced. Nevertheless, what is also evident is how certain notions prevail. In Chapter Three and Four aims I examine why it remains important to move beyond processes that serve to normalise African Caribbean communities and African Caribbean families without due attention to how 'race', racism and racialisation are implicated in their very construction.

Chapter 3: Race, racism, racialisation and African Caribbean communities (ACC)

There are potential dangers to be found in common acceptance of a normative view of community as this fails to acknowledge processes that shape understanding of community or capture the heterogeneity in how individuals' experience community (Anthias and Yuval Davies, 1992; Mirza, 1997; Reynolds, 2013). Here I present a critical examination of community in order to indicate why this is a prerequisite to capturing relationships between people and essential when trying to understand the views and experiences of men and women from ACC and 'UGC'.

3.0 Introducing community

> The word 'community' is encountered everywhere… notably not only in the writings of communitarian philosophers, sociologists and political sciences, but also in talks …politicians, police commissioners and university vice-chancellors. As one would expect of a word that has acquired such universal affection, community has also become the idiom of the street, the sports arena and the playground. It even appears in the most unlikely places, such the market (the business community) and the once-upon-a-time monolith of Fordism brutality- the Welfare State (Blackshaw, 2010:19).

Blackshaw (2010) highlights the multifaceted use of the concept community. He notes that the fascination with the term rests on its universal appeal. Similarly, Frazer (1999) identifies the popularity of community as resting in a range of positive feelings associated with notions of belonging, kinship and solidarity. He concedes that such feelings are often very difficult for individuals to take issue with, as such, leading to reluctance to critically challenge the concept. Bauman (200:1) describes community as 'a feel good word'. This is due, he argues, to community 'conveying all promising pleasures, and more often than not the kinds of pleasures which we would like to experience but seem to miss' (ibid). Hence, a common theme across the literature is a consensus of a notion of community that has facilitated its popular appeal. However, Bell and Newby (1974) argue there are also inherent tensions associated with the concept community; this tension can be viewed as arising from its general appeal, but also simultaneously reflects the diverse ways that it is both enacted and experienced. Commonality and difference underpin individuals and groups relationship to community.

Thus, despite its popularity and, it being considered as one of the most perfect political word in the English speaking language, community is difficult to define. This definitional challenge is a key feature found in work focussing on community (Nesbit, 1967; Bell and Newby, 1974; Frazer, 1999; Blackshaw, 2010). Nesbit (1967) describes community as; one of the 'unit ideas of sociology, which reaches far beyond local community to encompass religion, work, family and culture. Further, he notes that community refers to a wide range of factors, including social bonds, characterised by emotional, cohesion, depth, continuity and fullness. Bell and Newby (1974) conclude that, the lack of definition is responsible for a situation in which community can mean several

things at once or, indeed, nothing at all. A further problem is encountered in that community has little or no substantive sociological theory. This contributes to a situation in which the inability to draw upon a body of theory of the community leads to having to examine the concept through consideration of the ideas found in the work of individuals who have written about community (Bell and Newby, 1974).

Arguably, the lack of definitional clarity is in certain circumstances beneficial. Ambiguity helps to sustain a taken for granted view of community, which is normative and simultaneously aspirational (Alleyne, 2002). Accordingly, on a common sense level, if we take into consideration the range of positive connotations associated with community, it is possible to understand why community, when used in common and political discourse, is rarely contested. However Alleyne (2002) argues that community like 'race,' is not value free. Community also undergoes modification once it comes into contact with the political economic and social and cultural spheres. Additionally, he alerts us to the epistemological consequences of an unreflexive use of the concept 'community,' specifically when community is used in conjunction with ethnic minority groups. Consequently, he suggests that it is remiss to ignore the longevity of certain themes and ideas that historically shape how individuals from ethnic minority groups experience community as community embodies notions denoting difference. For Alleyne (2002), 'community' is something requiring critical examination and should not be considered obvious or self-explanatory. He contends that a starting point for those involved in research about community is to interrogate the concept as something that requires explanation. Thus, a critical review of the concept 'community' is central to my research as this allows for an examination of the normative ideas that dominate

understanding of community; the basis in which individuals are assigned to community, the relationship of community to politics and the state and the processes that go into building and sustaining human collectives. Drawing on a number of writers I present an analysis which enables me to move beyond a dominant and fixed conceptualisation of community. I irradiate how community is mediated by power and how this contributes to the construction and placement of a diverse range of people into a predetermined group. I draw attention to a dimension of community often less visible in which community is also part of the armoury evoked by individuals and groups as a means of self-definition and in response to perceptions associated with inequality and injustice within the political, economic and social sphere.

3.1 The intellectual roots of community

Whilst there is no overarching theory of community, there is much contemporary work that has attempted to capture its philosophical roots (Bell and Newby, 1974; Anderson, 1983; Crow and Allen, 1994; Bauman, 2001; Delante, 2006; Blackshaw, 2010). Delante (2006) traces the origin of community to early modern classical Greek when 'community' portrayed a kind of entity that was embedded within the very fabric of the polis (cities) of classical Greece. He suggests that at this time there was no essential difference between how people viewed the social and the communal sphere. Consequently, it was a period in which the very fact that people inhabited urban spaces meant they were automatically perceived as holding membership to the community. Thus, he maintains that the core essence of classical Greek thinking was how the concepts of community and society were used interchangeably. They were

ideas founded on principles in which there was no marked difference between the communal and the social as they were perceived to be the same. Further, Delante (2006) argues that community evokes a means of expressing something about the social, political and economic relationships individuals had to each other. This was because community and society conveyed a sense of belonging, which was commonly accepted, however, it was also recognised that this sense of belonging was contingent upon the locality in which people lived. The Classical Greek view of community was expounded within a specific context to include a particular group premised upon urban/rural split. In addition, Oldfield (1990) surmises that this view of community reinforced an important connection back to Aristotelian notions of civic republicanism and Judaeo Christian ideas.

Consideration of the intellectual roots of community illuminates how ideas developed during the period from Ancient Greece to the Enlightenment held notions of community that expressed the essence of the society, rather than its antithesis (Delante, 2006). Community referred to a more immediate world, in which belonging and everyday life was something individuals directly experienced. Therefore, 'community designated the social domain of the life world, the lived world of everyday (Delante, 2006:8). This is not to suggest that this interpretation did not raise issues about the nature of such relationships. As Delante (2006) explains within the Greek city community ties were contractual in nature and used to designate an individual's position within an existing hierarchical structure. Nevertheless, he argues that, notions of belonging were uniformly experienced due to the lack of differentiation between people living in urban spaces. Consequently, this is a period in which a dominant view of

society and community was established in terms of resting on expressing something about what people shared.

Within classical sociological theory we can deduce a degree of consensus about 'community' and, it is possible to see this as, in part, laying a foundation for the appeal associated with contemporary ideas of community. Community was imbued with an idealized appeal of what society could be. Writers presented a dominant conceptualisation that evoked an image of the 'good life' and even though views of the 'good life' varied this did not detract from the consensus where 'community' was something to extol (Bell and Newby, 1974). This dominant conceptualisation of community is not to suggest that classical writers held an idealised view of 'community,' but provides an indication of the significance of this period in shaping contemporary ideas of community. Giddens (1971) argues that a common ambition stemming from ideas put forward during the 19th century is that it expedited an enduring search for a specific notion of community. Alleyne (2002) asserts that this that is reflected within a number of social science disciplines. He posits that, within disciplines such as sociology and anthropology substantial attention had been afforded to explaining the role of modernization and capitalism in transforming a pre-industrial community into modern society and, in trying to understand the perceived separation between community and society. Furthermore, he claims that some of the most influential universalistic political ideologies of modernity have been in the search of a romantic idea of community that developed during what Delante (2006:18) terms as the 'Age of Ideology'. Consequently, Alleyne (2002) argues that it is often this notion of community that is portrayed within the rhetoric of the political elite and this is why community continues to be presented as an important aspiration.

3.2 Radical and reimagining of community

Clay (2009) surmises that the early 20th century is renowned for continual attempts to unearth and expose the concept community thorough study of particular locations. Indeed, he notes that in this period attempts were made to move away from using the concept community to focus on the idea of the local. Further, this shift, in part represented a response to historical tensions associated with the concept community. He also asserts that this is a factor leading to a tendency to view community as outdated, value laden or merely too vague. Yet, despite numerous endeavours to 'tidy up' perceived difficulties associated with community, what has also emerged is a growing body of work putting forward a critical approach to understanding community (Lawrence, 1982; Sivanandan, 1990; Anthias and Yuval Davies, 1992 Frazier, 1999; Mirza, 1997; Alleyne, 2002; 2007; Reynolds, 2012; Andrews, 2013). Alleyne (2002) calls for researchers to challenge and deconstruct taken for granted ideas embodied in a normative assumptions of community. Alleyne (2002) contends that what is often over looked in the analysis of the work of classical writers is how the community-society split also incorporated a separation of the traditional or the pre-modern from modernisation or the modern:

> The early twentieth- century sociologist imagined community
> somewhat differently from their anthropologist colleagues: while
> for the classical sociologists, the community was displaced back in
> the history of 'the West''; for the anthropologists, community was
> displaced in space, to placers other than their own modern West
> (Alleyne, 2002:610)

For Alleyne (2002), what has been ignored is that the classical period also purported ideas about individualism encompassed in European Enlightenment thinking that held socio-cultural significance at that time. With the domination of European Enlightenment thinking we see a key role for science and the validation of difference between population encompassed notions attributed to individualism. Hence, the 'individual' was a key distinction used to account for difference between the West and 'modern' and the rest of the world. For Alleyne, it is the validation of this link by the scientific community, in the late 19th Century, based on assumptions about 'race' denoting inferiority/superiority that became allied to a Western conception of community. For this reason, he called for attention to be given to questioning the assumption of an enduring and unbridgeable difference contained in the idea of 'community' because it is this that is also captured in contemporary notions of ethnic minority communities. This is because the idea of community deployed in official discourse ignores how community rests on a complex history, which is traceable through classical sociological and anthropological ideas which assumes ideas of the pre modern and non-western. He further suggests that, a legacy of this period is community as 'doxa', taken for granted and so unquestioningly accepted. This leads to the normalization of community or even naturalizing something that should be objectified and accounted for sociologically. For Alleyne (2002:2), 'community has a history and by implications a range of connotations'. This raises questions about the need to challenge the relationship between community, politics and how it is employed as a means of locating minority communities.

There is a normalised notion of community that has increasingly been accepted as a 'unit idea' within sociology. These assumptions offer a rationale for the allocation of specific groups to particular communities, but also account for how

we may understand their relationship to these spheres too, for example, extend to encompass grouping individuals on the basis of factors such as religion, work family and culture (Nibet,1967). Anthias and Yuval-Davies (1992) maintain that, 'race' is also a means by which communal similarity and difference is constructed. Subsequently, using the concept, without acknowledging its history is inexcusable as it renders invisible the social construction that goes into building and sustaining human collectives. Furthermore, this need is more pressing when we consider how community is implored by policies of the British State in its attempts to manage nationality, 'race' and race relations (Anthias and Yuval Davies, 1992).

Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) suggest that, what is evident is a notion of community that is extended to all groups. However, when 'race' is employed by state actors it is used as a way to differentiating between groups and erects boundaries that designates and fixes what people share and where they belong. Additionally, they argue that, these bounded communities are not equally positioned as the dominant position is held by White communities. This is apparent when we consider who has control over the means of communication, cultural production and hold dominant positions within the state. Indeed, Anthias and Yuval-Davies (1992: 8) assert that, such advantages merely afford those in dominant positions 'the potential to naturalize their Weltanschuag'[world view]. They recognise that there are some exceptions, for example, in conflicts that have been witnessed in parts of Eastern Europe and the processes that have gone into differentiating between people. However, they uphold the view that power mediates the concept community, which is evident in how community is operationalized by the state and its apparatus. As such, this raises questions about how community has the potential to reaffirm and sustain ideas around

'race.' To this end, it can serve to reinforce presumed difference between populations where the majority White British constitute the norm and this has ramifications for those who are deemed not to belong (Hall, 1996). Frazier (1999) contends that a reoccurring theme to be found in the in contemporary literature is how use of the concept of community in the 'West,' has tended to be focused in the area of identity politics and ethnic minorities.

3.3 Reflecting on Community

Alleyne (2002) calls for sociologists studying community to engage in a process, in which they imagine, represent and ultimately locate themselves in the community under investigation. This is because he sees a key component to studying ethnic minority communities necessitates `the mapping of the researcher's own social position: social identity and theoretical standpoint' (616) as a prerequisite in redressing the assumption of enduring and unbridgeable difference that is contained in the idea of community. He suggests that drawing attention to the location of the researcher helps to disrupt a normalization associated with how we understand community.

On reflection, my perception of community reflects the inherent tensions detailed above. I see community in terms of the normative ideals found in the work of classical writers as holding a notion of belonging and a part of a wider group. However, I am also conscious of challenges encountered in using community detailed in the work of writers such as Stacey (1969), who reminds us of how factors such as 'race,' gender and class shape how people

experience community too. I am a Black woman and a member of a minority ethnic group who was born and has lived her entire life in the UK. For me, community represents far more than a place of belonging or something about the location in which I live. Community is both something that is acted upon me, but also something that I perform. By this, I mean community is something that I am assigned to and a place in which I choose to withdraw often due to circumstances where I feel threatened, angry or a sense of injustice, or merely just a need to be reminded about something shared with others. As such, community real or imagined (Jenkins,1996), for me, performs a number of roles. One of the most important roles it has occupied since my teenage years is it has become a place I seek as a means of challenging racism and finding kinship. This is not to suggest that it is homogenous or necessarily a cohesive place because I am also aware of how my experience of community is also mediated by power where 'race' class and gender, religious conviction form shapes my experience.

Anderson (1983) provides an additional insight, in suggesting that for some ethnic minority communities community is essential in terms of performing the additional function in terms of being a place in which people are able to make sense of their national identities, particularly in the absence of defined territories. Anderson (1983) alludes to how for some migrant groups, irrespective of whether they are newly arrived, settled or second or third generation and British by birth, community can play a specific psychological role in terms of offering a sense of belonging, a connection to others based on a racial of racialised identity. Bauman (2001) sees a possible explanation for this in that for some, community forms a potential aspiration of a refuge in a globalising world that fragments people's sense of belonging at the level of

nation state. Jenkins (1996) argues that community in this context can be understood in term of an internal definition where individuals and groups define their own identity in addition to (and in response to) the external definition in which ethnicity reflects agency as well as structure. He further states that, groups form boundaries of inclusion as a means of eliciting a sense of identity and access to social resources. Moreover, he suggests that relations between ethnic groups are not necessarily hierarchical, exploitative and conflictual. Thus, Jenkins (1996) views racial oppression as a factor that structures an individual's identity as well as social relations. It is important to note that, while the emphasis appears to be on internal factors (agency in the construction of identity), the structuring of identity by external social factors remains important.

3.4 Racialisation and 'the African Caribbean community'

As previously discussed, we are often presented with a normative view of community associated with feelings of warmth and connectedness, which on the surface is largely appealing. However, as also indicated, there is a need to see beyond assumptions about where individuals belong or are assigned to a category from a limited pre-determined list (Alleyne, 2002) because for some groups, community represents a continual reminder of how access is gained and denied based on perceptions of racial or ethnic identity (Anthias and Yuval Davies, 1992). As such, in the UK, the construction of the African Caribbean community is in part the outcome of wider processes aligned to British social policy since the post war period. Here we see from the 1950s the emergence of an African Caribbean community constructed and presenting the British state with a means of grouping culturally diverse populations from the Caribbean

together as a way of managing 'race' relations (Sivanandan,1990; Solomos, 2003; Goulbourne, 2003 and Craig, 2007). Since the 1960, the UK has witnessed the introduction of a number of Immigration and 'Race' Relation Acts and initiatives, for example, the introduction of: Community Relations Commissions, Local Community Relations Councils, Local Government Acts, Urban Programme and Community Cohesion initiatives (Solomos, 2003; Bleich, 2003; Craig, 2007). Anthias and Yuval-Davies (1990) argue that the 1960s and 1970s witnessed an importation of community from America in which the term became indelibly linked to ethnic minorities and, it this that is the fundamental feature of Race Relation legislation and the wider 'race' relations industries. Bleich (2003) suggests that, a continuation of this relationship between 'race' and community is evident in domestic 'community' policy under New Labour from 1997-2010. He contends that despite a shift from a focus on processes to outcomes and a shift in political rhetoric, community policies continue to be, in reality, primarily concerned with the containment of Black and Minority Ethnic groups. He asserts that, there remain echoes of the language of the 1950s about assimilation rather than a specific response to real concern for the enhancement of minorities' welfare. For Solomos, this development is representative of how political treatment of ethnic minorities shifted from a race relations approach to a community relations paradigm. Further, he highlights how this is seen in the recent approach to Community Cohesion. An approach perceives the challenge today to be to make multi-ethnic and multi-cultural communities work (Cantle, 2008: 67). Cantle's (2008) work became influential for a substantial period of the New Labour Government and continues to resonate under the stewardship of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat administration. It is possible to suggest that this approach to addressing 'race' or

difference is conducted within a context in which we see a perception of community remains one that tell us something about the 'other'

3.5 Representation and African Caribbean communities

Anthias and Yuval-Davies (1992) state that the current situation is one in which the term community is used as a euphemism for civil society. Community in this sense denotes those who do not belong to the hegemonic ethnic grouping being constructed as deviant within this community. On the one hand, we see Black people residing outside the construction of British identity and the construction of the notion of a British identity built on 'a hegemonic white ethnicity that never speaks its presence' (Mirza, 1997:3). Thus, Mirza (1997) draws attention to caveats that are used in the allocation of a British identity whereby the invitation extended to Black people is conditional upon an invitation to be British, but tied to a specific notion in terms of the opportunity to be Black and British. She suggests that being Black in Britain is akin to a state of becoming racialised and an outcome of a process where colour is used as a defining factor that signifies who you are.

Alongside this, we see Black minority and other ethnic minority groups often conceptualised as 'flawed psychologically, morally and socially, not only as individuals, but also in terms of their cultures and family life, and indeed every aspect of their lives (Owusu-Bempah and Howitt, 2000:95). Writing in 1982, Lawrence argued that, if we examine the construction of the Black family what we see is how they are shaped by the connection between common ideas in

conjunction with Right wing theories of 'race; which are able to command popular support. Reynolds (2009) demonstrates the longevity of ideas associated with the pathological Black family and highlights a common tendency for non-resident Black fathering relationships to be characterised as deviant from White, middle-class norms.

Alongside the notion of African Caribbean people and families being flawed, we also have the construction, Gilroy (1987) argues, in which Black and minority ethnic groups are perceived as innately criminal. He suggests that this idea became common in the 1970s and 1980s with the mugging moral panic, and is crucial to the development of the 'Black problem'. Hall et al. (1978) highlighted how mugging was initially shadowed by the theme of race and crime, however over time this theme became more explicit and became evident in both official and public consciousness. As a result mugging became synonymous with the changing composition of some of Britain's larger cities, viewed as a Black crime, located in and arising from the conditions of life in Black urban areas and a marker of some kind of pathology (Hall et al., 1978). For Gilroy (2003) 'UGC' can also be viewed as reflecting aspects of the racialisation that went into the construction of the 'the mugger' phenomenon. Wood (2010) draws attention to how this is reflected in ideas associated with 'UGC' in which the image portrayed is of the young, armed, dangerous criminal other. As Hurwitz and Peffley (1997:375) points out,' we know two things about public opinion on crime it is salient and it matters'.

Arguably, this reflects what Anthias and Yuval-Davies (1992) argue, in that that the construction of the boundary of community when used in relation to Black

and other minority groups is extremely important as it holds a notion of the community that assumes an organic wholeness. Furthermore, it limits any attention on the possibility of any notion of internal difference within the 'community' as this is subsumed in its organic construction. They further suggest that it can be either a functional difference which contributes to smooth and efficient working of 'the community', or it is an anomaly, a pathological deviation. This natural community does not allow for an ideological reconstruction, whose boundaries, structures and norms are the result of constant struggles and negotiations, or more general social developments. As such, issues arising from religious views, class and gender are rendered invisible and have the potential to capture the myriad of views from the various actors to be found within ACC. As Weekes (2003) asserts, this constructs Blackness or individuals into community on the basis primarily of skin colour often subsuming the relevance of other social relations, including gender, sexuality and class, within the overall concept of 'race.' Reynolds (2012) draws attention to limitations associated with assumptions that Black people are bonded together through a shared cultural and ethnic background. She problematizes such assumptions for rendering invisible inherent differences that exist within individuals located with African and ACC. Reynolds focuses attention on differences between the 'established,' (those the Caribbean who settled in the UK in the post war period or were born in the UK) and 'new comers' (those arriving and settling in the UK from the 1990s). She concludes that moving beyond the assumptions of an ACC leads to uncovering differences that exist between 'established' and 'newcomer' migrants. Further, such a focus allows us to capture the 'invisible' and intra-ethnic boundaries between the 'established' and 'newcomer' migrants (69). Reynolds posits that, this directs

attention to factors such as change and continuity, and challenges within family networks and intimate relationships.

3.6 Community activism a response to racism

Sivanandan (1990) provides an alternative and important understanding of community. He charts the formation of African Caribbean and Asian people in the post-war years and concludes that community during this period needs to be viewed as an act of resistance to racism in the factories and the neighbourhoods of the inner cities which African Caribbean and Asian communities worked and lived. For this reason community for Black people represents more than an individual's search for belonging, but is a product of individuals' responses to racism. He explains that the post war period was instrumental in terms of facilitating a need for people to join together in order to draw attention to common concerns. To this end, community was a response to the denial of basic rights and restricted access to areas such as housing, schooling, criminal justice and welfare systems and racist violence. Furthermore, community is a collective response to common problems and common interests which coalesces in a common culture of resistance – and to community. Indeed, the racialised disempowerment and fragmentation that characterised the lived reality of many visible minority groups in the 1980s was significant in the politicisation of these groups and drive for collective action (Mirza, 1997).

There is a substantial body of work that demonstrates the interpretation of community as a form of resistance. For example, Reynolds (2003) states that, the growth of self-help organisations represents an outcome of Black people's increased collective mobilisation in response to feelings of disengagement, disillusionment and disaffection with 'mainstream,' municipal bodies. Craig (2007) shows how common concerns underpin the establishment of a Black housing movement and the capacity building of BME voluntary and community groups in order to facilitate campaigns around specific issues such as sickle cell anaemia, mental health and disability. Andrews (2013) documents how the development of supplementary schools within ACC can be understood as a response to the failure of the education system, partly as an outcome of institutional racism to be found within the statutory Education system. He suggests that the supplementary schools of the 1970s and 1980s need to be understood as a radical act, one that was highly politicised and functioned as a means of resistance.

The conception of community constituted as a collective response to racism is not to suggest that community is homogenous, uniform or that individuals experience it in the same way. Community in this sense is also shaped by social differences such as class, gender and religion (Hill Collins, 1990; Mirza, 1997; Reynolds, 2003). Reynolds (2003) identifies how the work of Black women demonstrates a personalized view of community in which community provides a site where women are able to adopt a pragmatic response to what they perceive to be local needs. Here we see Black women playing a key role and performing a range of tasks as a means of addressing issues of inequality and injustice. For Reynolds, this is an expression of community that represents something tangible, which is important in order to deal with Black people's

material reality. Reynolds (2003) illuminates how community in this sense expresses something 'real,' it is about 'real' people with 'real' concerns. Furthermore, it is a notion of community that embodies and represents an emotional and psychological connection people hold:

> Thus, the notion of 'community', and what appears to be a strong moral obligation and personal investment many black women have to this, is understood as constitutive of a spatial geographical community. This differs from the academic discussions of community that is 'imagined' (Anderson 1981) and constructed through the collective experience of shared gender and racial belonging (Reynolds, 2003:33)

Reynold's work allows us to see how for Black women community work is a means of becoming active agents in strategies in order to address local issues. Moreover, Hill Collins (1998) argues that Black women's involvement in community work whilst making a difference and contribution to Black political struggle can also result in individual sacrifice bordering sometimes on exploitation. Thus, Hill Collins (1998) highlights that for some Black women there are personal repercussions for putting themselves first as they have to contend with community expectations that they should engage in helping others. Reynolds (2003) draws attention to an understanding of community that is localized and issue-based. Further, she acknowledges that community in this sense may also rest on forging alliances with other groups irrespective of racial or gender identity in circumstances where a shared need is identified, Mirza (1997) points out that, when groups organised around a shared need this is not

without challenges, for example, local struggles over who could or could not be named as 'Black' (i.e. Asian, Chinese, mixed race). Nonetheless, what is presented is a shift in focus in which community is a mechanism for action rather than one based on a construction that is abstract and homogenized.

3.7 Politics and the appropriation of community

Wilmot (1989) suggests that in the latter half of the 20th century the concept of community has come to the fore in British social policy. This, he observes is an outcome of an endeavour by the British State and its institutions to incorporate 'community' more actively than in previous eras. Cochrane (1986:51) argues that, 'governments seem to use 'community' as if it were an aerosol can to be sprayed on any social programme, giving it a more progressive and sympathetic cachet'. He questions the nature of this shift and suggested that, it is unclear as to whether the shift represents a 'rhetorical exploitation of high-minded ambiguity' or 'genuine change in the way of organising collective life' (ibid). Giddens (1994:124) argues that across the political spectrum, the focus on community is, in part, driven by political concern about a 'perceived fear of social disintegration in British society associated with a perceived decline in civic society more generally. As such, drawing on community is a political attempt to revive historical appeal associated with community (Delante, 2006). Madden (2007) surmises that, this shift represents the usefulness of 'community' in party political discourse in mediating a perceived gap between the individual and the collective. This is because of the power one can associate with ideas of solidarity, co-operation and partnership with sentiments of warmth, belonging and sharing. Hence, what we see is a political revival of

community in the latter half of the 20th Century as a ploy to evoke such sentiments within British society. Further as Parker (2006) notes, this political attempt is vehement on all sides of the political spectrum. He, therefore argues that, despite community in recent years being considered as the domain of New Labour, the ideological battle to become the British political party most associated with the 'cohesive' and 'good life' that community brings is visible across other parties too. Evidence for this can be found in a speech made by Douglas Hurd who accused Tony Blair of being disingenuous in presenting New Labour as the party that most valued communities:

> The Conservative Party needs to stress our belief in our institutions in the community, and the bonds and values which make us a community, no less than we emphasise the market and its promise of material wealth ...We must also show that our understanding of our community and its values is deeper than theirs (Parker, 2006).

Under a coalition Government, since 2010 we have seen the continuation of this trend to focus attention on community. For example, the Coalition's Localism Bill, published on 13th December 2010, within a political rhetoric of the 'Big Society' set out a range of measures that they argue will give communities and local government greater powers and freedom from Whitehall. The central plank of justification was associated with the notion of 'community.' The Coalition project expressed clearly in the forward by Nick Clegg, the Deputy Prime Minster who states that:

> While Liberal Democrats and Conservatives use different language and The Prime Minister may talk about the ''Big Society' to Liberal Democrats the notion of the Big Society is about 'Community Politic. The Big Society, realised when people work together for the common good. So the political agenda is one which promotes active 'community' participation and it is this that can be seen as a central pillar of public policy (DfCLG, 2010: Forward)

The role of 'community' is said to be pivotal in the maintenance of mental health (Keating, 2007), supporting educational achievement (Andrew, 2013) and a key aspect in addressing issues such as 'UGC', in which strategies to promote community participation and to facilitate community empowerment, community trust and confidence in community policing are promoted as central to its amelioration in excluded and vulnerable communities (Home Office 2004). For Clay (2007), this can be summed up as indicating how we have entered a period in which: '...community as part of ideology has become something of a football-kicked around by different ideological positions and appearing as part of distinctly opposed political agenda'.

3.8 Summary and reflections

In this Chapter my aim was to critically examine how 'community' is far more than a neutral and/ or passive term denoting a sense of belonging and connectedness between individuals. The review illuminates how community is

dynamic and is used as a means to convey a range of assumptions about human relations. To this end, community is impacted when it comes into contact with the political, economic and social and cultural spheres (Alleyne, 2002). In addition, there are alternative ways of understanding community; an example is when it is employed by marginalised groups as a means of identifying, addressing inequality and fighting for social justice. It is community in this sense that is a significant aspect of my research. We are able to uncover the potential for community to produce 'oppositional knowledge' and 'counter narratives' which are mediated through diverse forms, producing theoretical ideas rooted in a desire for change (Lorde, 1984; Hill Collins, 1990, Reynolds 2003). It is from this perspective that community is used in the research on which this thesis is based. Moreover, I also suggest that in adopting this focus on community provides an alternative way to understand the relationship between ACC and 'UGC'.

Chapter 4: Race, racism, racialisation and African Caribbean families (ACF)

4.0 Introduction

In Chapter Three, I identified challenges encountered when the concept of community is employed without due diligence to explicating the processes that inform its construction and the meanings conveyed in its usage (Alleyne, 2002). In this, the third background chapter, I provide a critical analysis of the concept 'family'. My aim is to highlight how, similar to 'community,' 'family', is an ideological conductor predicated on a set of norms which sets out a specific dominant construction of what constitutes 'family'; its role and the responsibilities of individual members. An examination of this notion of 'family' is central to understanding the relationship between African Caribbean families (ACF) and 'urban gun crime' (UGC) in two regards. Firstly, it illuminates how 'the family' is a site premised on specific assumptions which contributes to a process of 'othering ACF. Secondly, I consider ways in which 'the family' intersects with 'race' and, in so doing, reproduces and naturalises a particular set of assumptions about Black families, which are then drawn upon and used to inform the policy machinery and approaches put forward to address 'UGC.'

4.1 The dominant conceptualisation of 'the family'

[Ideologies] work most effectively when we are not aware of how we formulate and construct a statement about the world is underpinned by ideological

premises; when our formulations seem to be simply descriptive statement about how things are (i.e. must be), or of what we can 'take-for-granted. (Hall quoted in Lawrence, 1982:46)

Family life is much richer and more varied than politicians and policy makers might like. It is also much more complicated. Individuals in families are motivated by a complex set of factors, most of which are rooted in emotions and family history, and few of which are straightforwardly rational (Braun, 2014:XIV)

These quotes are used to allude to an inherent tension encountered in a dominant conceptualisation of 'family, Bruan (2014) draws attention to difficulties encountered by politicians and policy makers when focussing attention on 'the family' in terms of having to address the actuality of family and family life which is diverse, complex and encompasses a range of emotional ties and relationships. Hall (1982) posits that there is a need to question taken for granted assumptions about 'the family.' He suggests that there is a notion of 'family' employed by major institutions that is far from a neutral entity but is the product of an ideological endeavour aimed at prescribing a specific and preferred way for organising family life and intimate relationships. Ergo, a specific Eurocentric notion of 'the family' is used as the bench mark that sets out what is deemed as acceptable or unacceptable behaviour within familial relationships.

Within Western Europe there is a dominant notion of what constitutes a family which is pervasive in that all other family forms are defined in reference to it'

(Muncie and Sapford, 1995). This nuclear family is characterised as; a young, similarly aged, White, married, heterosexual couple who have a small number of children and who are living in an adequate home (Bernardes, 1997). Morgan (1975) maintains that the role of ideology contained within early sociological debates around the structure and function of family and kinship have largely been a means of deflecting attention away from 'the family' as a concept whilst at the same time serving as a means of promoting particular ways of living. An example of this, he argues, is evident in the ground breaking work of Parsons (1956) who presented a view of 'the family' as something positive that evolved in order to meet the demands posed by modern society. From this perspective family in the form of a nuclear unit was presented as something that was necessary, natural and desirable. Within this family unit there is a gendered division of labour in which the male is viewed as primarily the full time bread winner and the female primarily the care giver and a part-time occasional earner. This is a family form that the state and religious institution gravitate towards. Thus, the normalisation of what is perceived as constituting a family is perpetuated through religious institutions and State and its institutions alongside being supported by 'scientific' arguments related to biology and universality in which the superiority of White Western Societies is emphasised.

Bernardes (1997) draws attention to why 'the family' should be considered in conjunction with the development of Western economic and political power. This is because indelibly the conceptualisation of 'the family' that dominates Western thinking is a specific European construction that is taken for granted, re-affirmed and reproduced over time. Moreover, this notion of 'the family' is readily accepted in more secular Western Societies reflecting how explicitly or implicitly religion remains a force that shapes social beliefs. Bernardes (1997)

concedes that the construction and acceptance of 'the family' is useful in that it offers an ideal type that is attractive for people in positions of authority (such as those operating within the state and religious institutions) as 'the family' encompasses a prescribed set of values related to gender roles, rights and responsibilities of adults and children and in positioning 'the family' within the private rather than the public domain.

Families are perceived as key building blocks of human societies as much of our lifetime is spent in families (Korbin, 2014). Henricson (2012) maintains that the community and/or society as a whole is reliant on identifying 'the family' as having legal and commonly established functions of caring and interdependency premised on functions such as; having a financial obligation of care directed from a parent (whether biological or social) to a child which is endorsed in a variety of legal instruments and addressed in child protection legislation and procedures. Whilst there is less of a focus on the care directed from a child to an adult, he argues that there continues to be implicit and explicit established expectations that children will care for parents in old age. This is because 'the family' offers a legally recognised adult couple a relationship sanctioned by religious and state institution via marriage or civil partnership and in which it is expected there are specific obligations of mutual financial support alongside expectations of physical and emotional care (Henricson, 2012). Henricson (2012:4) encourages us to acknowledge the fluidity of family but also points to how 'the family' today within policy is more clearly defined as:

A legally recognised parent-child relationship (whether biological or social) and/or

A legally recognised adult couple relationship.

Despite an acknowledgement within policies and policy making to accommodate family diversity and changes in gender roles (Henricson, 2012), there are some fundamental notions associated with 'the 'family' that have remained overtime. For example, 'the family' continues to be understood as representing a social unit and 'historiography points to the continuing centrality of marriage, motherhood and the male breadwinner construction of families across the 20th century' (Korbin, 2014: 35). The suggestion here is not that how families and family life is understood is fixed but that acknowledging broader societal changes does not equate with disrupting the customary expectation associated with 'the family.' Moreover, the expectations associated with families are increasingly scrutinised as a means of ensuring the legal expectation by the state of unremunerated family support and caring (Korbin, 2014). This has implications for families who are identified as failing to meeting these predetermined expectations and those living in personal and intimate relationships that fall outside of this norm who are stigmatised and/or problematised as a consequence (Clarke, 1991, Ribbens McCarthy, 2014).

Recent trends that show changes in the composition of British households provide a useful insight to understanding the tension between a dominant conceptualisation of the family and the reality of contemporary family life in the UK. Statistics show an ongoing trend in changes in the composition of households in the UK (Lloyd and Lacey, 2012). These changes include; the size and type of the typical UK household with households occupied by fewer people on average, and more people living alone. Simultaneously, there is a

decrease in number of couple headed households as the number of lone parent households has increased (Lloyd and Lacey, 2012). Lloyd and Lacey (2012) point to how in the UK family diversity is far from unusual and trends such as lone motherhood and cohabitation are growing. Despite, such trends and an attempt to accommodate such changes within Family Policy (Henricson, 2012), there remains a chasm between the reality of how people form family relationships and engage in family life and how the state understands and effectively responds to such variations. Ribbens et al (2014) argue that since the 1980s families have been subject to increasing attention across the political sphere. The motivation for this focus is a burgeoning 'moral panic' in which the state, media and sections of wider British society are implicated and reflects concerns associated with how changes in 'the family' are viewed as an indicator of wider societal breakdown. For Ribbens et al. (2014), developments such as rising divorce rates, lone parenthood and cohabitation are used as evidence for a perceived crisis within families which are viewed as having wider ramifications for British society.   This leads to factors such as class and culture being used as dominant factors in ascribing certain family formation as problematic and/ or troubled (Ribbens et al. 2014). Hence, culturally variable family practices, or families viewed as varying from a society and state sanctioned 'norm' are pathologised and treated as 'dysfunctional.' Skeggs (2004:3) argues that this is a specific neoliberal construction in which delinquency, 'dysfunctinal families and ineffectual parenting are conflated within a specific negative discourse'. She states that 'representation unleash a chain of signifiers in which an underclass is not only represented, but also shaped by disparate discourses of familial disorder and dysfunction, dangerous masculinities and dependent fecuns and excessive femininities'. Furthermore, in evoking specific cultural arguments that differentiates between families it is possible to uncover ideas

associated with 'race,' are drawn upon as to inscribe a specific conceptualisation of the 'ACF.' Hence ACF are represented as a pathologised presence and in which normalised absence is framed (Phoenix and Husssain, 2007).

4.2 Resistance and the African Caribbean Family

This dominant notion of 'the family' has been challenged and since the 1970s the uncritical version of family as 'a success story' became under attack from various directions (Gillies, 2003). A significant challenge to this specific construction of 'the family' can be found in the work of feminist scholars, for example Oakley (1972) identifies the nuclear family as a major site of the subordination of women who were relegated to the private sphere as they were denied opportunities outside the home. In opposition to the positivity espoused by Functionalists who view 'the family as a pre-requisite for modern Western capitalist industrial societies, there were counter claims which viewed 'the family' as an exploitative mechanism that supports capitalism through the exploitation of women as a source of unpaid labour (Benston, 1972). Barrett and McIntosh (1980) posit that the construction of 'the family' was a deliberate act designed as a way of supporting the interest of capital by providing motivation for male wage labour and the family wage and legitimation for male demands in the household. The subordinate role of women through the naturalisations of a notion of a gendered division of labour remains a source of contention. Reid Boyd and Letherby (2014) argue that if we examine care what is still evident is; how notions of 'the family' underpinned by an ideological construction of care continues to disguise that for centuries women have not

only worked in the home but have also worked in the public domain in fields, factories and workshops. Whilst in 1900 only 5% of women were employed by the 1940s they argue that this number had risen to 15%. They also note the variations between women, for example the higher percentage of African-American (20%) living in households headed by women and excluded in employment statistics (Reid Boyd and Letherby, 2014). Reid Boyd and Letherby (2014) draw attention to how caring evolved as a gendered concept and the repercussion of this on the lives of women and allude to variations to be found between women.

In addition, Black feminists, alongside antiracist commentators, have also drawn attention to variations between families based on 'race.' Hill Collins (1990:47) asserts that in relation to 'Black families, 'Black women and other women of colour have never fitted this 'norm' and their everyday lived reality challenges the very construction of this notion of 'family'. Thus, what is often ignored in the dominant characterisation of problematic ACF is the 'role' of 'race' in shaping individuals experiences. Hill Collins (1990) argues that 'the family' characterised by a gendered division of labour are less likely to be found in Black communities in which their everyday life is very different. She highlight how the need to share the cost of raising children, factor such as racial oppression and holding different cultural perspectives about 'families' means the boundaries between private and public are more fluid, which is essential for families to survive.   In addition, the historical relationship between Black women and work is one in which Black women have historically combined work and family (Hill Collins, 1990) Haynes (2014) highlights how, like mothers across the world, Caribbean mothers have always looked for ways to improve their family's economic wellbeing. However ongoing economic subordination is a reality for many

Caribbean women and employment becomes a means in which they attempt to transcend poverty. Moreover, this may include single mothers making the decision to leave their children and family members behind, in their home countries, in the hope that they will be able to gain temporary employment abroad, eventually gain permanent residency and be in a position to send for their child/ren.

Haynes (2014) also offers a juxtaposition in that when Black mothers stay at home there is a general perception that they are lazy, inadequate mothers and want to live off the system with less attention afforded to how, for some, this is a choice made out of economic necessity. Hence, what is uncovered in the literature is some variation in the focus of attention in attempts to deconstruct taken for granted ideas associated with the family in order to illuminate how when attention is afforded to 'race' this uncovers an additional dimension in terms of how ACF encounter multiple intersecting barriers which impacts on their experiences of family life (Haynes, 2014).

This notion of the 'problematic' Black family is integrally aligned to broader concerns associated with a perceived threat that Black communities pose for White society and, moreover, themselves (Lawrence, 1982). Thus, notions of problematic ACF are not new and Lawrence (1982) claims that evidence for this underpinned the 'moral panic' associated with 'mugging' in the 970s which was informed by a dominant image of Black families and Black youths generally in which Black culture was put forward as an explanation for problems found within Black families and communities. Moreover, he argues that the pathologisation of Black culture was not just a matter of 'ethnocentric' English

commentators misunderstanding Black cultures and misinterpreting Black family life, but a by-product of the hegemonic definition of family life that has been secured and organised deliberately around a notion of White superiority. Consequently, Lawrence (1982) concluded that it stood to reason that Black families were found wanting as 'the family' purported a racist ideology that led to sanctioning its' pathologisation. Brewer (1988) attests to this and argues that often ignored is how 'the family' rests on assumptions that are the by-product of ideas that fail to recognise that White prerogatives are unevenly distributed across 'race' and class lines. Hence, the construction of the 'troubled Black family' was shaped by racist ideologies that were employed to make sense of perceived 'social crisis' and it is important to recognise how the fear related to a perception that British society is falling apart has prompted the elaboration of theories about 'race' which turn on particular notions of culture, (Lawrence, 1982: 47).

The longevity of such ideas Odone (2011) suggests are evident in the aftermath of the 2011 riots in the UK in which parents were blamed for producing the 'gang' members deemed responsible for the social upheaval witnessed. Moreover, despite media images showing that those involved in the recent social upheaval were not only from Black minority communities, Lawler (2012) argues that discourses underpinned by notion of 'race' and class still prevailed and the outcome was a complex amalgamation of discourses 'surrounding dirty whiteness 'gang' culture and Black families' (In De Benedictis 2012:4). Whilst Lawler (2012) acknowledges how notions of 'race' contributes to variations in the formation of a dominant discourse associated with the riots, she asserts that a common factor is how the discourses work to differentiate between those identified as responsible as a counterpoint to the middle class White norm.

Irrespective of the recognition that there are some White families that require scrutiny, what cannot be overlooked, as Lewis (2005) observes, is the discursive strands between Black families and social unrest is ingrained within a cultural discourse which is overtly racialized. An ongoing trend from the ground breaking work by Lawrence (1982) is that 'the family' is identified as a fundamental site in which fears associated with social breakdown are played out as the 'the family' is viewed as a key ideological conduit due to the everyday role it occupies in the reproduction of culture (Lawrence, 1982). This forces a need to question taken for granted assumptions which link ACF and 'UGC.'

4.3 Politics, Policies and 'the African Caribbean Family'

In Chapter One, I argued that explanations linking 'UGC' to youth 'gangs' are dominated by a perception that perpetrators are male Black, workless, fatherless and violent. Thus, thinking and understanding 'UGC' is dominated by a focus on individuals and their problematic cultural practices and this has tended to be the default position in perceived problems within African Caribbean communities (ACC) are understood. The root of cause of social problems, such as 'UGC', is identified within media and political discourse as stemming from the 'ACF' deviating from a perceived norm (Joseph and Gunter, 2011). An example of this is evident in an interview addressing the issue of family and social breakdown and its relationship to 'gang' violence in which David Cameron urged absent Black fathers not to neglect their responsibilities:

The issue has previously been identified by political figures as a source of society's ills. Last year, Justice Secretary Jack Straw said the 'continuing problem of gang violence was due to the absence of fathers in black communities (BBC News 16 July 2008 in Tyrer and Patel, 2011:5)

Hence, irrespective of the diversity to be found within ACF (Ellis, 1988; Reynolds, 1997; Ellis 2003), it is a reductionist discourse in which lone motherhood, absent fathers and the poor socialisation of children are put forward as explanations for a perceived crisis within ACF and ACC which have repercussions for wider British society. This conceptualisation is powerful and has ramifications for ACF.

Gillies(2003) maintains that contemporary theorising around 'the family' has largely centred around the impact of broader structural and societal changes on intimate relationships. She argues that a common perspective within sociology is the association of changes in family and personal relationships stemming from post-industrialisation which has led to 'the de-traditionalisation and individualisation of social life' (2). Gillies (2003) posits that whilst accounts from social commentators may vary in terms of how they perceive the implications of these changes, resulting in some adopting a pessimistic view that sees a breakdown of traditional ties leading to a disintegration of moral frameworks, others have focused on the positive potential that such changes offer, proposing that greater diversity and plurality of lifestyles facilitate a democratisation of intimate relationships. For Gillies (2003), these divergent perspectives are each ideologically driven in that they reflect and support particular political stances.

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The more negative accounts of social change appeal to traditionalist argument which petition for renewed respect for normative structures and values. The more optimistic accounts are more aligned to liberal ideas such as working towards achieving more equality and justice in personal relationships. Importantly, what we see is the failure to recognise how 'the family' is connected to wider political and economic spheres. Reynolds (2003:4) notes that the 1980s signalled a new age of welfare. The outcome of this is increasing emphasis on individual responsibility which emphasised a key role for 'the family' in caring and supporting individual members. She argues that a key outcome of this development was an 'ideological shift in the provision of care and welfare services towards community and family'.

Henricson (2012) sees the caring-independency functions of family as facilitating a need for regulation and support alongside a need for family policy in order to deliver regulation and support in fair and equitable ways. The point of 'family' for public administration is that it carries with it caring responsibilities and dependency that in some circumstances can be enforced. However, whilst one may acknowledge the investment between 1997 and 2010 by the New Labour administration in which a concerted effort was made to tackle issues such as child poverty through the establishment of Sure Start Centres, Connexions and Quality Protects (see Henricson, 2012), an inherent tension within such policies is that they simultaneously advanced a commonly and politically accepted view of 'the family and sustained or even reproduced a specific notion of the ACF. Whilst New Labour enforced an agenda targeted at families that had roots in Social Liberalism with regards to affording attention to structural issues though an approach policy making that was concerned with addressing issues associated with gender equality and the accommodation of

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diverse family structures, it is also possible to see the entrenchment of structural inequality and institutional racism prevail which contributes to family policies and services targeting at families being ineffectual in tackling these inequities.   Moreover, the conditionality underpinning family policy raises additional challenges for ACF in terms of creating tensions through establishing a dual role for policy in regards to attempting to provide support to families identified as 'troubled' and attempts to 'control 'troubled families.' As such, social liberalism afforded limited protection for ACF as policies are often divorced from wider structural factors and failed to challenge a dominant construction of the ACF (Henricson, 2012).

The role of 'the family' is central to a dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' and is put forward as an explanation for young people's involvement. Yet, what is often overlooked is that the link between common sense and racist ideologies are taken for granted and used to confirm a view in which ACF are designated as inadequate' Hence, 'UGC like the crime of mugging is viewed as symptomatic of problems to be found within Black families. Once again, this rests on an image of White families and White youths which are naturalised through reference to the naturalisation of gender-specific roles but sees Black families and Black youths via their association with deprivation and a source of pathological culture, which for the safety of British society needs to be arrested (De Benedictis, 2012)

'The family' is a key component in a popular dominant narrative, which shapes and informs political responses to 'UGC.' Under New Labour the central aim of family policy focused on fixing 'problem families' through introducing a range of

behaviour management programmes (Henricson, 2012). Evidence of this is visible in the establishment of the Youth Justice Board who were tasked to work with young offenders and their families. Under New Labour Parenting Orders (PO) and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) were introduced and used as mechanisms to deal with 'troubled' young people, this included those young people identified as at potential 'risk' of not making a 'successful' transition to adulthood. Whist these PO and ASBO are civil orders, failure to comply with can lead to individuals facing both civil and criminal sanctions (Gask, 2004).

Since 2010 under a Coalition administration much of the trajectory of New Labour has continued albeit with financial retrenchment (Henricson, 2012). Henricson (2012) suggests that the Coalition has presided over a scaled down version of the aspirations started under New Labour for Family Services in terms of maintaining a focus on changing individuals' and individual family behaviour. An example of this is the current Ending Youth Violence Strategy which identifies tacking social issues such as 'UGC' requires targeting specific 'Troubled Families' (HMO, 2011).

The current Ending Youth Violence Strategy is constructed on a notion offering that tackling 'UGC' means targeting support at specific families defined in the report as 'troubled.' The report states that:

It is clear that we must focus on the family if we are to make a difference to the individual. …. In areas where gang and youth violence is a major issue, the Troubled Families Team will work closely with the new Ending Gang and Youth

Violence Team to support local areas to improve the identification of the families most likely to be involved in serious violence and develop intensive interventions to prevent further violence and reduce costs to local agencies.

Subsequently, this has led to an intensification of governance of specific families (De Benedictis, 2012) and acquiescence to a dominant approach in which social problems are tied to specific families and by changing behaviour of these families will improve child/rens outcomes (Henricson, 2012).

4.4 Summary and Reflections

The opening quotes by Braun (2014) and Hall (1982) offer analyses written decades apart in which it is possible to see why for those engaged in researching 'the family' there is a need to critically interrogate assumptions held about the concept family. This is because the dominant notion of 'the family' arose at a specific juncture and within a specific economic, political and social context. Hence, in the UK the 'the family' is cognizant with a specific world view that is Eurocentric and prescriptive (Korbin, 2014). This has led to the elevation of a dominant Western conceptualisation of a particular notion of 'family' which is used as the standard in which family and family life in the UK is viewed. Korbin (2014) asserts that what prevails is a common sense understanding of family and family life which established a Eurocentric notion. This notion dominates understanding within the public and private spheres and, more importantly, functions as a default position for the policy making machinery. Hence, this notion of family and family life is readily drawn upon to inform

society about what is perceived to be the 'right' and 'wrong' for men and women to live and nurture children. However, what also needs to be considered is how this specific family formation intersects with social divisions and how this becomes part of every day and political discourse. De Benedictis (2012) asserts that the current focus on families contributes to a much wider process of parental governance in which parents are deemed responsible for structural inequality and social unrest. As such, it is possible to see how for ACF the dominant conceptualisation 'UGC' feeds a 'moral panic' through the reproduction and reaffirmation of notions of 'race' that has ramifications for ACF and wider ACC.

Chapter 5: 'Urban gun crime' through a prism of Black Perspectives

Although oppositional knowledge often takes diverse forms, in my view historically oppressed groups also produce social theories. Not only do the form assumed by these theories – poetry, music, essays and the like – diverge from academic theory, but the purpose of such theory also seems distinctly different. Social theories emerging from and/ or on behalf of historically oppressed groups investigate ways to escape survive in and/or oppose prevailing social and economic injustice (Hill Collins 1998:xiii)

…the problem raised in conceptualisation and implementation of much mainstream research, which tends to perpetuate rather than challenge social divisions by accepting taken for granted premises about social relations (Truman and Humphries, 1994:1)

5.0 Knowledge Production: Knowledge construction from the Margins

I prefaced this section with two key ideas, which are central and inform the conceptual framework utilised to examine how ACC understand and respond to 'urban gun crime.' Hill Collins (1998) emphasises the numerous ways in which knowledge and epistemology from the margin is produced and, the significance of this knowledge in confronting and attaining social justice for oppressed

groups. Truman and Humphries (1994) draw attention to the barriers encountered by those engaged in social research from the margins, when they confront a conventional Western European viewpoint within the physical and social sciences that holds assumptions of value freedom and that 'true' knowledge is achievable and delivers a precise 'objective' declaration, which informs us how the world is (Lethertby, et al. 2013). Both Hill Collins (1998) and Truman and Humphries (1994) encourage us to both question and challenge taken for granted assumptions about how we understand the social world. This is of particular significance if we are to avoid the ramifications that ensue in knowledge production industries which fail to recognise how values are implicated in all areas of the research process within the social sciences.

In the Introduction, I drew attention to current limitations in how we understand the issue of 'UGC' and identified limitations in terms of how the problem is conceptualised within media and public and policy discourse and then acted upon. This is because dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' ignores the myriad of ways that 'race' racialisation and racism is implicated in its construction. As such, the Introduction and Chapter One drew attention to a current need for an alternative story through focusing attention on the meanings and responses from within ACC.

In making explicit this endeavour, I am conscious that I am demonstrating a specific philosophical and value-based position. This can be seen in my approach in firmly locating myself within my thesis. This serves to make visible my rejection of a traditional view of the existence of 'universal' objective criteria. My auto/biography is evident throughout my thesis, thus this in itself confronts

any impression that I view social scientists as neutral and/or objective and a search for the 'truth.' My deliberate intention is to challenge traditional ideas that the knowledge I produce can be applied neutrally and objectively to everyone (Letherby, 2003; 2013). Scott (2013) notes that, since the work of Kant we find a shift within the social sciences, specifically within the discipline of sociology to challenge the objectivity and truth claims that dominated the natural sciences. My theoretical approach reflects what Scott (2013: 25) describes as a 'political matter and an acceptance that perceptions and knowledge are fundamentally grounded in human subjectivity'. Scott (2013) asserts that this acknowledges the value of plurality alongside the abandonment of any conception of objectivity and truth. Further, this disrupts the idea that ways of knowing the world are hierarchical and in turn accepts that they are merely different. The outcome, he views as pragmatic in terms of social scientists having autonomy to make their own theoretical choices and utilise value relevant concepts, which is testament to the fact that 'Knowledge is always and necessarily grounded in the particular viewpoint constituted by the bodily and historical locations of particular knowing subjects' (Scott, 2013:25).

The philosophical ideas shaping and guiding my approach to research generally (see Brown et al. 2011; Brady et al. 2012) confers with those who recognise that that there are multiple truths and multiple ways of being and knowing (Hill Collins, 1990; Stanley and Wise,1883; Mirza, 1997; Letherby, 2003; 2013). Acknowledging the inter connection of our subjectivities does not imply methodological weakness (Letherby, 2013). Moreover, Letherby (2013) argues, that it may indeed allow us to become closer to the 'truth.' Further, as Hughes (1990) points out in his work philosophical issues are not addressed by our capacity to merely cite evidence, but resolved by reason. He further suggests

that, 'if the premises are agreed and the steps consistently and rigorously followed, then the conclusion must follow as a matter of logical argument, no matter how outrageous they may seem commonsensically' (Hughes,1990:6). Truman and Humphries (1994) contend that, the foundation on which all research is built, whether theoretical or empirical, is based on the process used in the conceptualisation of an issue under investigation. Within this, frameworks are central in two key ways, how we engage in knowledge production and in relation to how we conduct social research. Hence, within the social sciences there has been a tendency for the domination of particular ways of understanding and doing, which Smith (1987) describes as social imperialism. This has compartmentalized social relationships and set boundaries of inquiry within the framework of what is already established. For Smith (1987), social imperialism imposes concepts and terms in which we think about the world (in Truman and Humphries, 1994: 3). The approach adopted here accepts that:

> Our descriptions of the world are always partial, selected and filtered by our perceptual apparatus, by assumptions that we bring to our observations, and by the particular perspectives or standpoint from which we view the world (Letherby et al. 2013:6).

My theoretical framework is informed by a range of perspectives and located within a particular standpoint. Harding (2004) illuminates the evolution of standpoint theory since its introduction in the 1970s. She states that, as a theoretical position it has both attracted supporters but also been a source of contestation. We can understand why, if we consider how standpoint epistemology is a position most closely related with the materialist perspective

and as such adopts a realist stance which holds that there is an underlying material reality that structures the world. Harding argues that, Standpoint Epistemology opens the way for us to better understand the relationship between knowledge and power; a means of thinking about the world from a position where we move from viewing the world as comprising of merely things to one that focuses attention on better understanding 'processes' and the role of these processes 'within the context of the social totality (Harding, 2004:373). So for feminists, the traditional 'male' way of knowing is rejected for its limitation in terms of presenting a distorted and partial view of reality as it ignores the processes that construct and shape women's lives. Harding (2004) views Standpoint Epistemology as a realist stance where the social world is structured by underlying material reality. Standpoint offers a means of understanding the relationship between knowledge and power and a way of thinking about the world. In so saying, for me the thinking about the world needs to also allow space to consider the role 'race' occupies.

5.1 Black Perspectives

Whereas the politics of orthodox class struggle does not necessarily demand that those involved 'question their very individuality', feminist (and black) struggle cannot be undertaken without questioning both the values, ideas, images imposed on women and Black people and the relationship these have to the overall exploitative system. Thus the integration of both personal and political change is of the essence (Bourne, 1983).

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Bourne (1983) highlights two fundamental goals for those involved in research from the margins. The first is the importance of the position of the researcher to the matter under investigation and the second is that the purpose of the research rests on more than the accumulation of knowledge, for knowledge sake, but engaging in the production of knowledge as a means of contributing to change. For example, as a feminist sociologist, Letherby (2013) shares how feminist principles inform her identity as a researcher and means a pre-requisite of her work is to initiate social and/or political change in the lives of women. In her work she makes explicit her subjective position and sets out her standpoint in relation to how, for her, research is 'political' and motivated by feminist goals. Similarly, in the work of antiracist researchers, such as Barn (1994), we see that research forms more than a quest for understanding but is underpinned by a political commitment to explicate and challenge racism informed by notions of 'race' which shapes social work policy and practice. So her work aims to deconstruct ideas which lead to pathologising Black 'families' and Black family life, which she views as increasing 'internal colonialism of Black communities. Consequently, she argues that, just as studies into gender and sexism cannot overlook the role of patriarchal structures and processes, nor can studies which focus on 'race' ignore racist structures and processes that sustain racism (Barn, 1994). In the work of Letherby (2013) and Barn (1994) we are able to see the intersection of politics and how as social scientists their research is tied to a political goal associated with challenging injustice. Further, we see examples of the role of values within the research process. Letherby (2013) and Barn (1994) offer an insight to the benefits of holding a specific position this is not to suggest that they accept the idea that women or Black people are an homogenous group; and acknowledge the importance of recognising difference.

5.2 My Theoretical approach

Whilst the central body of thought shaping the theoretical framework used in this research is that of Black feminist epistemology, the framework is also eclectic in terms of being informed by a range of intellectual insights which can loosely be identified as a Black perspective. Singh (2007) suggests that, a way of capturing the eclecticism of this body of work that coalesces under the banner of a Black perspective is by considering it being constructed six ways, namely:

- **Common Sense;** Focuses on the significance of self-definition;
- **Universal;** Aims to embed 'race' within a political context with a goal of human emancipation;
- **Essentialist**; Calls for the establishment of an African concept of communication underpinned in traditional African philosophies;
- **Deconstruction**; Suggesting a shift in focus in order to show that while racism impacts on black people it needs to be viewed as a white problem
- **Affirmative**, Aims for a black perspective as a positive means of expression of otherness
- The final perspective he suggests is a **Black feminist perspective** which he identifies is a perspective that has been at the forefront in the development of a Black debates and playing an instrumental role in placing gender and class in their analysis of Black oppression.

Common in the construction of a Black perspective is the imperative goal to oppose racism. Across these perspectives, we see explicit attention to centre issues associated with 'race', racialisation and racism and engagement with heterogeneity of knowledge produced from the margins. As such, we see that Black perspectives are influenced by wide body of thought, for example, Marxist, Structuralism, Post Structuralism, Feminist and Postmodern (Hill Collins, 1990; 1998). Furthermore, in adopting a Black perspective, we are forced to engage in a process where we deconstruct ideas that naturalise whiteness and homogenises black people (MIrza, 1997). In terms of the African Caribbean communities and 'UGC', adopting this framework allows us to disrupt taken for granted ideas associated which pathologise individuals, families and communities through a racialised construction and offers insights about the processes which misrepresents, misunderstand and homogenises experiences. So a Black perspective is central in terms of what it contributes to the creation of a space for an alternative story to be recounted about 'UGC'.

Hill Collins (1998) contends that, engagement by the intellectual community across disciplines and theoretical perspectives offers a wider platform to permeate contemporary intellectual production. She shows how this offers tools to embed intellectual eclecticism in terms of being able to draw on multiple theoretical approaches from across a range of disciplines. She draws on work that has critically engaged with how 'race', racialisation and racisms infiltrates the production of knowledge to itself and allows for an interrogation of the interconnection of 'race' gender and social class. In so doing, she is not suggesting that these various perspectives are always working together harmoniously, but infers that together, despite contestation, they form a prism through which we are able to capture alternative ways of understanding. For Hill

Collins (1998) this approach encompassed both strength and weakness in that, the value of such an approach rests in offering an innovative connection between diverse ideas and phenomena. However, this can be at the expense of allowing for sufficient depth of any one knowledge. Consequently, as a Black feminist perspective has been significant to the framework utilised, it is worth setting out the key ideas in more detail.

5.3 Black Feminist Perspective

> Many White feminists' failure to acknowledge the differences between themselves and Black and Third World women has contributed to the predominantly Eurocentric and ethnocentric theories of women's oppression (Amos and Parmar, 1997:55)

Amos and Parmar (1997) suggest that the journey that led to the construction of a Black feminist perspective can be seen as born out of lack of equality afforded by White feminist scholarship to examining Black and Third World women's experiences. Gilkes (1985) identifies two dimensions of Black feminist epistemology:

- Centering black Women's experiences
- Stressing the interconnectedness of group experiences and collective knowledge

As such, Black Feminist standpoint is viewed as a means that opens up the potential for new knowledge to be uncovered about women's lives and helps to move forward our understanding 'of the political' (Hill Collins, 2000). This is a fluid approach that allows for theorizing from multiple angles allowing for new themes, approaches and questions to become visible. This visibility is uncovered through the use of the paradigm of intersectionality. Drawing on an intersectional paradigm allows us to see how systems such as 'race,' class and gender mutually construct one another. In that there are certain ideas and practices that emerge and continually re-emerge on a basis demonstrating the existence of multiple systems of oppressions

Whilst Hill Collins (1990) writing in relation to African American women, provides a valuable insight to the key component distinguishing Black Feminist thought, she sets out how for African American women, their position in the economy, political and ideological terrain bounding intellectual discourse has created a Black intellectual tradition. This tradition is underpinned by two basic components of Black feminist thought; the first; is its thematic content and second its epistemological approach. This is also shaped by Black women's 'outsider within' stance and by our embededness in traditional African American culture. So for Hill Collins (1990) Black women hold a unique position that affords them an insight that has traditionally been ignored.

There is no doubt that the work of Black feminists in north America have had a major impact in shaping ideas, however, Mirza (1997) highlights the potential challenges this places on limiting the experiences encountered by the diverse range of women. Mirza (1997) suggests this is evident when we consider the

lives of Black and Minority ethnic women in the UK. She contends that, in the UK Black British Feminism as a form of scholarship operates within an unchallenged hegemonic British White discourse. It is an outcome of a fight for equality and a struggle for social justice. In the UK, we can understand developments in Black Feminist thinking as an outcome of a struggle by Black women to invoke their agency by challenging the stereotypical images of black women and an attempt to reveal the hidden world of migrant Black women (Mirza, 1997: 11). Black Feminism's aim is to excavate the power and the silences within White feminist discourse and the homogenising of Black women's experiences. In the UK, it attempts to be sensitive to the limitations of reductionism and aims to explore differences through locating Black female identity at the centre of the analysis.

5.4 Summary and Reflections

Reynolds (2002) draws attention to the centrality of Black women in developing knowledge and understanding of Black women's experiences. She argues that, Black feminist standpoint is rooted in this legacy of oppression and particular notions of experience based on black women's victimhood status. Theory is grounded in the critical analysis of Black women's lives and an understanding of black women's 'everyday experience' is central to knowledge production. However, she also raises questions in relation to the analysis, tension and discontinuity which may emerge between academic definitions of experience and the way that Black women define experience within their everyday social worlds. So this forces us to be mindful of how, we too are a product of multiple environments and how part of undertaking our doctoral research within the

academy rests on engaging in a process that often trains researchers to alienate themselves from their communities. Hill Collins (1990) encourages us to move beyond seeing everyday actions as a negative, but as something that is positive and influences how researchers approach theorising. As such, she calls for an approach that aims to see how individuals everyday actions are reflected in the theoretical issues that are identified are important to them. This is important, she further argues, because there is a common tendency within research whereby oppressed groups are frequently placed in a situation of being listened to only if they frame ideas in the language that is familiar to and comfortable to dominant groups, which merely serves to subordinate the meaning of our ideas of oppressed groups and in so doing maintain the status quo through elevating the ideas of dominant groups.

Chapter 6: Methodology

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter I detail my methodological approach, methods and the dilemmas encountered in undertaking my research. Thus, I highlight the auto/biographical practices and processes of my research journey. Given the nature of my study and the auto/biographical methodological approach used in this thesis, appropriate reference throughout this chapter will be made to other sections of my thesis. This may be viewed as a departure from the conventional approach and the tendency for one's methodology to adopt a specific sequence. In adopting this approach I aim to make explicit the relationship between Black feminism and my work. In doing so, my intention is to make visible my position to the subject matter under investigation and my positionality to the body of work that falls under the rubric of Black feminism.

This Chapter is set out in three main sections. In section 6.1 'Methodological framework' I re-visit the theoretical framework to this study on which this thesis is based and illuminate the influences and challenges for those adopting a Black feminist approach. 6.2 'Critical Ethnography' sets out my methodological approach and research design. 6.3 'Ethical consideration' draws attention to ethical concerns and dilemmas. In Section 6.4 and 6.5 I detail my fieldwork activity which includes the methods used, participants included and fieldwork challenges. In Section 6.6 I reflect on some of my epistemological challenges when engaged in research an 'insider'.

6.1 Methodological framework: influences and challenges

As discussed in the Introduction, 'who I am', has been central to all aspect of the research process and is significant to this the product. However, I am conscious that whilst there has been some development of auto/biography within the social sciences, it continues to be a largely neglected approach (Letherby, 2010). Nonetheless, 'doing auto/biography' within my thesis is important as it demonstrates the significance and centrality of intersubjectivity in knowledge production and the position it occupies in my work. For me, it is important to acknowledge as Stanley and Wise (2003) point out that, knowledge is contextual, situational in that it reflects our social location. I am therefore mindful of what I share with research participants and how my 'race' gender, class and sexuality structures the knowledge I produce. Stanley and Wise (1993) promote the notion of 'accountable knowledge.' Letherby (2003) explains that, this can be understood as involving an explicit recognition of the relationship between the process and the product/ the knowing/doing relationship. In addition, adopting an auto/biographical approach to writing also allows me to pose a challenge to a traditional orthodoxy, which governs and dominates how we are expected to present our work in the academy. Implicated in this orthodoxy is a notion that there is a 'correct' mode of writing which suggests there is only one main audience (Mykhalovskiy, 1996; Letherby, 2010). There are also benefits in terms of making our work more accessible to a wider audience (Colombo et al. 2007).

My doctoral research requires me having to focus attention on the interplay between my auto/biography, my identity and on the biography and identity of

those participating in my study. This approach also highlights the research journey and tells the reader something about who I am and my relationship to others. So presenting my work auto/biographically serves to firmly locate 'me' in what I write and illuminates how I am not only the producer of the knowledge being produced but also intrinsically linked to the knowledge uncovered. Alongside this, my doctoral research has also ignited a sense of responsibility as a Black woman holding a position within the academy, albeit quite junior, to challenge and resist and consider alternative narratives to understand 'us' and an issue such as 'urban gun crime' (UGC) an issue that 'we' were repeatedly informed was a new and growing problem affecting 'us.' As Mills advises, we need to:

> . . . learn to use [our] life experience in your intellectual work; continually to examine it and interpret it. In this sense craftsmanship (sic) is the centre of yourself and you are personally involved in every intellectual product in which you work (Mills 1959:216)

In Letherby's work we are continually reminded that we are always present in the research we carryout (2003; 2013) and, as a Black women researching as an insider I am mindful as she further points out that, 'as social scientists we cannot separate who we are as we are part of the world we study' (2003:8)

> All social research involves individuals – both researchers and respondents - who have subjectivities, who make subjectivities.

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Theorised subjectivity acknowledges that research is a subjective, power-laden, emotional, embodied experience but does not see this as a disadvantage, just as how it is. Starting with subjectivity though does not mean that we shrug our epistemological shoulders and give into the subjective, indulging in our subjectivities. Rather it requires the constant, critical interrogation of our personhood – both intellectual and personal – within the knowledge production process (Letherby, 2013:80).

For me, it is essential that the knowledge I produce includes a capacity to understand, resist and challenge the racialised conceptualisation of 'UGC'. Furthermore, I consider that the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' re-enforces and confirms particular sets of ideas about African Caribbean communities (ACC), the African Caribbean family (ACF) and our young people. It is these ideas that become institutionalised in the policies and practices of major institutions. As a Black feminist researcher, who is privileged to have an opportunity to engage in research and holds a position within the academy, I have to navigate between two worlds; as a Black woman working and researching in what remains a White dominated institution and as a woman who lives and is part of a wider Black community. This is challenging as I am continually reminded of and in some circumstances encounter the prevalence of racism both inside and outside the institution. Consequently, my lived reality is one in which my engagement in sharing knowledge through my teaching and in the production of knowledge through research cannot be a neutral endeavour. Rather, it is a purposeful activity with an ultimate goal of liberation (Sivanandan, 1990). Thus, there is a political goal driving my doctoral research and my research needs to be viewed as a political act and not merely action to

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generating new intellectual insights. Entrenched and central to my research rests an emancipator aspiration (Singh, 2004) and it is this that dictates and lays the foundation of my theoretical approach.

As noted by Collins (1990), the politics of 'race', class and gender influences knowledge and needs to be central to research and to the agendas of researchers engaged in researching Black communities. Researching Black communities necessitates a critical social theoretical approach that includes bodies of knowledge and institutional practices able to acknowledge the lived reality of Black people and is simultaneously underpinned by a commitment to social justice. Adopting a Black feminist approach allows for thinking reflexively and publically about both my lived experiences and the lived experiences of others like me. Additionally, it enables me to locate my research within wider systems of inequity that impact on the lives of Black people such as those detailed in Chapter Two, for example, in relation to income, education, housing, employment and crime. It also calls for the inclusion of a wider set of ideas, which are predominantly ignored (Hill Collins,1990:7). Utilising this approach opens the way for me to build an analysis that offers a counter narrative. Mirza (1997) describes a counter narrative as an alternative way of thinking; one that invokes some measure of critical engagement and offers an alternative way of knowing. For Mirza (1997) a counter narrative opens the way to challenge the normative dominant and racialised and gendered discourse that prevails. Further, she suggests that, such an approach re-focuses our attention on the mechanism that shapes how and in what ways dominant groups construct their assumptions and in so doing helps us to better understand their contradictions and limitations.

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I concur with Collins (1990) that Black feminism symbolizes a reclaiming of Black women's agency in telling who we are and centres who we are within what Mirza (1997:) categorizes as 'the patriarchal imperial project of sexualised racialisation.' It makes available tools that support us in actively challenging the injustice underpinning the very system of which we are also a part (Mirza, 1997). In so saying, whilst this approach affords a central position to Black women, who take responsibility for setting the direction of travel, this does not mean ignoring or excluding others who too who may have had or may have other tools to contribute. For me, adopting this approach is not to close the door to others, particularly to White feminist writers who have made substantial contribution to understanding the lives of women and mounting an ongoing challenge in order to address wider gender inequalities. Di Stephano (1990) acknowledges that, there is a need to recognise the material condition that women share, but this should not mean ignoring diversity. Consequently, my thesis includes the intellectual contribution of both Black and White feminist writers in recognition as Letherby (2013) drawing on Stanley and Wise (1983), points out the importance of acknowledging both difference and the material conditions that women share. My thesis is therefore a testament to the intellectual endeavour of Black and White feminists.

As a Black woman and a feminist drawing on Black feminism enables me to examine concerns central to any exploration of a range of issues associated with ACC and 'UGC'. Black feminism forces me to consider and uncover mechanisms that promote, contest, and resist racist logics and practices in the

everyday lives of Black people (Mirza, 1997). Black feminist theory is an approach that is shaped by Black women and is informed by four key principles:

- It takes place within interpretative frameworks,

- It adopts an epistemological stance,

- It allows for insights concerned with empowerment,

- And, it reflects and aims to shape specific political contexts confronting Black women (Hill Collins, 1990).

Utilising a Black feminist framework allows the use of intersectionality as a way to explore the intersections of 'race', gender, ethnicity and sexuality through positioning these issues at the centre of our thinking about our own lives, the lives of other Black women, Black men and Black family life (Crenshaw,1993). Intersectionality accedes to an analysis where 'race', social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation and age form mutually constructing features of social organisation, which 'shapes Black women's experiences and are in turn shaped by Black women' (Hill Collins, 2000:7) . Whilst not without a number of challenges, fundamental to this approach is 'a process of self-reflexivity' (Hill Collins, 2009 in Thornton et al. 2009:1). Intersectionality is a critical and analytical tool that challenges existing modes of examining structures of inequity through challenging traditional modes of knowledge production. So, it serves as an alternative model that combines advocacy, analysis, theorizing, and pedagogy; pre-requisites in the production of knowledge as well as the pursuits of social justice and equality. Thornton (2009) sees intersectionaity as centring the experience of those in society who are situating in multiple social locations in order to find approaches and ideas that direct us to the complexity rather than

the singularity of human experiences in an attempt to achieve the following goals:

- Reformulate the world of ideas so that it incorporates the many contradictions and overlapping ways that human life is experienced;
- Convey this knowledge by rethinking curricula and promoting institutional change;
- Apply the knowledge in an effort to create a society in which all voices are heard;
- And advocate for public policies that are responsive to multiple voices.

6.2 Critical Ethnography

My research was designed using an interpretivist framework. Hammersley (1989:1) notes to understand the social world our methods need to be attuned in order to be able to make 'inquiry about its nature'. An interpretivist approach recognises that human behaviour is complex and fluid and not reducible to fixed patterns. Hammersley further identifies that, the emphasis of this approach is that it focuses on the process rather than structure, allows for a focus on local and small scale situations, stresses the diversity and variability in social life and is concerned with capturing the range of perspectives held by participants. On designing the project there were a number of issues that I needed to reconcile. It was important to draw on methods that recognised I was part of the community being studied but also allowed me to produce a study that was both

valid and reliable. So whilst wanting to ensure that the methods used were rigorous and stood up to scrutiny, I also wanted them to provide me with an opportunity to spend time with ACC in order to; immerse myself in ACC, build relationships with others, allow sufficient time to speak both formally and informally with participants and provide an opportunity for me to give something back.

Harvey (1990) provides a valuable summary of the key features of ethnographical research. He highlights that, ethnography is a method which uses theoretical concepts and propositions to direct the analysis 'through a systematic collection, classification and reporting of 'facts' in order to generate new empirical generalisations based on these data' Further, he contends that, ethnography is an inductive approach that views 'analytical description as an empirical application and modification of theory' (Harvey, 1990:9). As such, ethnography is a valuable way of offering insights about social phenomena in their natural settings. So, it offers an opportunity to gain an understanding of social settings from the participants' point of view. This is done by researchers immersing themselves in the field of study in order to uncover how processes operate in the groups, institutions or communities in which they are located. Hence, a key objective of ethnographic research rests on uncovering the meaning that lay behind social interaction (Harvey, 1990). I felt it was important to adopt a critical approach so as to allow for an analysis that explicitly sets out to consider the relationship between my participants, data, wider social structures and systems of power (Harvey, 1990). Harvey (1990) suggests that the central features of critical ethnography include:

- The need to consider research participants in a wider context

- To focus attention on wider structural relations and its relationship to the social processes implicated in the lives of participants

- The production of a dialectical analysis as a means of deconstructing social structures

Critical ethnography enables an approach to research that allows for the inclusion of an analysis that takes into consideration participants' structural position. As Harvey (1990) notes, critical ethnography utilises tried and tested ethnographic tools such as, participant and non-participant observations, semi-structured, unstructured and in-depth interviews and adopts reflexive practices. However, it also offers an analysis that pays specific attention to how participants' lives are situated within a socio-historical context and as such cannot be divorced from structural factors.

6.3 Ethical consideration

Hammersley and Trainou (2012) see ethical application as associated with specific principles which are used to regulate research carried out. They argue:

- Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity, quality and transparency

- Research staff and participants must normally be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation entails and what risks, if any, are involved.

- The confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and anonymity of respondents must be respected

- Participation is voluntary and free from coercion

- Harm to research participants must be avoided in all instances

- The independence of research must be clear, and any conflict of interest or partiality must be explicit. (Hammersley and Trainou, 2012:7)

At the early stages of enrolling on my doctoral research I was made aware of potential challenges I may encounter in gaining ethical approval from my institution to conduct my research. In my research proposal I outlined that my proposed study would adopt a qualitative approach and use a variety of qualitative techniques to capture participants' views and experiences of 'UGC'. I also detailed my intention to include young people, specifically young Black males and utilise observations alongside other participatory approaches. At the time my first proposal was to be submitted I was on maternity leave. Consequently, the proposal was presented to the committee by my Director of Studies. The outcome of the review was the proposal was rejected and the reviewing committee asked that I make a number of amendments. The amendments requested involved making explicit the inclusion and exclusion criteria in terms of who would be involved in my study. Concern was expressed about 'knowingly' setting out to include interviews with known 'gang' members and about the locality in which I would be undertaking the study. The committee wanted to ensure that all attempts were made to ensure that I avoided any potential 'risk'. Hence, ethical issues, from the institutional perspective resided primarily around their perception of potential risk to me, the researcher. Whilst I was initially a little taken aback with the rationale given for decision, Higher

Education Institutions, have an important role to play to safeguard their researchers and adhere to the plethora of ethical guidelines and regulations governing research in recent years (Hammersley and Trainou, 2012). This is irrespective of how this poses challenges to researchers' ability to embark on certain types of research. To this end, I made the requested amendment, resubmitted the proposal to the committee and it was accepted.

Prior to starting my fieldwork I completed an application for ethical approval, which set out my approach, how I would approach recruiting potential participants, ensure the safety or myself and those participating in my study, manage my data securely and ensure that participants were fully informed and able to freely give consent. A part of this process included developing the following:

- Participant information sheet in which I set out the aim and objectives of my research, what potential participants participation would entail and potential risks involved. This also detailed a named contact that participants could contact if they were unhappy with my conduct or any aspect of the research I was carrying out.
- A consent form
- An interview schedule
- An observational schedule

What I have come to understand is the value of ensuring that we strive to ensure that we pay attention to the issues detailed above and that we think

carefully through how we intend to ethically approach the research we do. However, this is not without challenges when we are engaged in certain types of research and also when research participants are from certain particular communities (Brady and Brown, 2011). My research approach required that I locate myself in a community group and in community settings. In the early stages of my observations, the community group in which I was based wanted to encourage as many people to join and get involved as possible. This meant that there was always someone new attending the meetings. Whilst I had asked for research to be an agenda item at each meeting so I was able to remind people that despite being part of the group and supporting the work being carried out, I was also a doctoral student and simultaneously researching the group and collecting observational data. Additionally, even though this was my opportunity to inform newcomers about what I was doing and remind other members of my dual role, gaining written consent was not always appropriate. In the latter stages of my fieldwork as the groups stabilised this was less of an issue. The ethical approval process requires that we design all our research tools prior to entering the field but my interview schedule needed to be adapted once I was in the field. In some interviews the schedule became a barrier as the participant just wanted us to have a conversation.

This notion of ethical approval is also merely one stage of the ethical process (Hammersley and Trainou, 2012). Hammersley and Trainou (2012) argue that, all social research involves ethical issues, albeit that the nature and importance of these varies. They further argue that there are specific issues for those involved in research that is foregrounded in ascertaining unstructured forms of data, through methods such as observation and interviewing. This is because these methods are premised upon the involvement a researcher and their ability

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to establish close and long-term relationships with the participants they involve in their research. Additionally, these encounters often take place in participants' natural settings.

The ethics associated with what, why and how we engage in social research has been of interest to me for a number of years. This has been a result of being a researcher who has worked on short term externally funded commissioned research that has tended to focus on issues that have disproportionately impacted on marginalised and/ or disadvantaged groups. An example is the area of teenage pregnancy in which colleagues and I have written about methodological and ethical implications encountered when undertaking research with pregnant teenagers and young mothers (Ali et al. 2007; Letherby et al. 2007; Brady and Brown, 2011; Brady and Brown, 2013). A key theme from this work is to make explicit the significance of what we do and the way we do it to the final research outcome or output. Moreover, this work has specifically directed attention to how research is not a neutral endeavour and our actions as researchers not merely impacts on our findings but also impacts on those with whom we directly engage as part of the research process (Brady and Brown, 2011).

Subsequently, experiences gained from carrying out research meant that I was mindful of the ethical challenges researchers' encounter, which goes far beyond what we are required to do when we complete our applications for ethical approval and get institutional consent to proceed with our studies. There are a plethora of potential ethical implications that may arise in the field, during our analysis and in the reporting of our work. I am also aware that it is impossible to

predict some of the ethical dilemmas that may surface when we are making out applications for ethical approval. This reflects how research is not a linear process but messy and dynamic. As such, I am also alerted to how irrespective of the time we spending planning and organising our research, it can be unpredictable and throw up unexpected challenges. Hammersley and Trainou (2012: 34) contended that, for qualitative researchers ethical consideration requires that:

> There must be reflexive judgement about the whole situation in which action is taking place, including the identity of the researcher and of the researched and the forces, of various kinds, operating upon and within this situation.

Writing my thesis auto/biography has provided a valuable vehicle to bring to the fore a range of ethical dilemmas that I encountered when carrying out my research. I am quite new to the field of auto/biography and my initial decision to present my research within an auto/biographical framework resulted from suggestion made by my supervisor Gayle Letherby during a supervision meeting in March 2011. At the time, I had started the interview stage of my fieldwork and I explained to Gayle that I was finding the interviews very challenging. I explained how I was experiencing a number of tensions and uncertainties during and after interviews, which I had conducted with five African Caribbean men. I had previously worked for Gayle as a researcher on a number of projects so she was aware of how much I have always enjoyed fieldwork. I described how this was the first time that I felt a little 'odd' to the extent that I felt that I needed time to think things through and put a hold on further interviews. I

wrote and presented a paper at the Auto/Biographical Annual Summer Conference in 2011. In the paper I shared the challenges and dilemmas I had experienced in the field, detailing my relationship to the topic under investigation and the male participants I had interviewed. I wrote about how my research appeared to be having a profound impact on my sense of self, my identity and illuminates complexities associated with our positions as researcher related to insider'/'outsider' status and, the significance of all this for my doctoral study.

I have since presented two further papers and a common theme has been to illuminate my connection to my research and some of the ethical challenges I have encountered. To this end, my ethical considerations are not solely included in this chapter, but can be found throughout my thesis. This is because fundamental to an auto/biographical approach is the need to make explicit our relationship to what we do and to those we engage in research (Martin 2012) Moreover, Martin (2012) asserted that refraining from omitting to these relationships means we fail to make explicit our personal investment to the issues we research. Hence, auto/biography is in itself is a space to capture the messiness of research and the range of ethical issues that ensue. For me, these issues are associated with representation, identity, dilemmas of being and insider/ outsider (Naples, 2001, 2002), how my research brought to the fore a range of emotions and as such all this cannot be ignored (Hochschild, 2005).

6.4 In the Field

I decided to conduct the research in two localities in the West Midlands. There were both practical and intellectual reasons for choosing these two localities these included:

- Both areas have large African Caribbean communities
- Both areas were identified as areas where there was increased concern about the number of 'gun' related crimes and at the time had experienced gun related mortalities
- I had both a social and work connection with both localities
- I had a connection with community workers living and working in both areas

My initial research strategy was to utilise three research methods; participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The aim of utilising a qualitative multi method approach was to allow for the collection of a range of data and serve as a means of methodological triangulation, which would corroborate one source with another, allow for an exploration of issues in more detail enhancing the quality of the data produced (Mason, 2002). In so saying, I was conscious that multi- method approaches can raise potential challenges, for example, there is no certainty that each method will lead to gathering the same type of data or in addressing the same research questions (Mason, 2002). However, my choice of methods reflected both my ontological and epistemological perspectives in terms of; the centrality of the interactions, actions and the way participants interpreted these in relation to the issue of 'UGC' and in recognition that knowledge about the social world can be

generated by observation, or participation. I was aware that in construction of an alternative narrative, an alternative way to understand the issue under investigation required an approach that endorsed depth, complexity and multi-dimensional data rather than merely a surface analysis of broad patterns (Mason, 2002). As Goffman (1989) notes:

…good fieldwork 'tunes your body up' and with your 'tuned-up body' and with the ecological rights to be close to them …you are in a position to note their gestural, visual, bodily responses to what's going on around them and you're empathetic enough – because you've been through the same crap they've been taking – to sense what it is they're responding to (in Rogers, 2003:71).

As I adopted an ethnographic approach to my study, I initially planned to locate myself in a community organisation based in one of the two localities in which I would be conducting my research (see Appendix 1:365).

Prior to starting my fieldwork, I received an invitation to attend a meeting at a community organisation, based in Area 1. The organisation provided an outreach and support service to predominantly young Black males who lived in one of the most deprived areas of the city. The young men they supported often had a range of issues but a key issue was the community organisation concern about their involvement or 'risk' of involvement in 'UGC' and gangs. The meeting was arranged by the Director of the community organisation with a small number of community activists working in various academic institutions to

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discuss the possibility of setting up a community focused research group to support the work and development of the organisation, but more widely, one that undertook research from a community perspective and could contribute to a community led evidence base.

At time of this initial meeting the Director and his staff were not aware that I was undertaking doctoral research and was shortly to start organising my fieldwork. I disclosed this at the start of the meeting and discussed the possibility of a reciprocal arrangement where I would organise and deliver a series of research training sessions and locate myself in their organisation as part of my fieldwork. I also agreed to share the findings from my research and support them with research activity as the need arose. I anticipated that locating myself in the organisation would facilitate access to participants and would be an ideal context for conducting my participant observation and accessing further participants for my semi-structured interviews. My contribution to establishing a community focused research group was perceived as providing me with an opportunity to give something back to the organisation's goal of developing a research 'arm.' As such, I would be one amongst a number of people identified who could contribute to its development. We all felt that this would be a positive way forward and I was keen to be part of such a development. A common feeling was that this could be an important way to challenge some of the issues arising from traditionally focused research and would allow us to set our own agenda and research issues that we felt were important to the Black community. Offering to support the organisation was not an altruistic gesture on my part as I would benefit; involvement had the potential for me getting something out of the collaboration. Working in partnership with the organisation would be positive for my research and my goal to gain a PhD. My potential involvement offered an

opportunity to access a 'natural' community setting where I could conduct my observation, access potential respondents for interviews and also other relevant networks. However, the organisation would benefit too through gaining research support and access to my networks, albeit that they were limited at that time.

Soon after the meeting there was a major disturbance in the area in which the organisation was based and a young Black male was murdered. This created a high level of tension between the African Caribbean and Asian community. A key worker at the organisation was alleged to have heightened the tension and this led to its temporary closure which raised the question of whether I should delay my fieldwork until the organisation reopened or identify an alternative community group to undertake my research. The organisation's offices were closed for a substantial amount of time and the outcome was that, after a discussion with my Director of Studies the decision was taken to identify another community organisation to conduct my research. However, although this did signal the end of my relationship with the organisation; I continue to have contact with them today through my work as a volunteer.

The community organisation in which I carried out a significant proportion of my fieldwork was based in the Area 2 (see Appendix 1:365). I was informed of a community meeting being held in Area 2 organised by members from the African Caribbean community. The meeting was called in response to a gun related incident that resulted in a fatality. This was one of a number of gun related incidents that had happened in the locality over a short period of time and members of the African Caribbean living in the area wanted a meeting to

discuss the situation and potential action. I was told about the meeting by a friend and former colleague who worked as a Neighbourhood Manager in the city. My contact details were passed to one of his colleagues who was also a Neighbourhood Manager working in the locality where the incident took place. She agreed for me to attend the meeting, which was being held in a local inner city community centre. I was given a slot on the agenda at the meeting so I could introduce myself to the group, tell them about my research and share my interest and concern around the issue of 'UGC'.

At the meeting I expressed an interest in joining the group both in the capacity as a doctoral student but also because I felt I had some skills that could support the work of the group. The group agreed for me to join. They identified themselves as a voice that represented ACC living in the city. It consisted of a range of people from ACC, men and women of various ages; working across range of sectors i.e. the statutory sector, public and private sector and community and voluntary sector. Members were employed in a wide range of occupations; lecturers, mentors, civil servants, probation, community workers. Members also included practicing and non-practicing Christians and came from neighbouring areas. A common feeling at the setting up stage of the group was how it was essential and an imperative that all those with an interest in working together to address 'UGC' put aside potential differences in order to work effectively. The principle aim was the formation of a community focused alliance. What I perceived to be shared by those expressing an initial interest was concern about the future of 'young people' and addressing issues that disproportionately negatively impacted on ACC. The group was to be a conduit for this through developing an action plan for members to challenge statutory services such as the Police, Health and Education and others provided by the

Local Authority who the groups perceived to routinely fail in their duty of care to ACC. This was alongside organising to address inequality in the Labour Market and Criminal Justice systems. So a key aim was to work towards holding services to account in terms of the work of the steering group acting as an intermediary between ACC and statutory services with the intention of being the voice for the community.

My involvement spanned almost two years. In the early stages we met on a regular basis, fortnightly, and in the latter stages of my involvement meetings were held on a monthly basis. As my relationship with the group developed I was aware of the need to continually remind members about being a doctoral student, my research and their role in that process. I undertook a number of activities during my time with the group which included; sharing my knowledge about public policy, minute taking and contributing generally to discussions. I supported the group by attending community meetings, strategic meetings with key representatives from the Local Authority, Police, Education and Health. I contributed to the development of an Action Plan which identified areas where ACC in the locality had poor outcomes in comparison to the White majority and other ethnic groups living in the city. This action plan developed reflected concerns raised by the community group. It was considered as a tool to be used in an ongoing process of dialogue between ACC (represented by the Steering Group) and the City Council and its partners (led by the Council's Chief Executive)'. The plan sets out proposals across a range of fronts to reduce and ultimately prevent the problem of 'UGC' and gangs in the city (see Appendix 3:373). Alongside participating in meetings and trying to support the work of the group, my attendance at external meeting also raised issues in terms of consent for my PhD. There were occasions where I would introduce myself as a

doctoral student and inform those attending from statutory bodies about the aim and focus of my work, but there were also times where this was not appropriate or that I felt the need to fully identify as a member of the community group rather than a doctoral student. As part of my critical ethnographical approach, participant observation enabled me to gain an insider perspective of how members of the group conceptualised and understood the issue of 'UGC' it also allowed me to see first-hand the steps the steering group member identified as important in responding to 'UGC' issue. It also allowed me to gain access to meetings with statutory bodies, to observe their interactions and record what happened and was said during these meetings. Nonetheless, I remained conscious of ethical concerns about what I included and excluded from the data collected during these meetings in my thesis. Using this method facilitated opportunities to build a number of relationships with a range of people, some of whom I am still in touch with. My approach provided an opportunity to support albeit in a limited way the work of this organisation. Moreover, an unanticipated outcome of this approach is that it has led to me receiving research related opportunities.

Through the networks in this locality, established during my time in the field, I carried out four commissioned community focused research projects. These have included being a partner in an arts based project in which I worked alongside a local photographer interviewing respondents living and working in community settings about their experiences. Narratives from interviews were used alongside photographic images of localities in Area 1 in which young people had been shot or died as a result of 'UGC'. I was commissioned in partnership with a local community organisation by a Local Safety Partnership in Area 2 to carry out two small research projects focused specifically on girls and

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young women and their experiences of 'UGC' and 'gang' violence and I refer to data from this project in proceeding chapters (Brown, 2012). And, I have conducted an evaluation of a Barrow Cadbury funded project for a community based organisation in Area 2 exploring the effectiveness of drama in working with young people living in the inner city. I have also recently completed a research project funded by a Social Housing provider in partnership with a community organisation examining the disproportionality of tenancy failures amongst African and African Caribbean males living in Area 2 (Brown et al, 2014).

Alongside this, I received an invitation to speak at the Annual Citizen Advisory Bureau National Conference; where I shared with delegates some of the issues arising from my work and shared the work being carried out by the community group. Additionally, I have presented my research at national and international conferences and hosted a seminar with local community activist at my institution and received an invitation to be part of an ESRC bid with colleagues around developing Black studies in the UK.

In my Introduction, I reflected on how Singh (2007) alerts us to be clear about what we stand to gain when we engage with research that focuses on explicating 'race.' As this list indicates, academically and professionally I have gained a number of opportunities, relevant to my CV. However, there are a number of other things that I have gained such as how my research journey has ignited my activism, is evidenced through the voluntary work I do in the community. For example, I am part of a faith based organisation working in the Black community and a member of their Black Woman's group set up to support

other women who may be living with partners imprisoned for a gun related crimes or who may be in challenging and or violent relationships with young men. What is also not as visible is the other multiple ways I have attempted to maintain a range of other community connections I have discovered along the way.

I am conscious that my ethnographical approach and my immersion in the field has played a key role in these relationships. However, this is not to suggest that my time in the field was easy, or indeed that participant observation was unproblematic. Whilst it allowed me to immerse myself in a community group 'hanging around' is not sufficient for methodological rigour (Mason, 2002) and there was a need to ensure that alongside participating in the group I captured the data that helped me to meet the aims of my research. Coffey (1999) reminds us that when we are in the field we are there to try and gain an understanding of the social world we are observing. This was not always easy and there were a number of meetings and events that I attended where I failed to captured my observations in written form. In addition, critical ethnography rests on being able to establishing positive fieldwork relationships. This too, is not always easy and as in other spheres of life establishing a positive relationship is not always going to be easy with everyone we meet. I was conscious that at times I subordinated certain feelings and remained silent about issues raised where in other areas of my life I may have been challenging. Whilst overall my experience of carrying out participant observation was positive, there were occasions when I felt angry and vulnerable and at time powerless. This reflects how power in research has the potential to shift in ways that can leave researchers feeling disempowered (Coffey 1999). Mason (2002) argues that you cannot control how your participation is perceived by others and

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there were occasions where I felt or at times was made to feel an outsider within the group. This feeling was often tied to my gender, the perception around my class position and that fact that I was often a non-Christian working alongside people of faith. Reflecting on my time carrying out participant observations I can clearly identify with many of the challenges detailed by Coffey (1999: 36)

The choices between involvement and immersion, rapport and over rapport, familiarity and loss of self are often too starkly drawn to accurately reflect the full range of chosen and imposed identities, assumed during and beyond the field. The issue is not necessarily one of conversion, immersion or not, but a recognition that the ethnographic self is the outcome of complex negotiations. Moreover the definition of location of the self is implicitly a part of, rather than tangential to the ethnographic research endeavour. One of the strengths of ethnography (or participant observation) is the 'real' involvement in the setting under study. Contrary to some traditional views a weakness is not the possibility of total immersion, but rather failure to acknowledge and critically (though not necessarily negatively) engage with a range of possibilities of position and place and identity. Coffey (1999: 105) identifies how, fieldwork, evolves, develops and changes and comes to an end. She also points out that sometimes these endings come unexpectedly, suddenly and that we can often be unprepared. I was concerned about ending my relationship with the steering group. I spent a lot of time considering my role, my research and accepting that I needed to be realistic about what I could and could not do in light of changes in my personal circumstances. Leaving was not easy and walking away I felt guilty. Irrespective of the advice put forward in research texts for leaving the field (Loftland and Loftland, 1995; Hamersley, 1992) for me, leaving the field held both a practical and emotional dimension (Coffey, 1999). I was concerned

about what it would mean for my research, as I felt there was still much more to observe, more to understand. I was also concerned that leaving the steering group would present barriers in terms of people not wanting to talk to me. My emotional tie to the steering group was also a key factor. Ending our relationship meant leaving behind something unfinished. And, I was leaving the groups at a time when the steering group was in the process of re-focussing its work, depleted and looking for new members to expand and move the agenda forward.

6.5 Semi structured interviews

Access to respondents was via community groups and through networks that I came into contact with during the time I spent as part of the community group and through events I attended. Theoretical sampling was used as a means of elaborating building on categories emerging from both the participant observation and the literature I had read. Charmaz (2006) views this sampling approach as an effective way to learn more about how a basic process develops and changes, as theoretical sampling enables you to record further data from statements, events or cases that illuminate existing categories. For Hood (1983), theoretical categories helps researchers to guide and move research forward in order to achieve the following outcomes:

- To delineate the properties of a category
- To check hunches about categories
- To saturate the properties of the categories

- To clarify relationships between emerging categories

- To identify variations in a process.

Participants identified to participate in an interview were selected based on my belief that their contribution would allow me to build and develop my emerging theory, clarify questions I had or fill gaps that I had identified in the data from my participant observations.

The semi-structured interviews took place almost a year after leaving the community group due to my pregnancy and maternity leave. I continued to attend meetings and related events during my pregnancy, and on my return from maternity leave attended a further three meetings which were by that time being held on a monthly basis. However, whilst on maternity leave the group had undergone a number of changes in relation to both personal and its remit. Whilst I had come to the end of my fieldwork, it was personal reasons, in terms of the demands of having a young child and other work related demands that informed my decision to end my formal relationship with the community group.

Semi structured interviews were conducted with 12 participants (see table below and Appendix 2:369 for further biographical information).

Pseudonym Respondent	Role	Faith based	Locality	Gender
Paul	Community Worker	No	Area 1	M
Robert	Chief Executive	No	Area 2	M
Martyn	Lecturer / Community Worker	No	Area 1	M
Susan	Civil Servant	No	Area 1	F
Alison	Anglican Vicar	NO	Area 2	F
Kyle	Radio Presenter	No	Area 2	M
Samuel	Community Worker	Yes	Area 2	M
Vincent	Community Worker	No	Area 2	M
Ronald	Community Worker	Yes	Area 2	M
Shirley	Probation	No	Area 1	F
Anna	Health professional	Yes	Area 1	F
Rachel	Youth Worker	No	Area 2	F

The aim was not to have a representative sample, but to fill some of the gaps and areas I wanted to explore further. Interviews were conducted with a diverse group of participants, which included:

- Men and women

- Being affiliated and not affiliated to a community group

- Practicing and non-practicing Christians

- Parents/non parent

- Professionals/those in non-professional occupation

- Those employed in statutory, voluntary and private sector work

- Individuals with and without a first degree

The semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity for me to explore further the emerging theoretical ideas from carrying out my participant observation and interviews were conducted with three participants who had been part of the community group. Loftland and Loftland, (1995) described interviews as a directed conversation. They argue that interviews are intensive and offer an opportunity to carry out an in-depth exploration of a topic or experience. Consequently, an experienced researcher will have the skills needed to create a safe space in order to allow participants to interpret and share aspects of their own lived reality. Therefore the role of the researcher is to listen and observe paving the way for the interviewee to engage in some reflection and ultimately respond. I decided to use a thematic interview schedule (see Appendix 5:378) as a means of guiding both myself and the participant through the interview process. However, I adopted a flexible approach to using the schedule as I felt it was important to also explore any new themes that arose. My approach to the interviews was to ensure that

participants had an opportunity to identify, share and clarify issues. Whilst I had anticipated each interview would last around an hour, the reality was interviews on average lasted a minimum of two hours and there were occasions when once the tape was off, the conversation continued. Interviews were conducted in a venue identified by participants and transcribed ver batim. A substantial amount of the data presented in the findings section is drawn from the interviews with the twelve participants; as such I feel it is important provide a short bio about my research participants in order to contextualise their views and experiences (see Appendix 2:369). Like participant observations, interviews can pose a number of challenges. Keeping a research diary is my way of capturing the practical aspects stemming from the field but also my feelings about these research encounters. Drawing on my diary here, is useful to demonstrate some of the challenges encountered in the field. An example is the entry written after my interview with Paul:

I felt a positive rapport with Paul, we shared a number of common experiences, both our parents came from the island of Jamaica, we both grew up in the Midlands in the 1970s and 1980s, we both had university degrees and both had an interest working in the community due to our shared concern with issues of inequality and social justice. The interview lasted almost two hours and could have gone on much longer. The interview started with me covering all the ethical formalities, which included informing Paul that once I had transcribed the interview I would send him a copy of the transcript. I explained that this would provide an opportunity for him to make sure he felt he was fairly represented and that he could draw my attention to issues raised during the interview where he felt in hindsight he did not wish to enter the public domain. Paul's response was that he trusted me and did not want or need to see a copy of his interview

transcript. However a significant part of my entry details how I felt about this research encounter. I wrote:

> I felt a need to de-personalise the relationship between me and [Paul]. Don't quite understand why or quite sure what I mean when I write depersonalise. But, I was aware that the interview was conducted very differently from the way I normally conduct interviews. This is my first interview, so it could just be that. But I'm sure this is not how I usually conduct my interviews in other research project.

> I don't know, I think it has something to do with being asked on a few separate occasions about the potential for bias because my research is focusing on the African Caribbean community. Must have internalised this without even realising it or maybe I just wanted to appear professional. Not sure! It was quite a formal discussion. I tried to build rapport but was aware throughout of a need to ensure that he was aware that it was a researcher and respondent relationship. So maybe it could be something to do with not wanting him to say things just because it was me asking the questions. Need to think about why I approached interview in this way. Why did I feel it was important to keep some distance? Was it concern about the issue of validity? Wanting to be taken seriously? Not sure!

Throughout the interview I felt some affinity with Paul's narrative particularly in relation to the discussion about community. However, I was also aware that my gender brought something to the interaction – at various points throughout the interview I was conscious of feeling that gender and race were prominent at different stages that is to say at certain points my gender identity was more important than my racial identity and vice versa. Class did not seem to be an issue. I think this maybe because he spoke about studying and working in the academy and felt that he shared this identity with me too. Conscious that this was a space created to find out Paul's views, there were certain issues that I held contradictory feelings, while I did probe on a few occasions there were times I let things go. Once I turned the tape off Paul and I chatted like old mates for a further hour in good old Jamaican patois[2].

Phoenix (1996) highlights, the increasing number of feminists who have written about their experiences of conducting research and what it means to be a feminist researcher and the complex relationship they have to negotiate at each stage of the research process. However, she argues that, there are certain themes that have been neglected one of which is the ways in which the gender, 'race' and social class positions of the respondents intersects with those of the researcher. For Phoenix (1996) such a focus is important because 'race' and gender positions, and the power position they encompass enter into the interview situation but they do not do so in any unitary or essential way. As a result the impact of 'race' and gender within research cannot be easily predicted. Writing about her doctoral research, Ochieng (2010) argues that while it is important for all researchers to be sensitive to their participants' 'social

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[2] Jamaican Patois, known locally as Patois (Patwa or Patwah) or Jamaican, and called Jamaican Creole by linguists, is an English-lexified creole language with West African influences spoken primarily in Jamaica and the Jamaican dispora

characteristics, researchers who share common historical experiences and ethnicity with their participants, because of their field identity, have the potential of eliciting rich, detailed data hidden from 'outsiders.' My interview with Paul lasted two hours and led to hours of transcription, in excess of 20,000 words. Once the interview ended a further hour was spent talking about my research, his work, our experience of racism, our involvement in community organisations and the fact that he was currently looking for work. For Ochieng (2010), being an African researching her African community instilled in her a need to maintain a professional distance to avoid what she calls 'skewed data.' She writes that she was conscious of a need to avoid too close a rapport for fear that it would submerge her in a 'new culture' which she felt would be detrimental of the research endeavour, resulting in a loss of objective analysis. Yet, I was not seeking objectivity and support Fine's (1993:286) views that 'objectivity' is an illusion - an illusion snuggled in the comforting blanket of positivism - that the world is ultimately knowable and secure. My approach accepted that I was part of the world I was studying (Coffey, 1999) in fact, this was central to my approach. However, this is not to suggest I did not recognise that there are multiple ways of knowing and my perspective is but one and, that there are challenges one can encounter when carrying out interviews as an insider.

6.6 Summary and Reflections

Hendrix (2002) noted that, there is a wealth of literature that examines the challenges and ethical dilemmas, which researchers from various backgrounds face in conceptualizing, conducting, and understanding their research. She directly addresses 'race' and the role it plays in shaping all aspects of her work

as an African American women and having to contend with challenges from colleagues who question whether she introduces bias into her research, pointing out how these challenges often came from White researchers who did not question their own 'Whiteness' as playing a role when they themselves study White populations (Naples, 2001, 2002). This resonates with experiences I have encountered whilst undertaking my doctoral study. Following a presentation of my research to peers in my institution I was questioned on 'how I, as a Black researcher, researching the Black community was going to eliminate bias in my work'? What measures would I use to ensure objectivity? Was I not concerned about potentially compromising the validity of my research? This is not the only occasion during my study that colleagues and/or peers have raised such queries. However, what some of my colleagues fail to comprehend how Hill Collins (1990:52) noted, 'personal and cultural biographies represent important sources of knowledge' for 'outsiders within' the academy. Thus:

> Fieldwork is personal, emotional and identity work. The construction and production of self and identity occur both during and after fieldwork.' In writing, remembering and representing our fieldwork experiences we are involved in process of self-representation and identity construction. In considering and exploring the intimate relations between the field, significant other and the private self we are able to understand the processed of fieldwork as practical, intellectual and emotional accomplishments (Coffey, 1999:1)

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My doctoral journey has led to an increasing awareness of the fluidity of my identity as a woman of African Caribbean descent, unmarried mother, someone who works in the academy and lives as part of the community where the research was carried out. My fieldwork demonstrated the interconnection of 'race', class and gender and the dynamic way these unfolded in my research encounters. Whilst there is confirmation of my insider identity, revealed through us sharing a relationship to the Caribbean, and history of growing up in the Midlands and experiences of racism, there are occasions where in these encounters I sense a process of 'othering.' This 'othering' may be influenced by the fact that I am part of the academy, engaged in a doctoral study and resulting from my gender and being an unmarried mother. As suggested by Serrant-Green, in research encounters one may occupy a space between the others and 'them' not fully one or the other (2002). My experience was depending on the issues under discussion I would share or hide aspects of my identity. The outcome is that in doing so has led me to consider how I view myself, understand my multiple identities and how the implications of this in how I negotiate my insider and outsider status.

My fieldwork experiences have reflected many of the challenges documented by Black researchers undertaking research as 'insiders'. This has included recognition of how being an insider may enable greater access to a community because of similarities. In so saying, such closeness can potentially lead to missed observations, a lack of clarity on the part of the researcher and confusion about relationships. This is in addition to how as an insider we may face challenges resulting from complexities associated with having to continually negotiate roles participants (Phoenix, 1991; De Andrade, 2000; Merriam et al, 2001Hawkins, 2010). Throughout my fieldwork I was conscious of the various

aspects of my identity and how my 'race', gender, educational background, perceived status impact on the research process (Acker, 2001). Additionally, to Naples (1999) I have been forced to question whether or not I am or can ever be fully an insider or outsider due to the fluidity of power inside the community I am researching. My experience demonstrates that, even when conscious of my insider-outsider position my identity continued unravels in ways that I could not predict. (Hawkins, 2010).

My fieldwork involved me focussing my Black feminist gaze on African Caribbean men and this has led to some uncomfortable moments due to the views being put forward about Black women and Black motherhood. I feel a significant responsibility in how this is shared with others both inside and outside the 'community'. Further, Atkins et al (1990) reminded us that research does not takes place in a social, economic and political vacuum, which means that investigations will often be faced with the problem of managing their superior power in relation to those who are the subject of the research. Yet, during some encounters I have felt a degree of powerlessness to challenge certain issues raised.

I am unable to deny that I feel a sense of trepidation about exposing the community to further pathology and I find myself questioning if focusing attention on my frustration with specific discourse of some of some Black men and also in challenging some of the ideas presented religious discourse of those identifying as practicing Christians. I ask myself if this is truly important when young people in my community are dying and thus be regarded as merely self-indulgence. But this may merely reflect a tendency for Black women to refrain

from openly challenging certain issues and of being critical of Black men. Hill Collins (1990) argues that this reluctance has contributed to a lack of insider analysis on certain aspects of Black family life. As Davies and Chang (2006) argue that, historically gender has had no place in African centric thought because it was viewed as involving an internal critique of the people. Further, they claim that historically the only focus allowed was one that demarcated Black women's oppression at the hands of non-Black, specifically White men and that which illuminated Black men's subordination through being labelled as hypersexual predators of white women. However, they suggest that Black women have been given the tools of intersectionality and anti-essentialism to combat this and this is now the way forward (Davies and Chang, 2006).

Alongside the identity work involved I also feel it is important to draw further attention to how emotions have been implicated in my research journey. In 2005, Hochschild wrote an Afterword to the Twentieth Anniversary Edition of her influential book, *The Managed Heart* She shared how her book had elicited a range of responses from flight attendants whose stories had been a central component of her work. Hochschild wrote that the responses from flight attendants ranged from them warmly wringing her hand, on a couple of occasions being offered free bottles of wine and receiving invitations to share her work at union meetings. It is possible to view the flight attendants' responses as signalling that Hochschild's book represented a form of affirmation in which it drew attention to something that was important to them and provided a space for them to tell an alternative story about the reality of their working life, which was far removed from the glamorous smiling neutral and untroubled image that is often presented. Many flight attendants thanked Hochschild for giving a name to the 'emotional labour' they routinely expended. Further

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Hochschild (2005:200) described that, she recognised much of the anguish she heard in the voices of the flight attendants and who approached her was evidence of the frustrations they felt about the sheer invisibility of the emotional labour that was a key aspect of their work. To this end, they were glad that, someone had taken the time to ask questions, to listen and to take into consideration the emotional impact of work on their lives. To them it meant something and, more widely, it illuminated how emotional labour is part and parcel of much of what we, tells us something about our sense of 'self' and is important to interrogate.

Emotions have been an integral aspect of my doctoral research. Unlike Horchschild's research mine did not explicitly set out to focus on the role of emotions. Nonetheless, emotions and emotional labour is a by-product of my work in terms of my role as a researcher and in trying to understand how community activists view the issue of 'UGC' and give meaning to their motivations, involvement and ultimate rationale for the work they do. My research highlighted the centrality of emotion, both to my 'doing' of it and the 'doing' of community activism by my participants. Like Hochschild's flight attendants, my work and that of the community activists was characterised by emotional labour and driven, sustained and challenged by values-based emotional responses. Thus, emotions are implicated in the narratives of my participants and in my response to these stories. My research has led me to feel a range of emotions ranging from ambivalence to total rage.

I am aware from conversations with colleagues and friends about the emotional roller coaster that can characterise the doctoral research experience. They

shared their experiences of feeling a sense of euphoria, likened to a drug induced 'high' when things went to plan. They explained how this could take the form of gaining access to a study site, having positive and informative time during their time in the field or receiving positive feedback from supervisors about their work. This is alongside potential lows; stemming from missed deadlines, negative feedback on a piece of work you may have spent weeks completing where you thought you had 'finally cracked it' or having a crisis of confidence in which you are just simply overwhelmed with the sheer demands one may encounter when studying at this level. For me, completing my research took place in a context of managing home, children, paid work and my research. Nonetheless, I accepted that there are things associated with the process and the experiences from doing research that are not new or indeed totally unexpected and the emotional labour this entails (Ramsay, 1996; Sampson et al, 2008)

What I have found more difficult to reconcile is how my research elicited emotions that have elevated certain issues pertaining to my racial and racialised identity to the fore. My research has reawakened my feeling of connectedness, responsibility to my family, wider community and community activism. Meeting, talking and working with men and women form ACC around the issue of 'UGC' has reminded me of how I and my participants are experts in the management or better still the masking of our emotions; how in certain situations we continually mask an important part of our racial identity and how this has become an almost fully formulated technique we employ both consciously and unconsciously, in order to navigate the racism, which operates as normal in our everyday life (Marshall and Rossman, 1995; Tate,1997). I feel that I better understand what our silences convey and the processes that silence 'us.'

In the next chapter, I show how 'UGC' in my study is a useful vehicle to explore current views, issues and tensions associated with being Black in the UK today. It also tells us something about how 'UGC' has become an issue that has led to ACC examining issues associated with racism and oppression experienced by wider Black community. However, for me it also demonstrates a range of issues about the relationship between the position of Black women and men in ACC.

Chapter 7: Communities understanding a site of contradictions, acceptance and resistance.

7.0 Introduction

The following four chapters address the research questions through presenting findings of the analysis of how 'race,' racism and the process of racialisation is implicated in the conceptualisation of 'urban gun crime' (UGC), inform the experiences and understanding of African Caribbean Communities (ACC) and African Caribbean Families (ACF) and underpins the range of activities and initiatives being delivered within (ACC). This chapter is structured into four sections; 7.1 'Framing a community understanding of 'UCG' wherein I revisit the ideas and themes that have informed the data analysis. 7.2 'Community perspectives: a site of acceptance and resistance' I presents an analysis of participants' understanding of 'UGC' from multiple perspectives. In 7.3 'Conceptualisation: needs to include a repositioning of macro systems of disadvantage' and in 7.4 'Role of class, poverty and deprivation in community conceptualisation' I explore how participants perceive the relationship between the 'UGC' and macro systems of disadvantage. In 7.5 'Racialisation and 'UGC,' I examine perceptions of an explicit linking of 'UGC' and 'race'. In 7.6 I provide a summary and reflection on the findings presented here.

7.1 Framing a community understanding of 'urban gun crime'

> Their excessive Victorian respectability gave way to sex, drugs and reggae as a gulf between generations opened up. Pimping became mugging. Mugging turned to rioting and then to "steaming". Now we are told that selling crack cocaine and engaging in gunplay are the latest manifestations in the same familiar sequence. Birmingham's murderous gangs are staffed by the conceptual descendants of Uncle Enoch's "wide-grinning piccaninnies". The cast of characters evolves but there is consistency in the way that it is always crime which tells the British people what racial differences add up to. (Gilroy, 2003: comment page)

> You cannot, use someone else's fire. You can only use your own. And in order to do that, you must first be willing to believe that you have it. (Audre Lorde)

The above quotes by Gilroy (2003) and Lorde illuminate two key themes uncovered in my analysis of the data. The first reflects how 'UGC' can be viewed as a contemporary manifestation in which we see the reproduction of a semiotic relationship between 'race' and crime. Gilroy (2003) argues that evidence for this is visible in the language, labels and symbols conveyed in the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC'. For him, this is representative of an

ongoing trend in which crime becomes a means of reproducing specific racialised ideas about the other. The second theme is captured by Lorde in terms of alluding to the significance of self-representation and resistance. To this end, she asserts that to achieve change, be it social or political, means that self-definition and resistance are imperative. Subsequently, change requires individuals and/or groups to be able to take responsibility, speak out and take action to achieve their goal. Here I highlight how these two ideas unfold in the narratives of my research participants and how they are central in how they conceptualise 'UGC'.

In undertaking the research on which this thesis is based I was keen to capture the views and experiences of community activists as a way of uncovering how they make sense of 'UGC'. I also wanted to examine the relationship between participants' perceptions about how the problem was presented within dominant conceptualisation and if they, like me, were concerned with messages conveyed about 'race'. Thus, I was keen for my research to be informed by a range of people working at the coalface who were in the forefront of community based initiatives working alone or as a part of a group. They needed to be actively working (or had an interest in working) in localities made notorious for 'birthing' and socialising this 'new' dangerous criminal generation, localities perceived as notorious for creating and sustaining such crimes. I was interested to uncover whether and, how the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' was accepted by and embedded within their work, their understanding and the extent to which this was visible within their narratives. To this end, I aimed to uncover the relationship between the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' as reproducing or reaffirming particular ideas in relation to 'race' and the extent to which this was appropriated, reproduced and resisted within ACC. Here, I present key findings

related to how men and women understand and conceptualise 'UGC'. This also provides an opportunity to ascertain the extent to which my perception is or is not realised.

7.2 'Urban gun crime': community perspectives

In Chapter Three I argue that there are inherent tensions resulting from how policy makers engage with the concept community. This is because while they employ community as a mechanism to address a range of social problems, they often proceed without due care or attention to the dynamic and heterogeneous nature of communities and this includes ignoring how community also expresses something about individuals sense of commitment and solidarity to tackle perceptions of inequity and injustice (Wilmot, 1989). For community activists community held a number of meanings and expressed something about how participants felt about their sense of connection with each other and their connection to the issue of 'UGC'. Community also expressed something about their perceptions and relationship to the state and its institutions to ACC. Across the data participants identified 'UGC' as a problem. The community group in which I undertook part of my fieldwork was a tangible outcome of this manifestation. Members of the group had come together in response to a shared concern. The purpose of coming together was with a goal to coordinate a community response to the issue of 'UGC'. Hence the formation of the group was driven by the potential impact of 'UGC' on individuals, families and ACC. 'UGC' represented a threat and led to establishing a sense of solidarity and commitment amongst participants. An aspect of the mobilisation around community reflects what Anderson (1983) argues in terms of community

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offering a sense of connection based on a racial or racialised identity. But, of equal importance, for members of the group, was that community served as a conduit in which they were able to self-define and come together to demonstrate their agency and resistance. In the data there is a common acceptance that there are Black youths engaged in 'UGC', that 'UGC' is problematic and untenable. Participants also spoke about a relationship between 'UGC' and factors such as Black youth culture, Black family life and a range of social issues, such as poverty, deprivation and fragmentation within the African Caribbean Black community. However, community was in response to the perception of an external threat and also needs to be viewed as purposeful and proactive and political (Mirza, 1997). It is also important to note that, the suggestion here is not that this sense of solidarity or the commitment that underpinned this aspect of being part of a community was expressed in the same way or was unproblematic. The data captures how participants expressed their commitment and solidarity in different ways. This reflected the diversity detailed in Chapter Three in which homogeneity of ACC is continually contested (Anthias and Yuval Davies, 1992; Reynold, 2013) Participants view of community was impacted by their differences and reflected factors such as gender, class, religious convictions and whether they had experiential knowledge stemming from being directly impacted by 'UGC' as a result of an incident involving a family member or friend. Nonetheless, a key finding is how participants (whether or not they were directly impacted by 'UGC') spoke about community as something personal. Moreover, it was this personal aspect of community that ignited their interest to get involved in community work and it is this that is revealed in the data below.

As previously stated, explanation as to how the problem is understood varies. Participants spoke about their personal experience when they had first-hand experience of the mayhem that resulted from 'UGC'. This was a key factor in shaping their perceptions of the issue. An example of this comes from Samuel. He is a practicing Christian and a director of a community based organisation. He explained that his understanding of 'UGC' is informed by his experience of knowing someone who had died from a gun related incident and having to support families who had been impacted by 'UGC':

> I have been to funerals to men who have died to 'gun crime', gang violence. I have been to mums to let them know that their sons have passed away and to see how they are doing. I have been to people who have come ready to do damage to other people. I have seen people who have been crying for years who have lost a friend and the friend's murderers have never been found. So this is a real issue here.

Samuel's involvement in working in this area was his response to what is identified to be a 'real' issue. He explained how his concern for young Black men led to his decision to give up a prestigious and national role within the Black led church in order to take a more proactive role in his local community. Samuel did not equate personal experience as solely gained from having direct contact with families who had lost a loved one to 'UGC' or who had been impacted by 'UGC' in other ways. In his narrative there is a suggestion of an emotional and psychological connection to the families and in terms of feeling a sense of duty and moral responsibility to both them and wider ACC. Further, this

sense of connection is reflected in his understanding of the issue. This sense of solidarity and connection was also identified by Paul. Paul has a wealth of experience of working in his local community and has spent over 20 years performing a range of roles for the community, statutory and voluntary sectors. Paul has no biological children but has a keen interest in working with young people and specifically in the area of education and employment. Paul explained that his understanding of 'UGC' was gained from his personal experience of working within local government and from his engagement voluntary work within the ACC:

It is my experience of being stopped in the supermarket by a parent. Literally the last time is about three weeks ago by a mum who is telling me that her son is keeping bad company and then she goes onto talk about what that bad company is. The youngsters he is hanging with are known for being involved with guns and knives and so on. So because of my involvement of community work in the past in the city I have people stopping in the streets literally or I get a phone call three o'clock in the morning saying something is going to kick off what can we do. So I'm informed by what I see myself and also what other people in the locality tell me. Also my last role working in [city] Safer Partnership, I had access to a lot of information and stats and actually pulled down that data and did some number crunching myself and spoke to my counterparts in other parts of the country about what the issues are for them and how they see things going.

Hence, an important dimension of 'personal experience' is how participants' understanding of 'UGC' was informed in relation to how they viewed their connection to ACC and the extent to which they felt a sense of solidarity and responsibility, obligation and duty. Angela decided to leave nursing to work for a community based organisation that work with individuals from ACC with a mental health need. She, like Paul, had been involved in community work for a number of years. Angela was a mother and a grandmother and was born in the Caribbean. She explained that 'UGC' is personal to her due to the very fact that she is aware of what she described as her connection to the young men, families and the wider community in which 'UGC' is perceived to be an issue. Angela explained that she felt profound empathy with others in her local community. Moreover, this empathy was not solely directed at victims of 'urban gun crime, but was also directed at the perpetrators too:

> People who have lost their lives in this community due to the effect
> of gunshot and being stabbed; I think of the pain to those families
> both the victim and the perpetrator must be quite profound.

Angela did not deny 'UGC' was an issue. However, she explained that, for her, it signified something beyond the immediate impact on those who have directly lost, had someone injured or imprisoned as a result of their involvement. She related 'UGC' to the potential wider ramifications she perceived it held for ACC. Subsequently, she perceived it as important and personal to her due to her racial identity and sense of connection to others who shared her racial and ethnic identity. 'UGC' was not just a problem the she associated with ACC living in the inner city or those directly impacted. 'UGC' for Angela evoked 'race' and

concern was heighted by her lived experience of racism and racialisation which could not be divorced from her understanding of the issue. Angela's expressed her concern and anxiety about 'UGC' despite not being impacted 'directly' this is not what is important it is still a personal issue. Angela expressed this in the extract below:

I think we have to take back that responsibility and you can't expect other people to come and put your house back in order. They may help mash it up, but it is like somebody come and they could bruk inna ur house and mash it up and you vex. But, you tink dem deh same people *a go come and put it inna order. Who a go put it in order? A fi u ouse an you wan in deh fi comfortable! It's the same where wid di children dem.* How can the same system that up load the poison give the antidote?. How? *It don't mek sense!* You start to think and talk like that people think you are being radical, but you are just dealing with realities because you just need to apply some everyday basic principles, if you give me the poison how are you going to give me the antidote. It's the same people that are kicking our children out of school before time, you *si dem a build prison for dem now wid* television and telephone and everything because they are going to be in there for a long time *so mek dem* comfortable[3].

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[3]Bruk inna ur house (break in your house)
Tink dem deh same people a go come and put it inna order? (Do you think those same people are going to put it in order)?
Who a go put it in order?(Who is going to put it in order)?
A fi u ouse an you wan in deh fi comfortable! (It's your house and you want it to be comfortable.
It's the same where wid di children dem (It is the same with children).
It don't mek sense! (It doesn't make sense)
You si dem a build prison for dem now wid(You see them building prisons for them now with

Yet all participants, irrespective of whether they had direct or indirect experience of 'UGC', had an emotional connection and sense of responsibility to community:

> My experience I guess you could call initially was not a personal one became a personal …I have got a twenty five year old, a twenty four year old and a nineteen year old. My twenty four year old has been to prison, my twenty five year old is currently in prison and my nineteen year old is toughing it out. So for me it is not... I am not doing it because my nippers are involved; I started it in 1998. I am doing it because it is my duty more now because I have no choice (Martyn).

There are a number of ways in which men and women talked about 'UGC' as something personal and something that connected them to others. Participants identified how 'UGC' was not something abstract or distant but potentially something that could easily impact on their immediate families or someone they knew. But, they also spoke about how they were implicated in 'UGC' too. They viewed 'UGC' as a result of a racialised process which cemented a link between 'race' and crime, more specifically between ACC and firearms offences. To this end, this 'UGC' was something that was personal and political. In Chapter Three, I drew attention to the myriad of ways in which community needs to be viewed as more than a place that signals belonging. For example, Mirza (1997) contends that community forms a mechanism for action. The issue of

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mek dem (make them)

community is discussed in Chapter Seven, however, here it is important as it is this sense of community, solidarity, and means of action mediated by 'race' that forms part of how participants' conceptualise 'UGC'.

During my time in the field I observed occasions where there existed some tension between those with direct experience of 'UGC' and those whose personal experience was shaped by a wider feeling of solidarity, responsibility and membership of an ACC. An example, of this was in the community group where I observed the frustrations of those who had direct experience 'UGC'. The community organisation held meetings on a regular basis; they did not want to lose the momentum generated by the individuals who had initiated the first. At the time I joined group meetings were held on a fortnightly basis and in between members of the group often communicated with each other via telephone or email. I observed this commitment, how members of the group were motivated to be involved, and wanted to be connected to the work taking place in their local community. This is not to suggest that involvement was always straight forward (as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Ten). Anthias and Yuval Davies (1992) alert us to the internal differences that can also be found in community and how these differences are mediated by power. During my time in the group I observed tension between members on the basis of gender, religious beliefs and in relation to those who held and did not hold professional positions and how this in turn was perceived in terms of their experience of 'UGC'.

A source of tension I observed was between those who spoke about being directly impacted by 'UGC' and those with more indirect experience. Those with

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direct experience included those with a family member, friend or neighbour who had been a victim of 'UGC', or had received a custodial sentence for a gun related offence. Members with indirect experience were motivated by a feeling of solidarity, empathy and sense of responsibility with ACC. For those with direct experience, there appeared to be a feeling that their experience gave them a more authoritative voice which legitimated their involvement. They were 'better' informed due to their physical proximity to those whose lives had been touched directly by an incident associated with 'UGC'. 'UGC' came to their doors, so their experiential knowledge offered them legitimacy over others whose positions were more removed and hence their sources of knowledge viewed as more distant. They felt that this gave them the authenticity to be able to speak on behalf of the wider community and, perceived they were in the ideal position to support the production of knowledge informing policy and practice.

For others, whilst experiential knowledge was less important the ramifications of 'UGC' meant that they too had a vested interest. They felt that the issue was no less important to them and also had a role to play. For them, it was essential to take the time to seek out other forms of knowledge, to share knowledge and learning to accept that 'UGC' was something that impacted on everyone and so looking at things more broadly was an imperative. This viewpoint was often put forward by those who held professional roles or whose religious conviction was an important factor in their decision to get involved. The suggestions here is not that these two groups were mutually exclusive or that those who had experienced 'UGC', first- hand, did not also locate their experiences more broadly, but for those with direct experience it is important to ensure that their experiences were not diminished, or lost in the work of the group. It was essential that their experiences were not subsumed under the agendas of

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others. Consequently, experiential knowledge derived from the diversity to be found within the group was a central 'battle' site to having a 'true' understanding of the issue and in turn a better understanding of potential solutions.

Martyn highlights some tensions:

> We were meeting every two weeks people were coming from all across the [names area] to make these meetings and, it was obvious that there were tensions, conflicts, different ideologies, different ways that people saw that it should be tackled, very difficult when you have got individuals working for the council sitting at the table working with us. You almost had two ideologies sitting around the table.

This tension was impacted by issues such as gender, occupational/educational background and religious belief. An example of this was noted by Jonathon. Jonathon held a prominent position within the local community and had held positions on a number of strategic boards was keen to position himself in relations to others working in this area:

> So, these issues as they have emerged over the last few months, for example the August riots, have really been part and parcel of my own journey but as many people point out I engage with it from maybe a slightly detached place which is not detached really but I

think sociologically, I presume, well I don't presume, but people tell me I think that I am middle class. But if middle class means you have lots of money then clearly that's not me because I ain't arrived there yet [laughs]. But I suppose, you know, kind of socially where you are in the pecking order, I am not of the street and I wouldn't claim to be from the 'hood' in that sense.

... And I am very clear about that and, in saying I am not from the hood, is not a denial of anything or an apology, it is just to say that I am doing my bit for the community ….

Kyle explained that he had very little personal experience with the police, but he did understand the difficulties that others from ACC may encounter:

I hear of people who have been stopped by the police regularly so there is lot to do with. I suppose, how you are dressed, sort of in a suit, not all the time, but you know. In the last twenty years I have been of an age, which I suppose, is not a young person so they are not looking for me and I have never sort of driven an ostentatious looking car. So I hear about people talking about such things and I have engaged with them and I have been with a number of people to confront the police over some of these issues. And again, because of where I am placed it quite easy for me to go and engage with the Chief or with the head of a Regional police or now in the [names region] the Chair of the Police Authority. ... So again, it's the place from where I have worked from say

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the last fifteen years has been a slightly privileged place for engaging with these issues so it is in that sense that I mean detached.

He illuminated some of the internal tensions thus:

... I think it is not considered, it is not considered 'cool' to do that. You are only cool if you can self-declare to be from the 'hood', you know, so even people who are not pretend that there are

Gender was used as a means of positioning people in relation to the problem but also as a means of understanding the issues. My research diary notes illustrate how often meetings were led by the men in the group. This is not to suggest that this situation was a source of contestation between men and women. However, I noted how 'UGC', whilst a problem that impacted on both men and women, was viewed as a problem that was most significant to men. During meetings it was often viewed or presented as a 'male' issue where community efforts should be led by men in the interest of men. This gendered dimension can also be seen in the extract from Vincent's account below which illuminates why for some participants gender was considered as a key issue and the role of men was central:

With the man and women thing, in terms of parenting, it is not detrimental but I think it is essential that a child grows up with both sort of perspectives in life. There are single mother that have

done very well with one, two, three and four children. Very well! Who have managed to even out, even with the boys who need that male presence …I think that some of the times what helps is if the mum has a brother or an uncle who plays a fatherly role and set some kind of example as a male adult that helps. A lot of how I am with my children is coming from how my father was with me and, if I didn't have that father influence I probably would be living on my own in a one bedroom flat and my children not really paying me any mind because I didn't grow them.

Such ideas influenced how 'UGC' was viewed and the perception and conceptualisation informed by ideas of the relationship and impact of 'UGC' on Black men. In Chapter Nine, I detail how a key way in which gender plays out in relation to 'UGC' is in how the relationship between 'UGC' and 'absent' fathers is often put forward as an explanation for young black men's involvement in 'UGC'.

Nonetheless, Rachel highlighted that gender needs to be considered in a wider sense and how as a woman and mother her perceptions and experience was no less valid. Her contribution was both as a mother of a son currently imprisoned for a gun related crime, having woken up to police in her bedroom pointing a gun at her head and from her employment as a youth worker. For Rachel first-hand experience played a key role:

I am trying to save these kids from destruction. I don't want them to go through what [son] has gone through. I set up this group [mums/ parents support group] because when I met [name] he was supporting my son and gave him confidence. He had started working with [son] and we started talking. My biggest comfort is that they were doing something good with my son. No one ever saw the good side, only the bad side because of the media and police. You need to sit down and talk to them. Most of them just want to feel like somebody. If you are never told that then you are lost. They don't see that. Many of them have been thrown out of school, they don't have that. When you want to fit with this what they call the 'real world' and it is not happening for you then you have got to make your own world and, if that is selling drugs etc... .

Individuals' religious belief and faith also informs their conceptualisation of the issue. Martyn, a practicing Christian and chair of a community based organisation set up in response to concern around 'UGC', felt that his involvement was not merely a personal sense of responsibility but ordained by God:

I know it is going to be a tall order because there is a lot done to us historic, but I am held by God! ....God has given me an amount of time on the earth, without going to deep into stuff, but I have a new perspective and I have been called here to serve and, he's given me whatever my gifts are to operate and function at this time in this age until he says it is time. When I look through the

scriptures, Jesus sent 70 disciples, (some people don't recognise this), 70 disciples out to preach the gospel and the reason we only know about twelve is because only twelve came back that's the reality. Sometimes we only need a small seed, not the great numbers, just the a small amount with real common aims, common values, people of integrity, people who are honest, people who will put themselves out selfless not selfish put those things together with just a few and make enough noise and move in unison is a starting point.

Participants' view of 'UGC' was informed by a myriad of perspectives, which are personal and shaped by a sense of connection to others. But this connection was interpreted in various ways, influenced by a range of other factors which in turn leads to complexity, tension and inherent contradictions. As discussed in Chapter Two, the processes that lead to racialisation that automatically locates and bind individuals within groups often on the basis of perceptions of a racialised group identity is insufficient to capture how ACC are dynamic, diverse and hold a range of political and religious views. Moreover, the implication of gender, class and ethnicity are rarely taken into consideration. There is much participants share in terms of a sense solidarity to what they perceive as a problem that has repercussions for ACC. However, the conceptualisation of the issue is informed by multiple ideas and the construction of a counter discourse imbues notions of both acceptance and resistance to the dominant discourse but intersects with social divisions such as class, gender and religious convictions.

7.3 Communities perspective: a site of acceptance and resistance

For Stuart Hall, there is no authentic popular culture uncontaminated by dominant culture and no self-contained identity untouched by the identity of others (Practor, 2004). Participants are not untouched by the dominant discourse, indeed the involvement of Black youths, more specifically young Black males in 'UGC' was viewed similarly as an outcome of individual choices and circumstances and within a context that acknowledges factors associated with poverty, inequality and deprivation. So, the role of agency is evident in that young people involved in 'UGC' make a conscious and rational decision to engage in this form of criminal activity and this reflected in the way the issue is perceived. Robert is an ordained Minister in an evangelical church. During my time in the field I became aware of a number of faith based initiatives in which Christians who were working individually and alongside non practicing Christians in the area of 'UGC' (this is discussed further in Chapter Ten). Robert spoke about his sense of solidarity and connection to ACC and shared how it is his belief that it is God's will for him to spend time working on the streets with those in need. Robert's work forms part of an increasing interdominational response to problems within Black communities (for example, see Isaac and Davies, 2009). However, his community work and understanding is also informed by his personal experience as a young Black male who in his youth had spent time in prison for drug related criminal activity:

> I think where gun crime is a problem it's because it has become
>
> accessible. Guns have always been here and crime has always

been here but it's become more accessible to a generation that has not matured yet in criminality because even in criminality context we are at the bottom of the pile. When you go into jail and you look at the various levels of crime from organised to just basic foolish crime that is where we are. You have very few that have actually made it and made it well out of criminality so people have got to remember this. This is the work we are doing now in prison and the guys have come out and said you've critiqued it well.... When our parents came in the Windrush to the land of milk and honey and money they were pushed into the factories and pushed into manual jobs. I don't know about you, but as a first generation from the Windrush, *'mi nah wok'* [I am not working] in no factory because I saw my mum and others bust their back for this thing. ...What is the alternative? Oh the streets! And then the whole kind of hippy 60s, 70s, drugs, Ganja, weed, Ras, boom, saying we can make an industry here. As a generation then coming through 2 or 3 or 4 in some family lines a high proportion that have only known criminality so that produces what it produces ... .

This is an example of how across the data we find both acceptance and resistance to the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC'. While Robert rejected the tendency for 'UGC' to be sensationalised in media as a problem that was out of control within ACC (Joseph and Gunter, 2011), Robert viewed the involvement of Black youths in 'UGC' as a conscious choice and a means in which Black youths demonstrated their agency. He acknowledged the role of structural factors such as the disadvantages experienced by Black men in the Labour, but Robert viewed 'UGC' as the outcome of a criminal culture that he

perceived existed amongst sections of Black youths. Moreover, their involvement was perceived, in part, as an outcome of an intergenerational transmission of a criminal culture. Consequently, in Robert's narrative we see an understanding of 'UGC' as a symptomatic of the choices and circumstances associated with those involved choosing to engage in this form of illegal criminal activity rather than making decisions to engage in decisions to choose a more positive route to adulthood via the legal labour. This reflects a dominant discourse which puts forward specific ideas around culture (ACPO, 2007)

This acceptance and resistance can also be seen from Vincent, a community worker:

> There is no question it is a big, big problem. Because there is not as much shootings going on as up to a couple of years ago that does not mean that there is not a gun problem. It is just that a lot of the young men that did most of the shootings are either doing a lot of big sentences; we are talking thirty odd years, twenty odd years. A lot of them are off the road. The ones who are more still inclined to do those things they are not as brave as those ones. The way I see them, they will come out now and again and do a little robbery here in their community and run home - probably fire one shot and gone. They are not as blasé and blatant as the ones that are doing the big sentences.

Despite acknowledging a reduction in levels of 'UGC', Vincent suggested that this may be an indication that young Black men are choosing not to get involved in this type of activity. The reduction in 'UGC' is an outcome of a lack of courage amongst the new generation of young men involved in this type of criminality. Yet simultaneously, Vincent acknowledged that understanding 'UGC' needs to include more than just focusing attention on individuals and he drew attention to a wider set of concerns related to how these young men have access to weapons in the first place:

> Those were the ones that were out every day, drive by shooting, but the guns are still here. The questions should be where are the guns coming from? Because none of these kids can afford these guns, when you see a 16/17 year old with a big gun, where did he get it from? ...these young men, the gangs and having these different weird and wonderful weapons, it has always been the focus. ...'Oh these youths are bad, oh these youths are this'..., No, it is where are they getting the guns? Who is giving them the guns? It is not something you should think of and find out, know who is doing it and get rid of these people.

The notions associated with culture, moral values and choice feature in the narratives of participants. Factors such as breakdown in cultural values and the need to focus attention within the community and the breakdown of the Black family are also present in how the problem is understood. An example of this is the notion that a major part of the problems leading to young Black men engaging in 'gangs' and hence 'UGC' results from Black boys being socialised

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by families that are too feminised and lacking father figures (Sewell, 2010; Glynn, 2013). Thus, in the data the view that 'UGC' is partly due to the disintegration of the Black family is identified (discussed in Chapter Nine). Barbara makes this point clearly:

> I think that is what has evolved from perhaps our generation having our parents there. As much as my parents or my generation of parents did their best for their kids I think the values have broken down somewhere in terms of the children and, being able in terms of my generation, being able to pass that on. The values have gone. It's a shame to actually say it! It's sad! Really really sad! But it really is a minority when you have a family mum, dad, children. With my son, not a lot of his friends have mum and dad at home... .

However, in acknowledging the role of morals, values and culture, the data shows evidence of participants trying to not resort to the common tendency associated with drawing on 'race' as an explanations understood in simplistic binary terms, but attempt to locate 'race' as part of a wider system of disadvantage.

Clement (2007) in his research with a community group in Bristol, uncovered a tension in that his participants found it difficult to separate what they were told from what they experienced. This led him to conclude that there was the disassociation in participants understanding of the disadvantages they

encountered in areas such as employment, education and housing from their past experiences of institutional racism. In my study Alison suggested that lack of attention to 'race' can create problems for some young people in terms of them being able to make sense of their experiences of racism:

> I am not discounting any of that; the values that we are brought up with the examples we have been given and all of that and, if you haven't been given any of that then it is easy to take on all of that. If somebody didn't say to you 'well actually that wasn't the way to do it little Johnny' and Johnny isn't given that moral grounding that little Johnny needs, it is very easy for little Johnny to absorb, he hasn't got the resources not to absorb the negative out there, the destructive, he absorbs it because he hasn't got anything to counteract it. …I am not discounting what happens in the home and how important but we also know you can bring a child up well and he can go out there and do things… .

Silvestre et al. (2009) point out that, 'UGC' is embedded in and symptomatic of macro-systems. Yet, a tendency evident within political and media discourse to prioritise the role of the individual rather than broader structural factors means that the problem is located as a failure of the individual, their family or community, rather than fundamental factors that shape an individuals' lived reality. The suggestion here is not that policy has not acknowledged some of the broader social factors (and evidence for this is clearly seen in policy initiatives) or that research has not attempted to address such factors. Indeed, Joseph and Gunter (2008) argue there has been a tendency for academic and politicians to

highlight structural bias. Moreover, they question the notion that structural factors have not been central to how 'UGC' has been accounted for within policy (2011). They contend that the situation is characterised by an over focus by academics and policy makers, albeit without much action, on issues such as structural characteristics rather than the complex local nuances that are often the causes of interpersonal and group violence. Nonetheless, as Silvestri et al. (2009) maintain a major criticism is that explanations for 'UGC' subsumes macro explanations and in so doing diminishes them. Whilst there has been some acceptance about the role such macro systems play, rarely is this central to thinking and how the problem is understood, and in turn conceptualised by the state and other major institutions. The work of Joseph and Gunter (2011) importantly draws our attention to how rarely 'race' and cultural factors are appropriately located and understood within a wider web of motivational factors in young people joining gangs and carrying weapons.

7.4 Conceptualisation: needs to include a repositioning of macro system of disadvantage

Despite 'UGC' being identified as the principle issue and reason for participants coming together either as part of a community initiative, meeting, event or indeed for agreeing to participate in an interview, 'UGC' in itself was seldom the principle focus of attention. 'UGC' was a catalyst for men and women from ACC to come together and, in coming together create and occupy a space to share their perceptions, experiences and to engage in a dialogue. Central to discussions was a perception that 'UGC' was both located and symptomatic of wider injustice and inequality. My observational notes record a myriad of ways

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in which participants spoke about their racial and racialised identity, the extent to which they felt included and excluded from wider society, insiders yet also outsiders and treated fairly or unfairly. Consequently, participants' narratives moved beyond the issue of 'UGC' to tell an alternative story about their lives and their experiences of 'race,' racism, racialisation and the process of criminalisation, and it is these factors which are paramount to the sense of collective endeavour and in the conceptualisation of 'UGC'.

Hall et al (1978) aimed to go beyond the label in order to uncover an alternative way of understanding the relationship between the crime 'muggings' to British society. Their work offered a way of extrapolating how mugging was not a neutral or value free word/construct, but one that was imbued with certain ideas associated with 'race', crime and youth. Exploring mugging they were able to reveal something about wider British society. Parallels in the discourse of my participants reflect how 'UGC' stood as a label which was viewed as 'an articulator of the crisis, as its ideological conductor' (Hall et al. 1978:viii). Gilroy (2003) argues that the combination of 'race' and crime remains a way in which the UK managed immigration throughout the 20th century. Thus, they establish a connection between alien settlement and excessive law-breaking something of a theme during the period of mass immigration. It is now a means to rationalise the ongoing marginalisation of the locally born grandchildren of those citizen-settlers. Gilroy (2003) points to how 'race' and class are key factors that need to be included in how we understand the issue of 'UGC'. My data also reveals that gender and religion and culture are significant to how we understand the issues too. This raises the question as to whether we should view 'UGC' as a form of resistance and as something that is able to tell us something about neo liberalism and capitalism.

7.5 Role of class, poverty and deprivation in the community conceptualisation

Sivestri et al. (2009) suggest that economic decisions are behind young people taking on unlawful activities or criminal careers, e.g. when participating in drug dealing. This can be understood in the context of their social positions of disadvantage and relative deprivation. As Susan said:

> I think it is systematic of underlying issues so the standard disadvantage, discrimination, poverty not an excuse but increasingly young people have fewer opportunities and if it is a choice between getting rich quick or, you know, working in a job that pays the minimum wage often because we live in a consumerist society the option will be for the get rich quick schemes**.**

So a key aspect of the conceptualisation reflects issues highlighted by Robert, which points to inequality and how this manifests:

> There are two things that are very very prominent it is over simplified in the sense that a Black guy or a black youth is going to be a drug pusher or a gang member and the questions is why. There are two main reasons I believe as to why that is the case; A

lack of educational support and achievement. The system does not support Black boys to achieve and the statistics bear that out, so the education and the lack of equipping our young people with the right skills to cope with life.

Across the data participants spoke about the relationship between poverty, deprivation and 'UGC'. Nevertheless, it was felt that this alone insufficiently explained the issue. Pitts (2008) eludes to structural preconditions, in what he terms, 'the volatile weaponized street world.' He argues that this must be understood as an outcome of the escalating inequalities at play in our society, and the formation of a sub-proletariat surplus to production in our polarized and segregated cities. Hence, Pitts asserts that just as capitalism reproduces itself self- destructively from above, its concomitant effect is to reproduce itself self-destructively from below. However, what is not fully addressed in the work of Pitts is the role of 'race' and the intersection of race and class is not adequately explored (Hallsworth, 2014). In 1982, Gilroy wrote how 'race' existed as one of the ways in which hegemonic relations are secured in a time of structural crisis management. For Gilroy, the link between 'race' and the 'capitalist state' cannot be ignored. He argues that, the links between racism and capitalist development are complex, and conditioned by the specific socio-political circumstances in which they function. So whilst my data provides evidence of the role of class it also suggests that this is mediated by 'race' and racism and as such class alone was insufficient to understanding the issue. Angel said:

The other day my brother said that he is poor and I said 'you're not poor you just don't have a lot of money and there is a difference.'

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...when people think they are poor they behave like their poor and nobody respects poverty, nobody respects poor people. There is an economic reality out there and maybe that's my way of dealing with it. I may not have as much money as you but I am not poor because when I walk out there I know who I am. I am empowered because I know that you are no better than me ...poverty is relative but it is relative to where your live to where you're from but there are those structural things and this is why I say to young people, 'you need to think of developing your businesses. You need to stop expecting people to employ you. There is nobody out there ready to waiting to employ black people particularly young Black people and particularly young Black men so you need to think in terms of your friends, family and community and other communities out there is there a product you can provide that they want. You may not be Richard Branson but from you can make a little money legit.....but one of them may go and think about… .

7.6 Racialisation and 'urban gun crime'

Gilroy's words near the beginning of this chapter views 'UGC' as part of a legacy in which certain crimes undergo a process of racialisation. For Gilroy there is nothing new and historically Black communities have undergone a process where they have been constructed as a criminal class. In 1982, Gilroy argued that the association between Black and crime in the post war period was popular as the circumstances that existed at that time required British society to view Black communities, in terms of the alien, criminal threat they embodied.

This is done, he argued, in a universalistic way, not merely targeting the minority of people who may be involved in illegal activity, but applied to all Black people. It is possible to suggest that this analysis has some resonance today. Indeed this is overwhelmingly reflected in the narratives of participants in terms of indicating how 'race' is a contributor and cannot be ignored. For example, Robert spoke about how he sees 'UGC' has been racialised and how this can be seen as part of a development of the way racialisation has become a common feature of Black people lives as an individuals or in their relationships with others. Robert's narrative shows strategies of resistance, yet there is a psychological and physical impact that ultimately leaves him feeling disempowered:

What has really happened over the last ten years particularly is the way that gun is synonymous with Black has had an impact on Black people who now know that my child, my son as a Black boy is going to be perceived by society as a gang member that is the impact it has had. Just like within the Asian community they know that they are perceived as potential terrorists even though we know that that is not the case in every instance. So that is the big impact that it has had in that we are not only stigmatised not only now has being thick, not only now has being drug pushers, not only now as being gang member but also has being potential shooters. So that just adds to the list suppressing the Black community and makes a challenge in trying to educate your child and keep them motivated. And then once you have got through all of that and then up for it; that you know within your heart, when they sit in front of a potential employer, or they go to apply for a

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course or whatever that they are going to be perceived by society as fitting in to that category. And that has an impact on you as an individual and you as family so you are always trying to protect your child and trying to steer them away from those kind of things on a personal level but you realise that there is something out of your control that really frustrates the life out of you that society now has within their mind a view of your child and that has a mental impact on you but it also has a physical one.

Robin sums up what he perceives as the impact of racialisation on the wider Black community:

The perception is that we're all thugs, we're all criminals and our ladies like to dress loose, so these kind of stereo-typing look at how it works out in policy look at where there is over representation and under representation from housing to access to education, further education and where our kids are directed to studying and to business and economics it plays itself out. So Social policy in the last 20-25 years has helped to reinforce the demonization of the community and we are at the bottom of the pile!

Whilst Paul acknowledges that 'UGC' is a problem and is concerned about the involvement of Black youths he draws attention to what was a key concern evidenced in the data in relation to the need to challenge the racialisation of

'UGC' whilst still acknowledging that there are some young people who are engaged in these types of crime. Paul challenges the idea that 'UGC' is a Black problem and suggests that such thinking in itself merely contributes to removing the focus on other issues:

> … It is not exclusively purely a Black problem it is a societal problem. It is a problem for me about groups of young people who feel so marginalised so on the edge of society that they think well nobody cares about us, nobody respects us, but you know what, you're going to respect at least in my circle, my age range, my counterparts in other parts of the city you're going to respect me. And you hear that word used a hell of a lot the one of respect. That one word, one of the things I have observed within marginalized disadvantage groups, they prey on their own. You won't see these kids going and preying on kids in areas ... and so one in [names city], it will be other kids from other poor neighbourhoods, like themselves because they know to go and prey on them and to go and attack them all the power that be will reign down on them - if you see what I mean? And they are almost left to destroy themselves and destroy one another. And I've seen it.

However, Paul also suggested that the ideas shaping the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' also contribute to ineffectual institutional responses. For Paul, what is ignored is how notions attributed to 'race' are reproduced and performed through racism which impacts on individuals and families:

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This is a story I've relayed many times to people as an example, had just been excluded from school because she, his mother, had made a complaint about a teacher and the teacher's treatment of her son. What had happened is that one of her neighbours had come to her and said my son said that he had witnessed her son being pushed against a wall by a teacher and being racially abused. She asked her son and her son said yes it is true that is what happened. The head teacher decided, after his investigation, that the complaint was malicious and vexatious and that she had to apologise and her son had to apologise and until then he was not allowed back in school. She refused to apologise and so he was excluded. He was out of education for quite some time. She decided 'o.k. we will move him from that school'. She went found another school that were prepared to accept him. She told them the background. I attended that meeting with her so I know that happened.   But, then the first school refused to release his registration, but until the registration is released the second school is not going to get the funding so they are not going to take him. That kid was out of education for 18 months.   When you realise the background for that kid, two days after he was excluded a letter arrived home by second class. It said, each year the school awards two free places on the school trip, one to a boy and one to a girls, for achievement-, whose attendance record academic achievement and behaviour was the best in the school, your son has won it for the second year running. So this was a kid who was a straight 'A' students, whose behaviour was impeccable, whose

time keeping and attendance was one hundred percent; never been late in a year and that had been for two years on the run. All of a sudden he is thrown out of education at the age of fifteen. His education is finished. He never really gets back into education. Three years later problems develop in the relationship between him and his parents because they felt he was not really trying hard enough to get work and he was lazy, he was lolling around the house and he was not going to be a free loader under their roof. So he left. He left and went to stay with a friends living in [area] sleeping on a sofa. The next thing is, he is selling drugs and carrying a gun.

With reference to the relationship between 'race' and material reality and choices available to some young people; Paul added:

When I spoke to him he said, 'look man! I earn more in a week sometimes in a day than my dad earns in a month. I have to carry one of these to protect the merchandise,' and he shows me his gun. 'Nobody wants to give me a job anyway. Why am I going to give this up to go through all that crap?' This was from a kid who had got dreams and who had got ambition and who, in my view through no fault of his own, was excluded from the whole process of education qualification, couldn't even get a reference to pack chocolate in a factory who employs anybody and everybody. Desperate for a way of earning an income and here was one way that he could do quite easily. And I see that time and time again

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Angela pointed out this is increasingly difficult to challenge and perhaps the recent focus on race and ethnicity, diversity and cohesion has been at the expense of talking about 'race' and addressing racism:

> I think it was easier in the 60s 70s at that time racism was raw and even as a community we were closer and we were that way because of circumstances, we didn't have any choice but to live with each other because you couldn't get a room to rent because that was when you had the signs saying, No Coloured, No Irish, No Blacks. So there were all those situations which in a way didn't give us the options. It was in the days when the Teddy boys were rife and stuff like that and Black men had to walk together to defend and that. Also that era then the black men then was the ones who came over from the Caribbean who had a work ethos as well. And even though the job and conditions weren't good, if you look at our families and our parents, a lot of them went out to work, dem [they] throw their Pardoner buy them little house so data dem have a roof over dem picanini [children] head. A lot of them were saving to go home so they didn't put down roots, not that they went back any way for whatever reason. So back then it was different it was... because racism was easy to organise around it.

Angela shared her observations of change; noting that, in the 60s and 70s she openly experienced racism as it was explicit and something individuals openly encountered in their everyday life. As such, this made engaging in community activism somewhat easier. However, she argued that racism today is far more subtle, but no less harmful:

> Now that certain words aren't politically correct, it is doesn't that the impact is any different or that it has gone away but, it just that it is more covert now. You know? You are feeling the effect! You go somewhere and you pick up the vibes and you look at what happens with our children in schools, it is still there, it is not as blatant, but the impact it is worse and because people can't see it and, a lot of our young people when you talk to them about racism they don't think it exists because people aren't in their faces calling them the 'N' word or you know this kind of thing [interruption] so they don't understand. I think that makes it a bit more difficult.

She added that institutional racism is far more difficult to identify, organise around and challenge which has major ramifications for young people:

> A lot of our young people they think, I go to school and sit next to other people and they are alright but they don't understand the structural nature of racism and how it dictates where they go, how they can go, what they do. The fact that they are disproportionately included in school exclusions and within mental

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health system, prison system because 40% of the prison population are young Black men. They don't understand that! Although a lot of our young men are bright, sadly they don't have the analytical depth to even be able to see anything beyond face value because schools don't teach them to think, but the can regurgitate certain things...

Similarly, Susan points to the lack of focus on racism:

I think the statutory bodies want to, because it is easier, take a simplistic approach in that they want to deal with the symptoms as oppose to the causes. Because the causes are long standing, well entrenched in the very difficult to do box so treating the symptoms is going to appease the statutory bodies in that they are doing something. What that something is and how that impacts and the longer standing issues that is the question.

7.7 Summary and reflections

The data indicates how for 'us' the personal is political comes to the fore (Mills, 1959, Bourne, 1983; Letherby, 2003). 'UGC' was not something out there to be viewed objectively, but something that impacted in multiple ways. 'UGC' became a euphemism for other things and, it is these other things that it was felt posed the greatest threat. During my time in the field I attended meetings

attended by people in positions of power who as part of their work were tasked to work with the community. I observed how openly talking about 'race' and 'racism' was often difficult. At a community event with strategic leads from the Police, Local Authority, Health and Education, the chief Executive of the Local Council vociferously refuted a claim from a community activist that the Council was institutionally racist and this was evident when looking at progression, staff retention and in the services funded. However, there also appeared to be tension in the room during this confrontation and the activist appeared to be subtly silenced by others in the room. As such, openly talking about and confronting 'racism' with key decision makers was challenging as it often met with an emphatic denial or a reluctance to accept or engage in such debates.

> I... think there is a bigger thing which is the way that Black children are viewed by society. As I say we don't have a voice in this country we are insignificant in this country so we have no influence and if you have no influence you can't make a difference. You look at the mental health system, we fill up the mental health system, we fill up the prisons, we are seven times more likely to be stopped by the police – we are insignificant and all these things feed into the racist white dogma that oppresses the Black man in this country. We as a race have not recognised that that is what we are up against, sorry we recognise that we are up against racism but what we haven't recognised is how to deal with it. What we should have done to deal with it is to go down the route of education, to educate our people, to motivate our people, to ensure that there are system in place to ensure that our children are not expelled that they are not pushed onto the scrap heap that

they are not forced into a life of crime because they have no alternative and, I believe that many of our young people have no other alternative. And that sounds strong from a campaigner about 'gun crime' and that kind of stuff, but the reason I say that is because I have dealt with many people who have got involved with criminal activity, they come out of that and want to change, they have gone through all the education but at the end of that they are not getting a job because, A- they have a bad CRB or simply because the colour of their skin. Now I can change me but I can't change you; that is the problem. If society is saying anything that is bad is Black -…. [Robert]

Thus, the data demonstrates that what is required is a willingness to consider complexity and a more nuanced conceptualisation; one that acknowledges the multiplicity of community perspectives but that also is able to accommodate wider systems leading to exclusion and material disadvantage:

Whether it is the riots or its gun crime to take one of those two positions, you are either with the government saying it is terrible gun crime ....clamp down give them long sentences or you're sympathetic towards these guys, saying its unemployment, if there were more jobs around they would not need to resort to this ....and I think it is not a middle, middle road that we need but a nuance approach to the whole thing that's we need. [Kyle]

The chapter focuses on the experiences and the explanations put forward by participants in order to understand the experiences and explanation of 'UGC' within ACC. I aimed to illuminate how a community perspective is not merely an acceptance or rejection of ideas that have shaped how 'UGC' is largely conceptualised within political, media and public discourse. Rather embedded within the narratives of participants is an understanding of 'UGC' that is informed by multiple perspectives shaped by gender, religious views, experience of racism, class and the extent to which one feels a sense of connection to ACC. Hence, the narratives of community activists provides an indication of how the label of ACC masks, a range of positions, relationships and connections between individuals and how, for some, community serves as political act and a means of drawing attention to the longevity of ideas of 'race' and how in understanding issues such as 'UGC' it is essential to understand how it has a 'real' impact on 'real people.' Joseph and Gunter (2011) question the failure to appropriately address 'race' despite the disproportionate number of young Black men affected both as victims and perpetrators to 'UGC'. They argue that this had contributed to the misrepresentation of a problem leading to the sanctioning interventions which are misguided (Joseph and Gunter, 2011). Consequently, researching the issue of 'UGC' within ACC offered a unique vantage point in terms of providing an opportunity to focus attention on the voices of men and women who are implicated in both the construction of the problem and put forward as key to its amelioration.

It is possible to suggest that a limitation of attempts to facilitate community engagement with marginalised groups is that it rests on strategies in which there is an unequal distribution of power the perspectives of 'insiders' has often been a means of co-opted groups in. By this, we see community used as a way of

supporting or reinforcing wider [p]olitical agendas; a tool deployed as a device to relay a dominant ideology (Brady et al. 2011). It is this which is visible in relation to 'UGC' in that community becomes a weapon in the State's armoury in the maintenance of social order through the common acceptance of a particular worldview. This means that when those identified as marginalised have been included in research around 'UGC' it has often been to supplement the hegemonic interpretation, which provides evidence for sanctioning interventions that aim to address the priorities of others and the lived reality for Black communities becomes subsumed under attempts to improve problems associated with Black culture (Joseph and Gunter, 2011).

Lorde (1984) highlights the blinkered approach that White feminist anti-oppressive struggles seemed to have regarding other forms of oppression, most notably racism. However, there is a more general truth in what she is saying, which is that you cannot solve a problem through the inherent logic of the problem i.e. one needs new tools and concepts both to dismantle the edifice of racist oppression and to construct different ways of being together as human beings. Such an approach whilst recognizing the alienating effects of racist oppression nonetheless seeks to uphold the unique insights of the oppressed. As Rancière suggests, the 'oppressed … are intelligent, and the weapons of their liberation will emerge from their intelligence' (Rancière, 2011:14–15).

Chapter 8: A critical analysis of the meaning of community

8.0 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on examining the conceptualisation of community. In Chapter Seven, I briefly introduced the connection of community to the conceptualisation of 'UGC' by participants in my research. In this chapter, the aim is to further interrogate this notion of community expressed in participants' conceptualisation of 'urban gun crime.' In doing so, I draw attention to the multiple ways that participants spoke about community and how 'community,' when associated with men and women of Caribbean origin is indeed complex, contested but more importantly something personal and political. In focusing on community the intention is to illuminate factors that need to be taken into consideration by policy makers engaged to work in the realm of 'urban gun crime.'

The chapter presents an analysis of observational and interview data. It is structured in four sections, In 8.1 'Framing the relationship between African Caribbean communities and ''urban gun crime'' 'revisits ideas set out in previous chapters in order to set the context for the data in this section. 8.2 'The political aspects of community' provides an analysis of the political nature of community. 8.3 'The personal aspect of community' details a personal role for community and how for participants it embodies emotions. The final section 8.4 provides a

summary of the themes examined and draws attention to the relationship between my own biography and the themes detailed in this chapter.

8.1 Setting the scene: story to date

It was not black people who should be examined, but white society; it was not a question of educating blacks and whites for integration, but of fighting institutional racism; it was not race relations that was the field for study, but racism (Bourne and Sivanandan, 1980:339).

The English Southallians do not speak of an English community because the cultures that define communities are distinctive possessions of others, not one's own (Bauman, 1996:96).

These quotes draw attention to a central theme derived from my analysis of the data associated with the concept community. Bourne and Sivanandan (1980) contend that racism is a defining factor that is repeatedly ignored in attempts to address issues encountered by Black communities in the UK. Moreover, they argue that attempts to deal with issues tend to rest on scrutinising Black communities rather than on wider systems and processes implicated in their disadvantage or indeed their oppression. Bauman (1996) alerts us to the usefulness of community as an apparatus of the state in this process. For Bauman, community is a powerful tool in the armoury of states in sustaining assumptions about differences between people. Consequently, the tendency to

associate community in conjunction with ethnic minority populations without attention to the legacy and continual re-enactment of 'race' merely serves to legitimate cultural reductionist ideas. Such ideas in themselves are contributors to processes that perpetuate racism and inequality. Although the quotes span two decades and are drawn from different perspectives, I employ them here as an indication of how Bourne and Sivanandan (1980) and Bauman (1996) allude to inherent limitations associated with how policy makers embark on addressing the Black communities. This is achieved by obscuring 'race' and in so doing adopting a racialised ambivalence which is not accidental (Rollock, 2014). To this end, community forms a useful component in a strategy that helps to mask the validity of those experiencing racism. Simultaneously, it accepts racialisation as an organising principle in the social, political and economic spheres in the UK (Rollock, 2014). Here I illuminate how the formation and performance of community by men and women in my research demonstrates both continuity and difference to the communities of resistance characterised in the work of Sivanandan (1990). For participants in my research community continues to be a means in which they were able to articulate a demand for self-recognition and enact a challenge to 'race' thinking. Additionally, the data also elucidate aspects of participants' lived reality today in terms of capturing dynamic relationships within African Caribbean communities (ACC), between ACC and the state and its institutions. Consequently, examining community leads to alternative insights about ACC relationship to 'UGC'.

In Chapter Three, I presented a critical review of the literature associated with community as a means of signifying why it is imperative to move beyond a simplistic understanding of an ACC. In Chapter Seven, I presented an analysis detailing factors influencing the conceptualisation of 'UGC' by participants in my

research. I revealed how the notion of community uncovered in participants' narratives is testament to how community is complex and rests on more than an externally assigned category, which they passively accept. But, the data uncovered a notion of community that expresses something about participants' attempt for self-definition through adoption of a collective identity. Thus, evoking an African Caribbean collective identity is a means by which participants organise in order to actively engage in the public sphere and as such is a political act (Lorde, 1984). Thus, I contend that community articulates something that is personal and political and this is captured in the narratives of participants.

As such, it was an amalgamation of concern related to a specific and shared racialised experience alongside concern associated with participants' vulnerability to racism and a racialised structural inequality that is reflected in a community conceptualisation of 'UGC'. To this end, the previous chapter sets out the centrality of the concept community to 'UGC' and the disjuncture to be found between a community understanding and the dominant conceptualisation that continues to be employed in pursuit of both understanding 'UGC' and in the production of interventions for its amelioration. It is in response to the centrality of community to 'UGC' that I set out to specifically focus on the concept in this chapter.

8.2 The political aspect of community

Community and ethnic identity and notions of culture serve as the back rock to discourse associated with ethnic diversity and ethnic minority groups (Sveinsoon, 2012). Accordingly, Virdee (1997) argues that the selection of

ethnic group names is by no means part of a democratic process but constructed by the powerful. Consequently, the use of community by policy makers and the British media industry is not neutral but part of a wider process of racialisation. However, racial identity, as noted in Chapter Four, can be a bridge that binds people together. As Cole (2003) reminds us the right to self-definition is a preeminent necessity. This is not to suggest, that engagement in self-definition within a community is always solely determined on the basis of a shared racial identity as in the narratives of participants we can see an interaction between racial identity with factors such as gender, class, locality and faith. Susan alludes to this, and explains that her racial identity is important to her understanding of community, but she cannot ignore the significance of her gender, professional identity and geographical location:

> Community is an interesting concept and it means different things to different people. Yes I am a Black woman, I am a Black woman who lives in [city] I am a Black woman who lives and works in [names city] and so it goes on, community is different things to different people and yes you have the Black community.

Hall (1992) provides a global analysis for why and how people and populations embark on identity construction. He contends that identity is not fixed, but fluid and can be understood as a response to the increasing uncertainty of globalisation. This leads to identity being formed and transformed as a means of self-representation and reaction. Similarly, within my research, it is possible to view the formation of ACC around the issue of 'UGC' in part, as a response to the challenges encountered on a local level and a response to wider societal

concerns. This leads to the formation of community in response to both local issues with broader ramification. As detailed in Chapter Four, this is associated with the precarious relationship with the state and institutions such as the labour market, criminal justice system and education. In so saying, despite the evident acknowledgment of the multiplicity of identity a key finding is that despite challenges in trying to define community and in acknowledging the role identity played in shaping their experience of community, for participants in my research racial identity was very important to acts of self–representation and action. As Paul said:

> Communities! When I was growing up there was very much a feel of, you know, in my teens, of an African Caribbean Community. You were united because of the kind of inequalities, the violence and the attacks on our community by the media, by the police etc. If I as a lone Black man was walking through town centre and I was attacked, I knew that if there was any other young Black man in the vicinity, whether they knew me or not, they would see me as being one of theirs and would step in to defend me. ...So, there used to be a wider community regardless of where you went in the country. There was a nod. There was the eye contact. A silent recognition and 'hello' that seems to have, certainly with younger kids from those backgrounds, seems have disappeared now. So I would say communities and you would not be taking pot shots at one another like they do now**.**

Hylton (2003) describes African Caribbean group formation as a thing of beauty and an expression of history, affirmation of culture and ethos of people with common heritage in which the most important themes is the need to instil self-love. He also describes community as part of a strategy for survival and a mechanism for change. For participants 'community' encapsulated something about what they perceived to share with others. In this sense, community functioned as a means feeling a sense of belonging, security and unity but also a response to the reproduction of ideas pertaining to 'race' in which Black people are viewed drawing on a range of negative characteristics (Husband, 1977; Patel and Tyrer, 2011) to racism and the process of racialisation. Andrews (2013) points to how organising around a racial identity in which Blackness is evoked represents a response to racism and part of the politics of resistance. He argues that evidence of this development is not specific to the UK but can also be found as a feature of politics at a specific juncture of history in the Caribbean. Hence, the data captures how community racially defined performs a role which is both personal and political.

There is a sense of nostalgia in Paul's narrative. He recounted stories in which he presented a particular view of 'community' often associated with his youth and growing up in an inner city the 1970s in the UK. As I discuss in Chapter Five, I felt a sense of affinity with Paul. He, like me, spoke with fondness about his past experience of community and how it instilled a feeling of connectedness and affinity with others. Andrews (2013) asserts that the shift in the profile of Caribbean communities between the mid-1950s to the early 1960s reflects a change in status of migrants from the Caribbean. This shift represents one from migrant workers who had planned to return to their home countries to a settler community who took the decision to put down roots in Britain. Subsequently, he

argues that this led to shift in dynamic as they built communities in Britain's urban conurbations. However, the juxtaposition is that the growing presence of this immigrant population also facilitated the introduction of restrictive immigration legislation in 1962 and 1971 and a situation in which Britain's growing Black immigrant population also had to 'bear the brunt of a post imperial rebirth of racism' (Kundnani, 2007:40).

The period identified by Paul of which he speaks fondly about community was a period in which people from the Caribbean were settling and raising families across a of number Britain's urban landscapes. Whilst, as Kundani (2007) notes, they were often doing jobs at the bottom of the economy that Whites did not want they were part of the workforce needed for Britain's post-war reconstruction. Their settled status meant that they began to see themselves as citizens and equals who deserved equality. Nonetheless, Blackness existed as a means of identification in part due to the experience of racism (Andrews, 2013). In Paul's narrative we see an example of how community is portrayed as a place of safety and instilling a sense of solidarity with others primarily based on sharing a racial or racialised identity. Additionally, it is possible to see Paul's reference to a particular time, notably the 1970s and 1980s, holding a particular image of 'community.' It was a period in which connecting with others offered a sense of protection.

This is not to suggest that this notion of community is not still relevant today. Kundnani (2007) asserts that it is possible to see the beginning of the 21st century as signalling an high point of progress in the fight against racism in Britain. However, since then, multicultural Britain has been under attack as

evidenced by government policies and vitriolic press campaigns with an intensity he suggests is unmatched since at least the 1970s. Kundnani links new forms of racism linked to a systematic failure to comprehend the causes of issues such as forced migration, global terrorism and social segregation. Consequently, he concludes that this has contributed to a climate of hatred and fear which is directed especially at Muslims but also other migrant communities. This is captured in Paul' narrative, for him, community continues to have an important role in terms of safety, he draws attention to how community for British Muslims forms part of a response to their vulnerability to experiencing violence: 'In a lot of ways that Muslims are being demonised today is the way that we as Black men were demonised thirty years, forty years ago'.

Paul implicitly suggests a difference between the African Caribbean and Muslin community need for community:

> That they [Muslims] are already being shunned by the wider society so they move inwards and become more insular and they kind of embrace some of the things in spite of their parents saying, 'why are you doing that for?' So, for me, it is something to do with groups of people that have been shunned. For me how times have changed is that, our youngsters nowadays don't seem to have the same kind of problems on the street. While there are problems around education and so on, the types of problems that we experienced in terms of you don't know if you are going to make it home tonight, those kind of things around personal safety don't appear to be a problem anymore. That's kind of my view

Here we gain an insight of a potential shift in the motivation of individuals from ACC to organise around community. Paul suggests that fear of racially motivated violence is off less importance to ACC than it was in the 1970s and 1980s. The suggestion here is not that ACC no longer experience racial violence, for as the death of Stephen Lawrence leading to the publication of the Macpherson Report 1999 will attest violence remains a feature of Black people's experience in Britain. Rather, there has been a shift in focus and the threat of violence appears no longer part of the explanation given for the need for community, but the need for community is primarily viewed as required in relation to addressing broader structural factors. For Paul, community as a place for action and something political is needed to address broader issues associated with a feeling of alienation, exclusion and disadvantage.

This draws attention to how for Paul and other community activists, in my research Black was associated with skin colour rather than implored as a political category as used by antiracist activist in the 1970s and 1980s (Sivanandan, 1990). Participants rarely used the term Black as a means of signalling unity between different ethnic minority groups. Black was synonymous with ACC and community was used in relation to addressing what was perceived to be the distinct needs of this group. However, it is also important to note, the majority of those involved were from, what Reynolds (2012) terms as, established groups who had settled in the UK in the post- war period or second or third generation who were born in the UK. This was a specific notion of an ACC, which ignored the intra-ethnic diversity that has arisen with newly arrived migrants from the Caribbean (Reynolds, 2012). Nonetheless, participants did

account for differences between African Caribbean and other ethnic groups. For example, Ronald said:

> I think culturally there is a difference as well because growing up amongst the Black African Caribbean community was also the Pakistani community the Bangladeshi, the Sikh, the Hindu, but they had a different cultural mind set to the whole thing of business and enterprise so they grew differently. What a lot of people don't want to talk about is that a lot of that was built on drugs, but nobody don't want to hear me seh suh cause but dem tink so. It's only we get demonised as a people.

This shift mirrors how in British policies the focus on culture and cultural difference has been the corner stone of state policies to manage diversity. Correspondingly, multicultural policies since the 1990s have facilitated two entirely different experiences of multicultural Britain for those who once united under the political label Black (Kundani, 2007). Kundani (2007) stipulates that an outcome of multiculturalism is that it has led to Black culture stepping into the mainstream of British life, albeit in a form that has diminished its radical edge. This can be understood as leading to the construction of an acceptable notion of difference an example is the characterisation of a specific notion of Asian culture which we see promoted as cool in music, films and comedy. This acceptable face of the 'other' in turn leads to obscuring how multicultural Britain remains marred by a deep seated racism. A general critique of multicultural policies has been how it places an emphasis on individual and collective characteristics in people subject to discrimination (Faist, 2008). In doing so it

has, in effect, led to accentuating the very things upon which their exclusion is founded. Moreover, he sees the outcome being the perpetuation of exclusion by minorities through their representation and mobilization.

Paul does not view racial violence as constituting a need for 'community' for men and women in ACC. Yet, the very fact that he draws attention to what he perceives as the demonisation of Islam and how this has instilled Muslims' feeling under threat where they respond by insulating themselves within 'community,' may be an illustration of the dynamic nature of 'race' to reproduce itself and be employed in different ways in the process of constructing the other. The characterisation of the Muslim other is impacted by concerns about security, both in terms of international relations and transnational Islamic terrorism. Further, Islam is seen as culturally threatening and/or illiberal and undemocratic in its values. Islam is viewed as belonging elsewhere (Modood, 2012). Fekete (2009) views the reproduction of 'race' as instilling new forms of racism. Thus, whilst racism is not something that only impacts on ACC, the data indicates how for respondents the experience of ACC was the primary focus.

While participants identified the need to organise around community, the data indicate how community is also a site of contestation. For example, Robert despite his recognition of the importance of community, also contests the notion of an ACC:

I don't believe there is such a thing as a Black community and that's a really interesting and controversial statement. The reason that I say that is that there are Black people but we are not together and there are only a few things I believe that unite the Black community. We are divided by our religion, we're divided by our geography – look at the smaller island verses the bigger islands – nonsense. Look at our slave heritage we are divided by colour of skin, texture of hair, shape of nose. All these things divide us and we have centuries of things that have affected us so, even today we have lost the opportunity to meaningful challenge or do something constructive in this country because when we should be uniting we don't unite and that is why I say we don't have community, a Black community based on the definition I gave before.

He identifies a range of factors that place limits on community formation around racial identity. Robert alludes to the tension that I observed during my time in the field in which I saw how the community group was a means of mobilising around a racial identity, yet observed how the community was also considered to be the problem. This dialectic relationship is evident in the frustration demonstrated in Roberts' narrative below: and his resistance to be seen by policy makers as a member of an ACC:

If they view us from a macro position, just looking at people and saying, 'you must be a community because you all look the same', then they are misguided. If they are speaking from experience

then they would not address us as a community. …I am being almost cynical or tongue in cheek when I say this, the only two things that I have seen over the years that have united Black people in a meaningful way is carnivals and riots.

Concern about the fragmentation of ACC is a reoccurring theme in the data. An explanation for this sense of fragmentation may be understood within the community to what is perceived as lack of change due to inability of people to work together:

I am absolutely sure we are a fragmented community. Absolutely sure that we are embroiled in envy, egotistic and we have lost our way and we are constantly expecting some people that have never shown us in any of their history that they care for us to do something for us and, the reality is that it is about us knowing who we are, knowing the issue and just saying o.k. 'let's go and do it...' (Robert).

In addition, the concern with fragmentation can also be understood as reflecting changes that have taken place within Britain's ACC. This concern can be understood in relation to perceptions associated with economic disparities between men and women (Hylton, 2003), evolving familial relationships (Berthoud, 2005) issues associated with social mobility. Some have moved up the social ladder (Cole, 2009) and while there may be a reluctance of those within ACC to self-identify as middle class (Rollock, 2014) even those holding

positions outside of the traditional role allocated to them in the post war period. Rollock (2014) argues that this reluctance is due to a perception of holding limited economic and financial power relative to Whites. She argues that to be Black and middle-class is to make a relational comparison in relation to factors such as status, mobility and wealth with the White middle classes and their African American counterparts. Nonetheless, Glynn (2012) draws attention to a perception that social mobility has led to the creation of a 'Black bourgeoisie' who have 'escaped' from the confines of the inner city in favour of the sunnier climate of the suburbs. This group are in search of a bigger salary and have both embraced all the benefits of middle England and in the process have become disconnected and more fundamentally forgotten their brother and sisters residing in the inner city (Glynn, 2012). It is possible to suggest that this feeds into a notion of fragmentation.

Consequently, participants acknowledged the additional dimension that class plays, nonetheless this recognition did not detract from a general feeling that this was subordinate to their racialised identity. Indeed, their racial identity was placed at the forefront of discussion and the acceptance of a middle class status something that was less visible in their narratives. This led irrespective of class to participants speaking about having a sense of responsibility and commitment; a notion of responsibility to ACC. Yet, difference as noted above, was acknowledged:

> I engage with it from maybe a slightly detached place which is not detached really but I think sociologically, I presume, well I don't presume, but people tell me I think that I am middle class. [Kyle]

On probing him further about his sense of responsibility to those he deemed 'living in the hood' he states that:

> I am very clear about that and in saying I am not from the hood, is not a denial of anything or an apology. It is just to say that I am doing my bit for the community but from a different place [Kyle]

Robert identified the need for solidarity. Thus, he draws attention not solely to his perception of fragmentation, but to the potential unity that can be found when people have a shared interest or concern and how this is politically used. What was a source of frustration for Robert was his perception of ACC being weak when compared to other communities (Goulbourne, 2003). For Robert, this weakness contributes to why ACC do not rally around and engage more fully in the political and economic spheres. He suggests this lack of engagement leads to invisibility within the political and economic spheres and limited or marginal representation, lack of social and economic mobility and Black people disproportionately experiencing poverty and exclusion.

> …the word community attached to Black people is a very strange term and I think this is a problem with policy makers who view us as a collective. We don't have a natural leader, we don't have one! If you want to address us how will you find us? Where will you go to find the Black people and that is the problem that we have suffered with over the years. So when there is a problem within the

community one or two people may stand up and start to shout their mouth off, but they certainly don't represent. They are not democratically elected, they have no Black people of such of note behind them, they may have individuals who run an organisation but that organisation will be bespoke to deal with specifically the issues of that individual who is leading because you will have narcissistic individuals who will raise up a couple of followers but apart from that the Black community is hard to address.

Robert is a chief executive of a third sector organisation. He has a PhD, is a leader in the Black church and a representative on a range of boards. What cannot be ignored is that Robert's background and class position informs his understanding and need for community. For him, there are certain spheres in which he feels it is important for ACC to unite and take action in its own interest. His priorities are around political representation and business and as such, his perception about a lack of community is informed by his concern with a lack of significant engagement in these spheres. For Robert, community encompasses more than a collection of people organised around a racial identity rather being part of community was a purposeful activity, about coming together in order to initiate a specific kind of change. Community is a means of organising economic and political power in order to achieve this end. This is not to suggest that class and status alone were definitive factors as calls for action associated with representation and political engagement were also identified by other participants. Hence a common theme was (irrespective of class) community as a political act to address certain interests. What was revealed however, were differences in the ways in which community activists worked toward organising

around community and, how this played out in the approaches used in the community (detailed in Chapter Ten).

Nonetheless, it is important here, to briefly draw attention to the context in which Black collective mobilisation takes place. Reynolds (2012) characterises the third sector as the outcome of shifts in thinking leading to increasing professionalization and bureaucratisation of the voluntary sector. Consequently, as discussed in Chapter Three, we cannot ignore the politics that underpinned such developments because they are also implicated in the ways which participants engaged with and employed community. For example, the work of the community group was shared via local reports, included in strategic plans. The chair of the group was invited to attend Community Safety and other relevant meetings. The group was allocated funding to work with others in their local community. This was not without it challenges as being in receipt of funding and gaining access to those in positions of power was not necessarily a marker of success. Hence, in Chapter Ten I detail the numerous ways in which representation and legitimacy is often an outcome of negotiation in which notions of 'race' continue to be relayed. However, the legitimacy given to those externally viewed as community leaders was also determined by their ability to 'appropriate' engage in this increasingly professional third sector environment and an outcome of who was externally identified as suitable and work in line with the national agenda.

My observation notes records how the chair of the community group spoke about the work of his group compared to other locally based organisations working in the same area. In his research Hylton (2003) notes similar tension

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arising around issues associated with legitimacy and credibility. At one meeting I witnessed arguments, and challenges leading to the resignation of two key members of the group in protest about what they considered to be the chairs' lack of mandate to be the voice of the community. As one participant said:

> You know, we took it so far as a group and I sat and thought long and hard about what to do next when I resigned from the group. And one of the things that came to mind was to denounce the group. Tell the statutory partners, the Safer Partnership that a number of us have resigned and the reasons that we have resigned is that we don't feel that the group any longer has a mandate to act on behalf of the community. But I kind of felt that where would that leave the work and would it ever recover from that? And I hoped that the group would at some stage call an AGM and Annual General Meeting or another public meeting. Since that time, there has not been a meeting to report back to the community on the progress, which was one of the things that the steering group had promise. So the group started, money started coming in and influence going to a few individuals and the community are left wondering well where has it gone (Paul).

Yet, externally, often to those with the authority to commission services or had responsibility for budgets, the chair was constructed as a community leader and his views and opinion often sought, although not in relation to all matters or always productively:

What was evident over this period of time is that that they had an agenda and they wanted us to flow with their agenda. So although we gave them some information and they drew up an action plan to deliver against when we came to the end of that there were 25 actions of which only 10 were delivered and I would say about 7 of them was questionable whether they had been delivered. What was very clear is that they had made waters very murky and very muddy so that it was very difficult to be able to hold them to account, very difficult to hold them to account so at that point we moved away from the table (Martyn).

The data shows that 'community' is a contested concept and that it encompasses a number of challenges when used by individuals to organise around a racial or racialised identity as the challenge identified was both internally and externally located. Yet, amongst participants these challenges and tensions did not detract from the overarching ambition to come together for what was perceived as the good of the wider 'community'. Paradoxically, amongst the tension and challenges there existed a strong sense of a need for 'community' and, 'community' was essential to work in which they were engaged in. The need to work together was continually expressed and working together meant joining forces not merely as individuals coming together within an organisation but recognition of a need for different organisations to work together irrespective of alliances and differences in terms of issues such as faith, gender, and class. I was invited to attend meetings where around the table sat representatives from organisations such as; the Nation of Islam, Black Churches, Local Government, Rastafarian and Pan African. I was invited

alongside a number of key community representatives working to attend a community symposium which was organised in order to include representation from strategic and statutory organisations. The symposium was organised as a means to:

- Provide a forum for engagement with a wider audience/slice of the community rather than restricted representation and,
- Create a forum for the city Council and Police to present their position statements in relation to consultation and engagement with the African and Caribbean community as well as the community giving feedback on the impact of policy and politics and policing in the City.

The symposium was put forward as a means of offering:

A community centred evidence based response to key decisions that affect the African Caribbean community, must position itself in relation to brokerage and advocacy that has impact within the corridors of power. ...Central to the proposition of this symposium is that there is a historical legacy of theories, practices, insights, and strategies that have been rendered invisible by mainstream society. Our job therefore, is not to reinvent the wheel, but go in search of not 'what works', but more of 'what is effective'. At a time of economic hardship, the journey towards transformation will be by retrieving the past, reframing it for the future, and building the

kind of possibilities for change that will be sustainable and impacting (Community Symposium, 2012:1).

The symposium was the last of a number of similar events I attended whilst conducting my fieldwork. Common across these events was a goal to centre the voices of members of ACC and give voice to perceived silences, to share what works and identify what does not and to send a message of standing together to initiate change. Community is political and participants saw a role for community in constructing a Black political identity in order to challenge inequality and injustice and in drawing a map for change.

8.3 The personal aspect of community

In Chapter Seven, I identified how community was often identified by participants as something personal. As such the concerted effort observed in the community group and identified in interviews was a view of community that was alive and something embodying feelings and emotions. This, in part, reflects how ideas of community since Ancient Greece to the European Enlightenment as considered as something directly experienced (Delante, 2006) and across the data it is possible to see notions in which community serves as a site between the interplay of the mind, body and world. Community elicited and conveyed a range of feelings such as a sense of love, anger, frustration, jealousy, commitment and responsibility. As such, community was embodied and it was often perceived as important because it expressed something about participants' lived reality, values and perception of self.

The data reveals, in a myriad of ways, this personal and emotional connection between participants and community. There is evidence of how 'responsibility' was utilised as a euphemism to express the emotional connection of participants to 'community' and feeling of power and disempowerment to wider society. Hence, if we view responsibility as a manifestation of the range of emotions imbued within community, what we see is how 'responsibility' was expressed in diverse ways, which in turn allows us to see individuals' connection to community and how such feelings whilst located within individuals are also expressed collectively. This feeling of connection was mediated by 'race,' class, gender and religious conviction but this is not an indication that this signified a greater or less feeling of community. What it did signify was a sense of commitment, albeit expressed in different ways. Further, responsibility was perceived as contributing to notions of community and as a motivating factor for individuals involved in community action.

Defining oneself as a member of the African Caribbean community placed an additional dimension in terms of what it inferred about participants social, political and economic locations and how this is perceived by those outside the community. This influences how 'community' can serve as a mechanism for instilling a sense of belonging and in so doing also fostered a sense of responsibility to others (Anderson, 1984). Whilst this responsibility was considered part and parcel of what one does the emotional dimension was tied up with a need to offer care and support of which 'UGC' provided an outlet for meeting this responsibility. In the extract below, Anna expresses how she perceives her responsibilities to the ACC. She tells us something about her

feelings about being a minority, experience of multiple oppression and relationship to power. In her narrative, she suggests that there is a need for 'community' to address the inequities that Black people experience in wider society. She feels that it is important for the community to take control of their own lives and stop expecting the state and state institutions to address the disadvantages that Black people experience. She states that we should not expect the same system that creates and administers and sustains the disadvantages that Black people encounter to be able to offer solutions. She expresses her emotional connection which manifests in a sense of responsibility and a need to do something through her community work.

> Basically my passion is my community. ...There is no point saying that things aren't right and yet I was not prepared to give that commitment. I was on the board at the time and because my background was in mental health and I decided to step down and took on the job to kind of rescue and save the project. Luckily it's worked out and we've gone from strength to strength...

Anna sees a need to centre the needs of Black people, and provide support that accepts that young Black people are human too. Hence, Anna calls for the recognition that Black people are valued and worthy of being valued:

> If there isn't that passion, that commitment, that love, and I can't put it any other way and, I know sometimes with the statutory, they don't like you to get emotional you have got to stay detached and

all that thing; like you're working with a piece of machinery and not a human being but that's their problem not mine. So I think when you get somebody from the same community who has been on that journey and they have the passion, the commitment that's what you need. I am not saying that there aren't other people outside of our community who can make a contribution because no-body is an island and no one can stand alone, but there is some real intensive work that needs to happen which has to come from us because the motivation is different, it's like it's an investment in yourself. You know what I mean?

Anna's motivation is driven by her emotional connection to the Black community and wanting to contribute to building a society where Black children flourish:

What I would like is to feel hopeful that there is a future and a bright future for those who are currently trapped in this lifestyle and I think as the communities we need to reach out to them and because a lot of what has been done has been done in the name of these young people as oppose to engaging with them. And yes I understand the difficulties …the fact that they may not want to speak but I don't know that we have necessarily extended the hand and *seh c*ome let's hear what you have to say, let's work on this thing together.

So for Anna, community is important and there is a need for her to do her bit for others. Hill-Collins' (1990) study of the black community in the USA observed that it was common for women who were community workers to use 'family language' to unrelated individuals within the Black community. Her observations mirrored my findings whereby key female workers and volunteers used a similar language when discussing children and the elderly and the issues and concerns that affect them. So, for example, it was very common for women who were involved in the Saturday schools and the mentoring schemes to refer to the children that they worked with as 'our children', or 'my children', this despite their not having kinship or biological ties to them. Anna continues:

I am aunty to many, many children. We're not blood related but if they are doing anything they would stop, not out of fear, but respect, because I have been part of their nurturing and their upbringing in one way or another so you can't just get that kind of acknowledgment without putting the investment in and that is what we have got to do. I think to some extent it happens in some of the churches still, but as a wider community because we don't have any civic society, we don't have any civic groups with our young people maybe they go to a youth group but what happens there is often dictated by policy makers, so in terms of what needs to be happening the nurturing it doesn't happen. So I am very much believe in the concept of the family and I think there are lots of things as families and as communities that we can and need to do and, we need to do that at an early age. But we can't' wait till

the arse gaan tru di gate an den try fi lock h it[4] and that is what is
happening we are having reactions .... we're not planning for our
children future other people are planning and then when it goes
wrong we react and that is why we are having the madness that
we have.

Hill-Collins' (1994) discussion of 'community mothering', and in a broader sense
'community parenting', is particularly useful in understanding Anna's language
of ownership and the way it represents a moral or cultural obligation to provide
care for non-kinship community members. Her work also establishes an
interdependent relationship between mothering and/wider socio-cultural
concerns that Black women (and men) have for the Black community. Thus the
range of tasks and duties performed at local and practical levels by women—
such as giving up their time to educate Black children as it is to benefit Black
communities. At a psychological and an emotional level the community work
performed is also viewed as a means to successfully socialise and transmit the
next generation into the cultural values of the community. Women's
involvement in community work, historically both in the UK and in the USA can
be viewed as a response to concerns associated with children and the negative
experiences of Black children within the education system (Reynolds, 2003).
What is revealed is that for some women there is a sense of fear and anxiety
not merely about the potential threat to young people in the community as a
result of racism and the process of racialisation but as mothers of young Black
men and in terms of perceptions about personal safety**.**

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[4] Wait until the horse has gone through the gate and them try to lock it

During my observations I noted that community work encompassed a space for individuals to provide support, advocacy, and campaign and engage in preventative work was also something that was emotionally driven and related to past experiences and a political agenda. An example of how one's personal experience can precipitate involvement can be seen in Angela's narrative. Angela experienced a relationship breakdown so had a number of years raising her children as a single mother. At the time of the interview, one of Angela's sons was in prison and she recounted a number of first-hand experience she had over the years with the criminal justice system (CJS). On a number of occasions, this was related to her son's perceived involvement with 'gangs' and 'UGC'. Angela explained that she always felt it was important to be good role model to her children and this has extended to employment as a youth worker and in setting up a community group to support parents whose children have also been involved with CJS. Angela explained how her sense of responsibility manifested in her work with young people in her local community:

What drove me to study was I wanted to help those children. I wanted to do something in a more professional manner. I wanted to have the knowledge to do things. The issue of guns was not a problem at that time....I did not want to be just a mum who went to the post office got her money and came home and sat down. I call it 'The Government Routine' – it was like they mapped out your life. So I studied and did a lot of community work. …What really motivated me at the time was I was going through a very bad relationship with my children's dad and my son started to get involved with the police. He had a fight with a White lad whose father was in the NF, they used to come down on bikes and

torment the kids. My son started to fight and before you know it I had to take my son to the police station. At the time he was about 12-13yrs old and they read him his rights. They tried to charge him with GBH in those days I wasn't that educated about the system as I am now. From then on my son started to experience problems in his life. He came from a very structured home, but because of his lack of education he had trouble in school. This is a problem I see with our young Black men. Schools if you don't achieve, they try to get rid of you because of their stats. My son had a problem that he couldn't read and he got teased by the other kids. In the end they threw him out of school. They said they would pay for him to go to college instead, but they just sent him home. The streets were just looking for him

A guiding principle for Angela's work is offering support to others, in order for them to be able to have support which is not always forthcoming for many who find themselves pit against the legal system. She aims to support the transition of other young people to adulthood, and in so doing help them to avoid the pit falls that her son experienced as part of her daily role. So for women, it is also about resisting and challenging the negative characterisation of Black youths, developing relationships, setting an example, caring and supporting in a myriad of ways young people in the community.

I say to people all the time that, I want to feel safe and when I see some Black guys on the roads I feel like I have to clutch my bag or cross the road and feel that kind of way. And sometimes when I

pass young people I tell them morning because I know they don't

expect me to and sometimes they're shocked...sometimes they

will react and you can see dem think, oh lord she tell mi morning

and they answer ...so sometimes as an adult we have to take the

initiative ...'mi see young people sometimes with dem trousers

down in dem batty and mi seh pull you trousers up it don't look

good!   ...and we need to do dat even id dem don't answer'[5]

(Angela).

However, this does not mean that the responsibility they have to the community

is not also political. The narratives and actions of women are political acts aimed

also at addressing issues of injustice.

Whilst it is possible to see some gender differences in the motivation and action

of participants it is important to note that for men too community was emotional.

As Samuel states:

…because we are dealing with a Black community here and it is

my community and I am owning it for my community - these

children that die are my children so to speak also because I own

them to be my children. You know the whole African concept

about it takes a village to raise a child I am still on that one

because that is how I grew up. I am from the Caribbean, I am

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[5] I see young people sometimes with their trousers down their bottoms and tell them to pull it up because it
doesn't look good.

from Jamaica, my mum used to look after nuff picanini[6] because my mum think they are mine as well even though they are not biologically mine.

Indeed, the involvement of Black men in initiatives around 'UGC' can also be understood as rooted in an attempt to address what is often put forward as their invisibility within family life and the relations of this to the problem affecting young Black males (discussed in Chapter Nine). Consequently, male participants also spoke about their responsibility to others. For men, getting involved was also multifaceted and the data reveals a sense of responsibility in terms of their own personal experiences, connection to ACC, a feeling of disempowerment, roles as men and fathers, what was considered to be an absence of Black male role models, the danger associated with work in this area and their personal experiences. There was also a perception of invisibility of Black men within both the private and public sphere. Martyn's explained how his concern about young men living in locality led him as an older male and a father to take a personal interest. This personal interest took the form of drawing on his sporting skills to engage young men in his community.

Ronald also spoke about his sense of responsibility to young men in his community. He explained how his past spending time in prison led to him wanting to make a difference. Ronald felt that in some sense his commitment stemmed from feeling a sense of responsibility that he had in some way contributed to some of the problems young Black men encounter today. He needed to help put things 'right.' Ronald spoke about his life growing up in the

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[6] A lot of children

inner-city and his previous involvement in crime. He feels these connections stand him in good stead to work in this area as he brings an understanding that many are unable to learn 'on the job,' on the streets and from being involved with drug and other related crimes. He said:

I always had an interest in community work; in fact, I used to do community work in [a drinking den] still. I used to gather all the youths and say, 'look come see some free drink' and 'come sit down we can't keep going on like this we have to get organised'. So we used to have what they would call workshops, it was just the environment that was different. And it is *dem* kind [7]of dialogues now that there ain't no no go areas for me because I know who are the generals, who the lieutenants are too! *Mi* don't even know who you is because you probably wasn't even born but ...that relationship and respect some little youths *dem* now say, 'I know him ' who? 'I know him as this' I have lost friends to this, who I would call friends and I have also seen the loss of some of the unsolved shootings over the time. Whether I like it or not nothing done, nothing solved and I started to say no we have a responsibility...

Whilst not all the male participants had direct experience of the CJS, they all spoke about knowing someone or a family involved or who had been injured or died as a result of 'UCG'. In addition, they held a common view that this was

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[7] It is dem kind (Those kind)
Mi don't even know (I don't know)
Some little youths dem now say (Some young people are now saying that)

one community issue that men needed to have an active involvement that needed a male to understand what it was like to be Black and male in the UK. They also spoke about how this aspect of their lives gave them a vantage position in which to understand and work in this area:

I can only speak for me and I will give you an example. I have just started to work back after many years with one of my soldiers them and, when I bucked him up in [prison], when mi land, mi seh Yo[8]! Him seh, [calls him by his past street name]. Mi seh, you can't call me dat now, its [name] or [name] but you can't call me dat. 'Seen, seen, seen'. He said what are you up to? Mi seh look this is wha mi a do [9]and you no even av fi ask noting cause mi know wah you deh pon. Because I knew him back in the day he was one of those who I used to give him a drink, give him some food and we reasoned as youths. He is now a forty year old man and just got thirteen years; spent most of his adult life in jail. Him sey, 'bwoy mi av fi get out a dis ting big man!' The thing is that he didn't have to do it. He had his own yard and already chilled but greed. Him seh, 'greed man cause mi never a fi do it!' Mi seh, 'so wat dat a tell you?'. So I had to catch up with one of my right hand man in prison and, we're tracking him through. So that's one

[8] When mi land, mi seh Yo (when I got there I said hi)
Him seh, (He said)
Mi she (I said)
Dat (That)
[9] This is what I'm doing
you no even av fi ask noting cause mi know wah you deh pon. (You don't have to ask anything because I know what is going on)
Him sey, 'bwoy mi av fi get out a dis ting!' (He said I have to get out of here)
Him seh, 'greed man cause mi never a fi do it!' Mi sey, 'so wat dat a tell you?'. (He said, I am here because of greed. I said, so what is that telling you?)

of the things that we are doing, tracking them through prison (Ronald).

As part of his role for a third sector organisation in which he provides support to Black men in prison Ronald came into contact with an old friend. He shared how this was a reminder of his connection to the problem on the streets. Male respondents also spoke about the dangers associated with 'UGC' and the risk to personal safety for those engaged in work. They also identified the need for a male perspective and how this meant men have an important role to play on this agenda. In the narratives of Black men we see a specific rationale for why they perceive it as important to work actively in this area. Whereas Black women have always been acknowledged for their involvement in community work (Hill Collins, 1990; Reynolds, 2003), it was felt that it was time for Black men to have a visible presence within the community and be seen to be leading strategies to address 'UGC'. There was a feeling that whilst racism had impacted on men and women in similar ways, it was the impact on Black men that was particularly problematic. Consequently, responsibility expressed by male participants also included putting forward what they perceived as a male perspective. Gender was ever present in their narratives and it is possible to suggest that their responsibility extended to a male perspective not merely within a community setting but within the wider public sphere too. It was felt that there was a need to challenge a hyper masculinity which they associated with the violence perpetrated by young Black men and how it was that increasingly perceived as characterising what it meant to be male and instil alternative forms of masculinity (Glynn, 2010).

In Martyn's narrative we see the intersection of gender and his religious convictions. As a practicing Christian he draws attention to the way in which gender offers an additional dimension (explored further in Chapter Nine) in terms of perceptions about the role of men and that of women.

For me simultaneously, men have been disempowered and women have been empowered - men have gone to jail and women have become chief execs – do you understand?   If you go to [City council] look at the top floor look how many Black men, look at how many Black women though, there are a few – if you look at the prison system and you will see where they are. What the Black woman has to do for me is grab a hold of that truth and drive it home – you understand me? Get a hold of that truth, see it for what it is and say I need to promote my Black man. I need to promote him. Church is a prime example,   you go to the church ninety percent women, empowered women and nuff of them don't have no man.... Now all of a sudden a woman can come in a say to a man babysit! I am saying if you really and truly want to deal with these things you have to ask yourself who is promoting the agenda? Who is promoting the agenda and what is in it for them? And what is in it for them so when you look in the church black men are not in the church lots of women but if you go in the prison system there is a whole heap of men and a hand full of women. Those discussion are going on in the church ... When we come down to the nitty gritty they have had to come to the place where they are so empowered that the man has not got a say… .

So, we also can see how 'UGC' has drawn attention to gender differences within ACC between men and women and how religious conviction also shapes perceptions of gender roles. Samuel's responsibility to his community led to him giving up a well-paid job and going to work on the 'streets.' This decision can be viewed as reflecting religious beliefs but it also needs to be viewed as part of an ongoing tension between those living and working in inner-city urban communities and those whose have moved out of these communities yet still feel a sense of responsibility to those left behind. Samuel explained that his feeling of responsibility led him to feel he had no choice:

> I had phone calls from different parts of the world saying, [name] how can you do this, you can't give this up. And I said you know what, God has told me I need to let everything up and be on the front line where broken people are and work with them.

8.5 Summary and reflections

In Chapter Three, I showed how my own experience of community is shaped by a range of factors. I accept that our individual identities can be viewed as fluid and we occupy multiple identities, which provide us with the means of association with multiple communities (Hall, 1996). Nevertheless, growing up in a large urban city during the 1970s and the 1980s, I was conscious of the need to feel part of or united with others sharing my racial or ethnic and perceived cultural identity. Consequently, I had few doubts about where I belonged or

where others thought I belonged. As indicated in this chapter feeling part of a community was important to participants' sense of self, belonging and identity and in relation to how they feel a sense of solidarity with others. Community membership is partially dictated by the circumstances of our birth, but our experience of community is diverse as are factors, which motivate us to rally around community.

In the narratives of participants, there is a sense that, irrespective of how they perceive the fluidity of their identity, and what meaning to community they attribute, there is an acceptance of how individuals are also assigned to a community and how this misjudged assignment is fixed by others and have both external and internal ramifications:

> … So coming face to face with this group of young people who came to church and I know they are part of gangs… these are somebody's boys or daughters in some cases and so I can't be afraid of them and I refuse. ... We do, we do because that is the nature of our brain that it takes on board the negative and internalises it and chooses it over and accepts it sometimes without questioning it. If I felt any fear it was for my children I thought I hope they will be o.k. coming home from wherever they were. ...I felt very anxious for the whole community, not for me, it wasn't about personal safety (Alison).

Community is important irrespective of the challenges and difficulties, community needs to be viewed as something political, embodied and something that tells us about a range of relationships. Organising around community was something political:

> I think partly but I also think there is a bigger thing which is the way that Black children are viewed by society. As I say we don't have a voice in this country we are insignificant in this country so we have no influence and if you have no influence you can't make a difference. You look at the mental health system, we fill up the mental health system, we fill up the prisons, we are seven times more likely to be stopped by the police – we are insignificant and all these things feed into the racist white dogma that oppresses the black man in this country. We as a 'race' have not recognised that that is what we are up against! Sorry we recognise that we are up against racism but what we haven't recognised is how to deal with it. So we are on a self-destructive mission and we cannot ever progress and have an impact on changing the landscape for ourselves and our children until we change within ourselves and learn that it is about supporting each other as oppose to fighting against each other (Vincent)

It is such challenges that those engaged in community activism sought to address. 'UGC' was situated within a set of concerns that the community encountered. 'UGC' was viewed as a symptom of a broader set of issues whose impact is also perceived as a threat to the lives of those within ACC, but

also exists as an indicator for why there existed a need for community. Consequently, this contributes to a view of community that perceives community as a tool for action exercised to challenge inequity and in the fight for justice. It is such tensions associated with the concept community that unravel in the narratives of participants.

On reflecting on my perceptions of community I can see that it is complex and tells a story not just about me but shared by others too. Nonetheless, I am mindful, as Alleyne (2002) correctly draws our attention to, the epistemological consequences of unreflexive use of the concept. This is because there is a danger that when researching ethnic minority community we allow community to exist as self-evident rather than something that necessitates an explanation (Alleyne, 2002). Hence, unless we look underneath the concept we ignore how it diminishes the social complexities that lead to a need for community and to be found within communities and wider society to simple equations in which it is easier to see community as the sum of culture=community=ethnic identity=nature=culture as suggested by Bauman (1996:17). My subjective experience through identification with ACC necessitates not taking for granted that my experiences and perceptions are shared by participants in my study. I was keen to explore what 'community' meant to my participants, what role 'community played in shaping participants understanding and action in relation to 'UGC' and the extent to which holding a feeling about community was important to participants.

The narratives illuminate the complexity of community where community was perceived as more than merely an ideal, even when discussed in a nostalgic way, it had a lived reality. Community was perceived as something alive,

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complex, contradictory and embodying emotional connections. Community was positioned as something related to particular historical, moral and political contexts and related to individuals' perceptions of identity. Yet simultaneously, in constructing community what was also encapsulated in participants' narratives was how perceptions of community were not fixed but shaped and informed by various contemporary discourses and issues. As such, my aim in this chapter was to highlight how community is a relational mechanism and tells us much about perceptions and experiences of those deemed to be inside and outside its structures. Moreover, community is something tangible and we are able to uncover how it is mediated by power. Consequently, focusing on community draws attention to the pivotal role that it plays in regards to the construction of a community identity, community politics, community mobilisation and so opens the way to constructing an alternative narrative, an alternative way of understanding and sharing an untold story about 'UGC'.

Chapter 9: African Caribbean Families, Family Life and 'Urban Gun Crime'

9.0 Introduction

In this chapter I present findings exploring the relationship between the African Caribbean family (ACF) and 'urban gun crime' (UGC). In Chapter Eight, I demonstrated how the data identifies specific limits and limitations associated with how community is understood and utilised within the realm of 'UGC'. I argue that notions of an African Caribbean community captured in the narratives of participants reveals community to be something that is dynamic, heterogeneous in how it is experienced, personal and political. Here, I present an analysis of the data associated with the African Caribbean family (ACF). In doing so, I present a critical analysis and illuminate disparities between the construction of the ACF found in media and political discourse and captured in the narratives of respondents.

In section 9.1 'Framing the relationship between the ACF and 'UCG' I present an analysis that critically challenges the dominant negative construction of the ACF drawing attention to both acceptance and resistance to this characterisation and the intersection of 'race' class and gender. In section 9.2 I critically explore the ideas associated with 'Absent Fathers' and in 9.3 draw attention to the relationship of lone motherhood and 'UGG'. The final section, 9.4 provides a summary of key ideas stemming from the chapter plus some auto/biographical reflections.

Some problems we share as women, some we don't. You fear

your children will grow up to join the patriarchy and testify against

you; we fear our children will be dragged from a car and shot down

in the street, and you will turn your backs upon the reason they are

dying (Lorde, 1984:9)

Anti-gun crime campaigners and police have long recognised that

the lack of positive male role models is one of the main reasons

for Black boys turning to the gun… (McLagan, 2009:286)

These quotes frame the data presented in this chapter. Lorde (1988) alludes to

the importance of acknowledging how 'race' is a factor that differentiates

people's experience of family life. There are common experiences women share

as mothers, but for Black women motherhood cannot be divorced from 'race'

(Lorde, 1988). Black women's experience of motherhood and family life has

shaped their experiences of racialisation and racism. Yet, there is an inherent

failure to take into consideration how this relationship leads to public

misconceptions of how 'race' fundamentally shapes ACF life (Goulbourne,

2003). This is despite, as highlighted by McLagan (2009), the explicit link

between family and 'UGC. ' As discussed in Chapter One, 'UGC' provides a

further example of how a problem is allied to ACC and presented as

symptomatic of a wider set of issues to be found within. In the UK, there has

been a lack of attention afforded to examining the relationship between 'UGC'

and the ACF. Moreover, a lack of attention to this relationship is despite a core

aspect of the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' in which overt links are made

between ACF and young Black men involvement in 'UGC' and, youth violence

more generally (Svensoon, 2008). The dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' is a construction in which specific ideas of 'race', gender and class are also employed. The outcome is that this leads to a specific dominant characterisation of the ACF and simultaneously rendering invisible key aspects of their family life.

9.1 Framing the relationship between the African Caribbean families and 'urban gun crime'

This linkage between ACF and crime in the UK is not new (see Hall et al, 1982). As noted in Chapter One, what is new is a shift in which now we see the confirmation of a link between a specific type of firearm offence and Black communities. This link is heavily influenced by research conducted in the USA in which Black family life is identified as conduit for young people's involvement in 'gangs' and gun related crime, However, within the UK discourses associate with 'UGC' are also indelibly aligned and reproduced in contemporary discourses associated with 'Feral Parents' (see De Benedictis, 2012) and ideas underpinning notions of 'Troubled Families' (see Ribbens McCarthy et al, 2014). The outcome of a complex set such discourses associated with families have major ramifications on ACF who are held accountable for the poor socialisation of young people, providing ineffectual parental supervision, offering a lack of male role models, providing poor environment for raising children/ young people and generally answerable for the transmission of an intergenerational culture of criminality (Hirchi, 1969; Hagedorn, 1998; Fleisher, 2000; Jankwoski, 1991; Joseph and Gunter, 2011). As noted by Blake, 'America has often viewed the Black family through the prism of its pathologies: single-family homes, absentee

fathers, out of wedlock children' (January 15, CNN, 2009). In the UK, within the sphere of 'UGC' this association has also been made, (Centre for Social Justice, 2009; Home Office, 2011; Sewell, 2010). This in part can be viewed as reflecting a wider trend in which a key focus for understanding social problems has been to focus attention on choices made by individuals and groups in which we see issues such as educational under- achievement, teenage pregnancy, poor mental health viewed primarily in conjunction with 'problems' located within the home (Centre for Social Justice, 2009; Home Office, 2011). It is also part of a legacy in which we see the explicit linking of Black communities, and the Black family to crime (Tyrer and Patel, 2011)

Across the data, there is evidence of acceptance of a dominant discourse that firmly links social problems with family life. Hence, the primacy given to the role of individuals, their families or wider communities is reflected in the narratives of participants:

> It is quite easy to beat up Black men and tell them they have been terrible fathers or that they are absent, I think that is just one element of that and, it is too easy to blame the victim and that is my analysis walking around the streets and talking to the kids who are clearly having parental problems, lack of parental skills amongst mothers some of them, real lack of parenting skills but that is not just a Black problem it's a societal problem where we have young mothers who are having children and really ought really not to. It sounds really quite right wing, but I see White girls and I think you should not have a baby (Alison).

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Hence, there is a view that recognises the need for strong families, but also one in which 'race' is not considered as an indicator why families may not work. Alison alludes to why cultural explanations in which racialised ideas dominate is insufficient in capturing the problems encountered within African Caribbean family life.

Failure within the family is posited as a contributory factor shaping how the relationship between 'the family' and 'UGC' is increasingly understood in the UK. No consideration is given to how the image presented reproduces a particular construction of a specific type of family who are impacted by 'UGC' Thus, despite the association of African Caribbean family life and 'UGC', there is an avoidance to address 'race,' and how it produces specific notions associated with representation of 'Others' (Miles and Brown, 2003). Yet, as discussed in Chapter Four, these ideas implicitly sustained and form influential ingredients served up in policy responses to 'UGC' (Centre for Social Justice, 2009; Home Office, 2011). The outcome is an approach in which intervening in the personal sphere of specific families is put forward as key in preventing potential antisocial and criminal behaviour. Moreover, this is one of the central planks in political strategies to address 'UGC' (Home Office, 2011).

The data reveals that similarly to community, notions of the family were not fixed but constantly undergoing reconstruction (Oesterriech,2007) reflecting the attempt to better capture the diversity of family formation (Bernardes,1997). In 2005, Corrine Wilson and I questioned if there had been an ideological shift in the way we think about the family. We contended that there has been a shift

within research and policy documents evidenced by an acceptance that no two families are the same and what actually exists is a diversity of family life (Brown and Wilson, 2005). Nonetheless, we noted the domination of a common sense understanding of the concept family (Brown and Wilson, 2005). This ideal family masks the complexity of family life, perpetuates and maintains images of supposedly normal families and naturalises the roles ascribed to individual family members (Brown and Wilson, 2005:182). The ideal is implicated in endeavours that aim to understand and address the issue of 'UGC.' Hill Collins (2000) draws attention to how ideas about the family operate a dual function as both an ideological construction and a fundamental principle of social organisation. My data demonstrates how participants grapple with such tensions. There is awareness amongst participants of how the family within ACC has rarely been solely that of the father, mother and siblings living independent from other family members, participants also expressed concern about changes they perceive within the ACF.

> ...I go back to what I said originally about the Caribbean experience and the African experience and even the experience of the people who came, the Windrush generation that fathers were away doing what they had to do and this was not an issue. So for me, the question is what has changed in our social fabric to bring about the situation that we find ourselves in? (Susan)

Goulbourne (2003) explains that the larger proportion of migrants from the Caribbean in the post-war period often arrived as individuals with the intention to return home. Chamberlain (2003) details how the capacity for many to migrate

rested on being able to access support from their wider family members. As such, it was the willingness of extended family members, often grandparents, to care for children that enabled men and women to come to Britain to work. Moreover, this support was central to the formation of the diasporic families and, many of the children of the migrants who came to Britain between 1948-1966 were raised by grandparents or other family members for part of their lives. Alongside this, there were other mechanisms employed within the Caribbean such as 'child fostering' or 'child shifting.' These were informal support systems that involved care provided to children by adults based on social rather than biological relationships which has always been a feature of Caribbean family life (Chamberlain, 2003:67). Overlooked in studies on the ACF is how there has always been this diversity of family formation (Ellis 1988). Ellis (1988) shows how these family structures were the outcome of a range of influences, reflecting the history of Caribbean settlement with the African woman-centred matriarchal formation adopted from East Indian culture through the extended family type. Furthermore, single parent families and female headed households were a reality for many women at all levels of Caribbean society challenging the European concept of the 'nuclear family' with its ideology of patriarchy and male dominance (Chamberlain, 2003).

Perceptions of the African Caribbean family by participants reflected an amalgamation of the nuclear family structure and of matriarchal, kinship and extended family formation that characterised family life in the Caribbean (Ellis, 1988; Chamberlain, 2003). Yet the 'ideal' holds influence:

I am talking from my own observation, it is when you get home and you have that discipline and standards and, if ultimately that male role model is not there then it becomes difficult. Mums work hard and mums do their bit but it takes two to become a parent (Rachel).

Rachel is a probation officer who I met at a community event in Area 2 aiming to encourage members to get involved in work in their local community around 'UGC'. Her attendance at the event was in light of concerns she had in her daily role working with young Black males who she felt lacked appropriate support. Rachel's concern and interest was also motivated by the fact that she lived locally and was a mother of a teenage male. She was keen to get involved in community work and felt that her professional role gave her an insight to support work around 'UGC' and as a mother she felt it was important to do something in her local community. Rachel's involvement demonstrated how the personal is also political (Letherby, 2003; 2013). She spoke about the importance of young people having good role models but also felt that a stable family environment was important. Rachel identified 'strong' families as essential to ensure children had a 'successful' transition to adulthood. For her, a strong family was one in which there was both a mother and a father present at home. The data provides evidence of an acceptance of the superiority of this ideal family formation in alleviating some of the problems associated with the ACF. Rachel felt there was a lack of this type of family and this was partly to blame for the over representation of Black people within the criminal justice system (CJS). Accordingly she viewed single motherhood and absent fathers as key factors responsible for a range of negative social, economic and moral outcomes for those within ACC.

However, participants also identified the ACF as not merely consisting of mother, father and children living in the same household. They presented an image of the family in much broader terms. Paul sees family life as fluid:

I know many families, the little unit that lives in the same house if that is what you want to view as family, it doesn't take into account aunts and uncles and grand-parents and so on, but I think African Caribbean or certainly Jamaican families do. It is the wider thing, your cousin is your family it is not just that unit that lives in a particular household with your siblings and parents. There is an aunt and uncle of mine and they have raised 15 kids. They have got 15 kids. …he left Jamaica came over here got a job and worked all the hours that he could, saved up and sent money to her, some of it went to wider family as well, saved up to bring her over. She had got two kids when he left to come over here to build a new life; the kind of way that many came from the Caribbean. They weren't married, but they were a family. They were together and raising their kids and family for over thirty years and it wasn't until after one of their kids was married that they actually got married. And that was something that I saw over and over again in the wider Caribbean community that that happened quite often. But those units were a family in spite of what people judged them to be, despite the fact that mothers and fathers didn't have the same surname, in spite of the fact that quite often they did adopt the same surname.

Here we see the notion that family consisting of members who are biologically related and those who are not related but still perceived as sharing a familial bond. There are further inconsistencies between definitions of the family identified in participants' narratives. For some marriage was important, but it was not positioned as the defining factor that constituted familial membership nor was it viewed as something that was central to the decision to have a child or children. Moreover, such factors were irrespective of socio-economic position.

My own family in which my grandmother came to England in the 1950s leaving seven children in Jamaica placed with families, not all of whom were biologically related, is an example of how the family goes beyond blood relations and kin to close friends and neighbours (Ellis, 1988). In addition, whilst the institution of marriage is held in high regards amongst some, a variety of unions exists; common law and semi-permanent relationships are all ways that men and women in the Caribbean form relationships. My mother has never married but has been in a long term relationship for almost 40 years. Reflecting as suggested by Reynolds (1997) that Black family life is shaped by a reductionist discourse, which is static, culturally specific and relays a common misconception. The image portrayed is matrio-focal or female centred with women living and parenting alone, high male absenteeism from the household, black women occupying dual roles of domestic and economic provider with high educational success. This image Ellis (2003) suggests rests on a caricature of the strong, powerful, capable Black woman and is born out of the history in which Black women had to organise motherhood to meet the challenges of

survival during slavery and colonialism and in the current era underpinned by notions of independence. Yet, Black families are often understood in isolation from the role of patriarchy, class, ethnicity and age and the other variables which structure and shape individuals' experiences of the social world. Nonetheless, the idea of the chaotic and dysfunctional Black family structure and family life is powerful and it is this image that is often presented within the public domain and repeatedly used as an explanation for a range of social problem encountered by ACC.

Often participants spoke positively about the need for family and the important role that family occupies. The family was perceived as a place denoting inclusion, a source of necessary support and a place in which children were able to access the skills needed to live in a racialised world. However, this is not to infer that participants did not have concerns as the data also reveals how for some there was a perception that the ACF was in 'crisis' and broken. As such, participants shared concerns in which they perceived the African Caribbean family as something in decline, which is reflected in media and political discourse and also linked to participants making comparisons between their own experiences of family life and what is often put forward as a more superior structure.

Angela, who raised her son as a single mother, explains how the media reinforces a particular view of the ACF:

I just think with the Black family we are pathologised, we're like a pathology it's not like we're a family and the thing that is promoted is obviously about mixed relationships, where there is a man and a woman; I don't watch TV much but you don't see the image of a Black man and women and children so with you know with the media I think it is their interest to portray us as being dysfunctional, the Black woman, strong domineering Black women who is strong and don't need a man and that is what the media does and we buy into that stereotype and we use that to describe ourself.

There was also a sense that this construction of the pathological ACF was not incidental:

We don't have no family as far as they are concerned we are dysfunctional. We are all dysfunctional even where there is a situation where there is a family unit they still think we're dysfunctional and, they have to see us that way because that allows them to treat us the way they do and it justifies some of the things that they do on to us and you know... (Susan).

So for Susan, the pathology associated with ACF life extends across all family formations. Both Angela and Susan were single mothers, both lived in urban areas and both spoke about the challenges of parenting alone. They spoke candidly about the negative portrayal of the ACF, their status as single mothers and the relationship between such factors within the dominant conceptualisation

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of 'UGC'. In so saying, they rejected the blanket way in which the negative connotations are used to characterise the ACF and are keen to disassociate themselves from some within the community who they perceive have not taken their parental responsibility as 'seriously' as they have.

It's a difficult one because I grew up in a two parent family and that is what I knew. I had two children and when my eldest was ten separated from their father and my youngest was six so effectively for the majority of their lives I brought them up in a household where it was just me and them. I think values and beliefs have a massive role to play. I took my parenting responsibilities very seriously, I was a young mother, I was 18 when I had my first child and I took those responsibilities very seriously. I've observed other who haven't taken their responsibilities quite as seriously and in fact are children raising children and therefore there are these issues about boundaries. (Susan)

The data provides numerous examples of Othering in which participants distancing themselves from the negative representation of the ACF and for those parenting alone, identify why they live in families that depart from an idealised and prescribed norm. Yet, there is an acknowledgment of the relationship between the ACF and historical developments such as slavery, colonialism and migration. This is alongside recognition of how 'race' shapes aspects of their experiences.   Kyle who was born in the Caribbean, suggests that amongst all populations there will be some families who experience

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difficulties. He infers that it is overly simplistic to suggest that there are no problems encountered by some families:

> What is the popular phrase? Just because I am paranoid doesn't mean you are not out to get me [laughs]. I think there is always some truth in the pathology and if you take the pathology of dysfunctional Black family, those of us who are here in this country come from the dysfunctional family that developed largely under slavery and colonial days and so on. I come from a place in Jamaica, in St Katherine and I can remember, for example, I man in my district who had two families and he had probably 11 children with either women, 11 and they were all growing up together in the same place.

Kyle accepts that problems within families must not be ignored. Nonetheless, he rejects assumptions that routinely see this as evidence of pathology of the ACF life. Moreover, he refutes the idea of a 'crisis' and suggests that notion of a crisis is in part generated via the media representation of ACF:

> All we can do as individuals where we can is to correct it as we go along that's all we can do! Because we can't take on the media because we don't have access to the multimedia that can hit the airwaves as that is almost an insurmountable…

The data reveals numerous contradictions. For example, whilst recognising the limitation of family life in terms of the nuclear family, the nuclear family simultaneously was held in high regard and viewed as important. Participants rejected negative connotations attributable to ACF life often making connections to historical developments and the need to recognise fluidity of such family formation. Further, despite vehemently expressing anger and frustration about what they felt constituted a deliberate external attempt to pathologise ACF life by the state and major institutions such as the media, participants reported similar aspects of the ACF in their accounts. Here issues such as single motherhood, absent fathers and poor parenting were identified as a causal factors linked to 'UGC.' Therefore the data uncovers complexity and contradictions, acceptance and resistance as demonstrated in Samuel's account below:

So Black families have been pathologised for decades, for years, for hundreds of years and that is still here today, it is just in a more sophisticated way, do you understand what I am saying? And that disturbs me and makes me angry. And I think if we don't deconstruct that pathologisation we are just reinforcing it and, we are reinforcing it by what we are saying, how we say it. And the young people more or less reinforce it, Black young men particular and fathers who may not be there for their sons and their daughters. Sons I am talking about here because a lot of sons, it has been a lot of sons that have died to guns and knife crime. This is not just a Black problem though because if you go to Glasgow and other places white young men die too. But because we are dealing with a Black community here and, it is my

community and I'm owning it for my community - these children

that die are my children so to speak also because I own them to

be my children.

Samuel worked in the community with young people and is a father. The family for him served as a marker for his emotional attachment to other young people, particularly young men involved in gun related activities. His perception of family life was informed by his personal experience, his upbringing. Samuel's resistance is to the negative characterisation of the ACF rather than merely a fight for the nuclear family. For him, family moved beyond a biological tie, it is something that had a history and performed a social, economic and political role. Family was important as it offered a mechanism for the socialisation of children and was perceived as essential, it transmitted positive values to children, educated them about 'race' and racism and in providing care and support irrespective of a biological relationship. Hence, Samuel perceives a specific role for the family in maintaining the health and well-being of ACC.

In Chapter Seven, I noted that participants reported feeling a sense of fragmentation within ACC in response to perceptions of societal and community changes. The data associated with family illuminates a similar trend. Participants feel concern and fear linked to views of crisis or fragmentation within the ACF. This was articulated in terms of an intergenerational disconnection, changes in the extent to which support was provided to those in need by family members, changes in the roles between men and women in the private and in the public spheres. This feeling extended to concerns associated with 'social change' and the wider position of Black people within British society.

Thus, the response to fragmentation and breakdown was understood in terms of strong familial bonds in terms of strengthening relationships within families as a means of addressing wider societal changes.

There was also a sense that the answer to fragmentation within ACC could be found in the nuclear family form and in religious life. This was not uniform, but the data reveals tension between participants who identified as practicing Christians and those who did not. For example, Samuel, a practicing Christian, spoke about how his religious beliefs informed his views of family:

> …your family is important, children are important, if that is the case then there has to be a framing within that spirituality or that theological context to respond to the most broken, to the bruised, to the marginalised, to those that are so called disaffected, hard to reach, socially excluded all those labels and so on. So for me, I have had to frame it around a theology.

This is not to suggest that Samuel did not identify other structural factors that needed to be taken into consideration such as inequality in education, labour market and racism. But, he felt religion occupied a fundamental role and this is visible in how he understood the relationship between 'UGC' and the family. In Chapter Seven, I showed how the role of religion/ faith is important and how individuals openly identified themselves as practicing Christians and spoke about the importance of their beliefs to their perception of community, family and 'UGC'. Consequently, a key finding is the political engagement of the Black led

church on this agenda. Since the post-war period the church has been an institution that Black people could independently manage and control within communities. As such the Church performs an essential role in terms of informing and regulating social, cultural and spiritual political life of the Black community (SUSA, 2009).

There is estimated to be more than 4,000 Black-led places of worship across the UK boasting a collective membership in excess of 300,000 and more than half the church goers. Wiggins (2004) contends that, whilst there are similarities between The Black Church of the twenty-first century and White Protestantism, there are also clear differences. She examines the gender politics found within the Black-led churches in terms of the large female constituency. Alongside this, women tend to volunteer for a number of core roles and female labour is essential to the effective running of churches. However, while much of the everyday activity is carried out by women, the majority of church leaders are men and the clergy as in White protestant and Catholic sphere, remains male-dominated. Wiggins (2004) suggests that the divisions of labour within Black-led churches is a re affirmation of traditional sex roles in the private sphere. Moreover, gender division in the private and in the public sphere of the church is biblically sanctioned and reinforced in preaching. So for Wiggins (2004), whilst the establishment and growth of the Black led church can be understood as a response and resistance to racism it is the conduit for specific gendered ideas. Furthermore, she posits that faith takes on an ethical dimension for women in that it adds a further sense of responsibility to perform a caring role. Only now, this care extends to their families, church members, themselves, and their racial and geographic communities.

Martyn, a recent convert to Christianity, laments the demise of the institution of marriage and the nuclear family leading to single parenthood and suggests that this provides an indication as to why it is plausible to view the ACF as in 'crisis':

> I am not saying that you are posing that question but the question for me is have I seen a deterioration of the African Caribbean Family and I the answer is yes. And sometimes you can be generalist and I am conscious in saying yes that I am just being generalist, but some of these issues we have today stems from way back so we have a lot of single parent families and I think that is at the core of some of the issues.

Hence, Martyn sees family structure as central to the 'crisis' in the ACF. This is despite research that shows a far more complex picture (McCord, 1991; Goulbourne, 2003; Reynolds, 2009):

> I grew up with my mother and my father. What my mum gave me and 10 children was undiluted love. She used to sew so even when things were tight she would be the person who made our blazers and made our clothes and I would see church people come to the house and they would be helping her doing stuff.

Martyn draws attention to the importance of relationships between parents and young people. However, he implies that relationships between parents and children are often strengthened within a traditional family structure, but simultaneously identifies a role for others in supporting his family from the wider community:

> My dad on the other hand was a very strict man but a very stand-up guy and very devote man of God, a mover and shaker within the Church. So you had these two people as our role models and so we understood in our own way what a man should be and how a woman functions also.

Martyn's conceptualisation of the family is underpinned by gendered ideas with specific preordained roles for men and women. McCord (1991) uncovered how the relationship between parents was as important as that between parents and their children. Hence, it was not the family structure in itself that determined a negative outcome for children but the relationships within the family home. For Martyn:

> [So when I look around me] I see a lot of young men confused and not knowing who they are and what their culture is, in many respects embarrassed of who they are. I've heard them make derogatory remarks about African people and they fail to understand that they are decedents of Africans even laugh at the way they speak. That's worrying for me because some way along

the line we have not taught our young people really and we can't expect the people of this country, the Caucasian people to be teaching that, that has to come from us and I think that is an area that has been neglected.

Martyn suggests that there is a need for children to be raised within a traditional household, but he also sees that the 'damage' to young Black men of being raised without a father can be mediated by there being a positive male role model present in their lives. For Martyn, the need for the nuclear family is not merely a response to the problem of single motherhood, he acknowledges that even in this family formation children can be raised successfully. For him, the family performs a central role in the socialisation of children; preparing children to engage with 'race' and equip them to deal with racism. Furthermore, family is important in instilling children and young people with a sense of identity in which they are able to learn about their relationship to others, learn about their culture. Martyn's fight for strong families is driven by a view that it is best place to arm young people with an understanding about their history and equipping them with the strategies necessary for survival.

The fight for the 'family' is complex and multi-faceted but a common theme is the need to challenge and resist a dominant negative construction. Kyle states that:

…all you can do is chip away at it where you're at and, if we can change the perception or the stereotype amongst ourselves then

whatever they want to think let them think it. ..but that is what dictates how we perceive ourselves the media and stuff...

Samuel points to a need to understand how stereotypes of the ACF impact on the lived reality of those it seeks to define. He suggests there is a need for caution in how these stereotypes are not only received by the wider civic society but are internalised within ACC. This is important as this is often at the expense of masking a range of other factors that are of similar importance but are very rarely acknowledged.

For participants, the crisis of the ACF can be understood as representative of a range of feelings such as powerlessness, ambiguity and concern about many of the changes in wider society and in relation to position of ACC in British society. The need for strong ACF was viewed as a form of resistance to issues such as racism, fragmentation and poverty and, such factors were implicated in discussions associated with absent fathers and single mothers and 'UGC'.

Robert a key figure within the ACC and considered a key spokesman around the issue of 'UGC:'

There is no critical mass of Black people who stand up and fight for our traditions, we're in a strange land this is not our home as such. …My parents left Jamaica and moved to this cosmopolitan Britain where they had to adapt had to let go of some of their

traditions or they would not have survived; they would not get employment. So they had to leave behind some of the traditions, the microcosm within the house. The family in my home was Jamaica, when I went to school it wasn't Jamaica, when I went into work, when I got married I didn't take Jamaica. They are stronger links with me and my parents and the Caribbean than between me and my children. My children are British, they were born here, and I was born here so we were brought up with different traditions so these are the things that have changed. Laws that have been brought in that have tied the hands of parents to bring their children up the way that they believe are right. The teaching that our children are exposed to at schools; in traditional families the teachings that children are exposed to, we wouldn't be exposed to that. The rise in teenage pregnancy…you see the culture in society, the exposure to TV, to western ideology all these kind of things have affected the thinking. And as a result people don't buy into or don't hold onto or don't seek to understand the old ways…. and that is why we have these children who are not brought up with the respect and manners that were drilled into us as children. Because we over love our children, we don't want our children to suffer, anything they want we have to run and get it straight away. They are not taught to wait like we were, they are not taught to understand that no means no! If you say no to a child they don't understand what no means and they continue to wear you down, you are not allowed to correct you children because you will be prosecuted so all these things have had an effect of changing the landscape.

The data indicates concern in relation to a number of changes within ACF life, however, these issues are not particular to the ACF life, but reflect general changes in family life for many groups in wider society. Yet, many of the issues expressed by Robert are rarely explored or taken into consideration when talking about the ACF. Further, tendency to focus attention on issues such as absent fathers' and lone motherhood have become a cornerstone in shaping to 'UGC'. In Martyn's narrative, we see how understanding the ACF cannot be divorced from factors such as legacy of slavery and colonialism, the impact of migration, challenges of being a minority, institutional racism, marginalisation and inner-city deprivation. There is also a sense whereby the ACF is perceived, irrespective of its structure, to lack the status that is afforded to other groups. Additionally, many of the issues faced by the ACF are viewed in relation to the ongoing challenges that families encounter between home life and wider society. As such, parenting often takes place in a climate of increased scrutiny by major state institutions, which is merely exacerbated by attempts to address issues such as 'UGC' whereby absent fathers and single motherhood are put forward as explanation for understanding why young people engage in this form of criminal activity.

9.2 Absent Fathers

> The Black Caribbean community has a higher level of absent
> fathers than any other group. It is no small irony that, in an age
> when we are told that women can do everything, the absence of
> fathers is having a deviating effect on teenage boys, turning them

to drugs and violence in unprecedented numbers (Sewell, 2010:comment page)

Sewell (2010) provides insight into a commonly held perception related to the relationship between absent fathers and 'UGC'. As stated in the introduction, the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' views the role of absent fathers as key to young men's involvement and 'UGC' and criminal activity more generally. Glynn (2012) in his study identifies how many of the young male 'gang' members spoke about the challenges they encountered growing up without a father and, how they directly linked a lack of a father to a range of problems they encountered. Consequently, he argues that the young people in his study's sense of marginalisation, a lack of social status, guidance, support and a lack of opportunity to develop a social bond were factors that contributed to their involvement with 'gangs' and 'UGC'. Glynn (2010) suggests that 'absent fathers' contributes to young men feeling angry, cheated and unable' to adequately navigate and deal with issues such as racism.

Analysis of the data shows a more nuanced view of 'absent fathers'. For Martyn, a father and a mother is paramount and he stresses the importance of 'strong families' which he interprets has one that includes a male presence as important:

I think that society has kind of made it acceptable and what we have done rather than instead of staying put staying strong and staying fixed. Don't get me wrong… a good friend of mine who

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has said I have a daughter, her mum and dad have split up and the daughter has two bedrooms, and the daughter told me that she has two Christmases, it is almost like there is a sense of confusion and the kids can see that it is of benefit for them. For me it is a personal thought really and a personal opinion that I feel there are too many broken families, in particular where the boys are, unless they have had some sort male influence from maybe mum's brother or positive guys in the neighbourhood they are likely to stray.

However, whilst he states that the socialisation of children is best undertaken in families where both mothers and fathers are present, he also suggests that what is important is that young men have positive male role models to guide them through the transition from child to adulthood.

Samuel is more sceptical of the simplistic way the issue of 'absent fathers' has been [mis] appropriated and used to inform policy. Samuel has worked in a range of roles within ACC. Lately, he has been involved in work surrounding 'UGC.' This has led him to raise questions about the current linking of 'absent fathers' to 'UGC' and broader social issues:

So these youngsters with guns in their hands, for example, it is because their fathers are not around and all you need to do is to give them Black male role models so they can say I want to be like him and it won't be a problem anymore.

Samuel draws attention to a need to challenge simplistic individualistic responses where often the starting premise is based on a specific understanding of ACF and leads to a limited and individualistic understanding in which the key to addressing specific issues, such as 'UGC' are often informed by assumptions in which the multi-dimensional factors that impact on the lives of young Black men being are reduced to a response in which only Black men can give meaning to the lives of other Black men (Roy, 2006).

Reynolds (1997:24) argues that the presentation of non-residential Black fathers in family literature has important implications for policy debates. She suggests that perceptions of the ACF are informed by a certain type of evidence. This evidence is overwhelmingly negative, in that, it shows an increasing number of Black households headed by a female with males absent. This has facilitated the domination of two characterisations. The first views Black men as existing on the periphery of family life, characterised as lazy, feckless, unreliable and sexually irresponsible. The second perceives Black women as the 'lynch pin' or the 'super woman'; educated workers who are parenting alone. Such images feed and support a dominant perception of a degeneration of male-female relations within ACC (Reynolds, 1997:97). It is this limited caricature that is used by policy makers to explain the propensity for young men from ACC involvement in 'UGC'. This suggests that, current policies are engaged in strategies in which a key solution to the problem of 'UGC' is located in efforts to 'fix' problems within ACF life.

Hutchinson (1996) suggests that what is often forgotten is that Black men and women are basically conservative in their outlook. He suggests that, certain values and ideals such as of hard work, thrift, religion and family values, business and self- help have shaped their views of the world. Echoes of this are evident in some of the negative portrayal of Black men and their role as fathers, but we also see a general perception that irrespective of the reasons for the absence of African Caribbean fathers from family life there has been a loss of 'male authority.' This is personified by the residual role occupied by men within both the public and private spheres and has an impact on their role as fathers, their intimate relationships.

> I do believe that Black men should be stepping up to the plate. I think that they should be more politically active across the board...where change has been is where Black men have stepped up to the plate, if you have more Black men stepping up it would be very difficult to shut them down.

Whilst Martyn holds quite a specific view about the role of men and of fathers within the family, a key theme in the data points to how the issue of absent fathers is multi-faceted and reflects a range of concerns about the position of Black men in both the private and public spheres. It also suggests a need to unpick what is understood by absent fathers. Vincent is a father of six children five girls and one boy and whilst he has had some involvement in their lives he does not live or has never lived with all his children. He describes his relationship:

I've got five girls, not all of them have grown with me as three of them grew up outside my house. But, here is the thing! I have a lot of say in their life. Yes they need the mother thing and to learn how to be a woman, but there are times that they do need a father in terms of backing the discipline of the mum. My daughter is 21 now. All her mum used to say is, 'since you are not hearing I am going to call your dad'. 'No oh I will do it then.' She is gone and she is doing what she has to do:

In Chapter Six, I highlight the relationship between gender and UGC in Vincent's narrative:

With the boys, it is even more because it is men, the father, who have got to teach them how to be a man. You the mother can say to each other, 'this is what you need to do you know,' because it is from your perspective how you want a man to treat you. But overall, a man needs to be there to say, 'Yo'! My dad did. He would say, 'if you get women pregnant whether you want to be with her or not make sure you look after the child. Straight! If you put a hand on anybody's girl-child I will chop it off myself'. Yes, it's those kinds of things he told me. How he was in terms of family, how he deals with family life. I've grown up doing the same thing. I have said the same things I have just said to you to my son 'don't let me ever hear about you putting your hand on anybody's girl child or I will pop them off myself'. A lot of how I am with my children is coming from how my father was with me and, if I didn't

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have that father influence I probably would be living on my own in a one bedroom flat and my children not really paying me any mind because I didn't grow them. Well it's true!

However, what is also revealed by Vincent is additional dimension to our understanding of 'absent fathers' within ACC in terms of absence not necessarily equating with none involvement. However, he reproduces dominant notions found in discourses around 'absent fathers' in ACC in relation to what is put forward as the role men play within the home in terms of being role models who teach young Black men how to become men. Vincent shared how for him it was important that his children had both male and female input into their lives. Glynn (2012) similarly notes how young fathers who were physically absent in the lives of their children still spoke about their sense of responsibility and felt it was important to be involved. Susan also alludes to the need to question simplistic definitions of absent fathers:

I struggle with this because you have White middle-class families where the fathers are absent, but not in the way that they are perceived as absent in the African Caribbean community. So you have fathers the nature of their business takes them away from the family. Well how is that different to an African Caribbean family with an absent father? And I think that Government and commentators need to make that distinction and be clear when they talk about absent fathers because middle class families would argue that fathers are away contributing to the well-being of the family but their physical presence is missing. Similarly in an

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African Caribbean setting, use them as the example, the father is not often seen as making the same contribution as they do in a middle class family but they're absent nonetheless.

In so saying, the data also indicates the acceptance of notions of the need for men to be actively involved. Whilst implicit in Vincent's narrative is a notion of something lacking in households headed by lone mothers and as such this signalled a need for a male presence in some capacity, Ronald was more explicit, stating that he felt it was imperative for Black young men to have a Black male role model:

The role of fathers and the relationship to absent fathers and 'UGC' in many respects as become commonly accepted.

For Ronald, his experience of working in his local community with young Black males, growing up in lone parent household and having spent time incarcerated all influenced is view:

I grew up in a single household and yes I missed having a father around, and yes that informed a lot and driven a lot of why I went on the road to a degree with that rage and that anger. Where some were walking with their dad's to school and parents evening and all that, for me, my mother is my mother, father and friend and seeing her work two, three jobs...nah so when I became a father

saying, 'I will never let that happen' and, it happened then you have to look at yourself and say, yes! That was my deal in life but I don't want to deal with the same deal and it takes a lot of strength and energy

In so saying, whilst Ronald identified an important role for men, he also recognised that there was still the capacity for young Black men living in lone parent households to succeed:

....So we then have to take it or change.......my view is you either have to take it and beat people over the head and say it is you, you and you with it or change. You need to say, I understand that it is there and I understand that it has an impact but you can't make this dictate your future.

Angela who gave birth to her son aged 18 had no choice but to parent alone as the father of her son did not want any involvement. She also argued for male input:

I am not saying that boys can't be reared to be balanced without a male presence but I don't know what it means to be a man. The testosterone in the man dem different from the oestrogen in the women and that is a biological fact. I don't care what we seh there

are certain things that we can't change and that is just how God intended it and it's very important.

However, for Angela the issue was not primarily about having a father in the home, but about having the opportunity for her children to be able to have a male input from friends or her extended family:

But the concept of the village helps to balance things out. I have only got one child, I've got a son and I had him when I was 18; his father wasn't present didn't want to be. You know? But he grew up with my parents and my brothers and my dad.

She draws attention to the importance of support received from the extended family reflecting research carried out by Roy (2006). As time went on and her son got older, his father made contact and wanted to establish a relationship with him. But:

…when his father tried to have a relationship he wasn't interested, 'me don't need him now! He might have been the one but my daddy is my grandfather and my uncle dem'.

Angela drew attention to how her son, who is now a father, is determined to be fully involved in his daughter's life:

But for me, what was important when he had a child was that that history was not repeated and fortunately it wasn't he had a daughter and he played a very very and I'm not saying it because he was my son I have always said he was an excellent father. …he had to play his role because me tell him; anyway you go weekend. Sunday night time back in here cause she av fi go school Monday morning and mi nah wash or iron no picanini clothes. You have to be in here, wash her clothes and that was about him understanding the consequence of getting a child...so any way him go come back and Sunday evening time picanini clothes wash and iron because this is what you have to do because this is the responsibility of having a child.

hooks (2000) asserts that the acceptance of ideas held in the dominant discourse around absent fathers and male violence needs to be challenged as this link is not born out in research, Moreover, she maintains that 'some of the most loving and powerful men in our society were raised by single mothers' (hooks, 2000: 13). For her there is a need to resist and challenge assumptions that women raising children alone, especially sons, will fail to teach a male child how to become a man. hooks (2000) asserts that simply viewing single female household as matriarchal also misunderstands, the reality of the situation as this fails to capture the sense of guilt some women hold about their single mother status and how this in turn may precipitate women becoming 'hypervigilent about imparting sexist values to their children and, particularly to their male children' (hooks, 2000:14). She raises questions as to why we need to critically

engage with the concept of absent fathers and challenge what she deemed to be a very conservative conceptualisation. Further, it is possible to view this conceptualisation as reproducing non critical and specific conceptualisations of what it means to be male and masculine.

Alison draws attention to how masculinity has been part of a wider discourse that reaffirms negative stereotypes which constructs a negative representation of Black men, which is to their detriment:

> …this emasculation has done terrible harm to black men and whether or not they want to embrace that as a fact an historical fact, it is in our best interest for them to embrace that reality and when they embrace that reality, it seems to me, and look at the detrimental effect that those experiences that we have that have come down through the years have affected us so destructively and detrimentally and when we face that and, repeat myself, then we can begin to find the process of healing that we so desperately need. Beating each other up is not the way forward.

Reynolds (2009) argues that 'race,' class and ideas around masculinity and cultural practice are all factors to be taken into consideration when considering absent fatherhood, it is important not to accept simplistic understandings of absent fathers informed by stereotypical ideas such as Black men being feckless, over sexed, irresponsible not caring about their children's health and well-being. She suggests we need a more nuanced understanding to capture

Black father's involvement. How men engage in fatherhood is varied and this reflects their individual circumstances and the constraints they encounter. To this end, fatherhood is contingent on factors such as, confidence about being a father, financial constraints, time and geographical distance. Moreover, Reynolds (2009) suggests that we cannot ignore how access to children is implicated in how we understand absent fathers as contact with their children which is dependent on the relationship between the father and their child/ren mother. Chevannes (1999) argues that what is also missing from explanations is consideration of the challenges Black men encounter when trying to cultivate a masculine identity in a context of inner-city deprivation and failing social infrastructure which contribute to the subordination of Black men. Moreover, Gilroy, (1992) suggests that the social and economic crises facing Black communities is primarily understood through a masculine lens and this is evident if we consider aspects of discourses around female headed households

9.3 Lone motherhood

Similarly to absent fathers, lone motherhood is often presented as a factor in dominant discourses associated with 'UGC.' The problem of lone motherhood is understood in relation to the disproportionate number of female-headed households. The suggestion is that the absence of a father causes intense problems for the male child (hooks, 1994; Wallace, 1990; Reynolds, 1997), alongside positioning Black female parenting skills as ineffective (Reynolds, 1997). Further, this is within a context in which there has been a continual failure to focus attention on better understanding of the lives of Black girls/women which serves to illuminate how a perceived crisis unfolding within

Black communities is relatedly understood (Gilroy, 1992). Popular is the representation of the strong matriarchal Black woman which also informs the conceptualisation of motherhood and lone motherhood (Hill Collins, 1990; Reynolds, 1997; Weekes, 2003). Hence for Weekes (2003), descriptions associated with Black motherhood are informed by a stereotypical image that portrays:

> Black women as both physically and mentally strong superwomen;
> or matriarchs, locating black femaleness within a historical
> discourse of slavery. However, the image of black women as
> strong can become blurred within more aggressive overtones
> (Weekes, 2003:5)

Hill Collins (1990) asserts that the representation of Black women as controlling, aggressive and matriarchal has served as a means of normalising racism and sexism and ultimately fixes female identities within discourses of biology. These notions are reflected in participants' accounts. They spoke about the negative representation of Black womanhood and motherhood and they distanced themselves from other Black mothers who they felt were not living up to their responsibilities as mothers.

Alison, a mother of two teenage boys describes the representation of Black women:

Black women have always been beaten up by history; we are ugly, we have big bottoms, we have to justify our lips, we have to justify why we have lovely beautiful bottoms. So the all history is beaten up, if it is not Black men who have been over sexed and Black women being over sexed, all of this has been stereotypes that we have had to live with and it has damaged us.

Alison also argues that this negative view of Blackness has been internalised by Black women and reflected in them wanting to change aspects of their appearance:

One of my pet hates, sorry I mustn't offend you, the long hair down the back and so the self-hate has gone so deep and, I see them on the bus and the nails, just looks like they don't know how to peel potatoes, they certainly don't know how to make fry dumplings; it has got stars on it, every nail finger has a different colour the hair looks like it is totally in place and we have gone from my mother's generation who neglected themselves terribly because they worked so damned hard to bring up their children, some of them their husband, some of them their husbands were missing, some of them like in my case me their father had died…

For some, the dominant conceptualisation of Black motherhood and Black family life was a contemporary development, something that was very different from the family life respondents remembered:

I think that is what has evolved from perhaps our generation having our parents there.   As much as my parents or my generation of parents did their best for their kids I think the values have broken down somewhere in terms of the children and being able, in terms of my generation, being able to pass that on. The values have gone. It's a shame to actually say it! It's sad. Really really sad! But it really is a minority when you have a family mum, dad, and children. With my son, not a lot of his friends have mum and dad at home...(Rachel)

Rachel provides an idealistic idea of a family and reflects the nostalgia found in some participants' narratives around community. However, she also alludes to the material reality that characterises the lives of some mothers and how this continues to shape their experiences of mothering. She recognises that not all Black mothers are passive recipients of their material reality and employ strategies to proactively address their anxieties of the perceived threat the inner city poses to their children:

I see some very bad examples of motherhood but I also see some terrific ones who have worked extremely hard and try very hard to give the best to their children. One of the sad things here is that I have met quite a few Black mothers who are moving out of the inner cities cause they are so terrified of their young boys and young daughters becoming sucked into parts of the groups that we live amongst in the wrong way. So, they're still having to cope with the same decisions that my

generation coped with, what do we do with our children?

However, social differences between Black women contribute a further dimension to their lived reality. For example, occupation, income, choices made about where to live, the school that children attend and capacity to access out of school support and leisure activities are not uniform amongst Black mothers. Access or lack of access to resources is a factor which determines the opportunity Black mothers have to exit the perceived turmoil of the inner city for a life in the suburbs.

Rachel and Ronald draw our attention to a range of challenges of single motherhood. Rachel highlights how, for some, mothering is part of the multiple roles they occupy within the family**:**

> I think it is the circumstances rather than I think of motherhood because the circumstances are having to go to work, come home cook, clean whatever and not just be mother, but be father, be the educator, be everything and it's hard, so it's bound to break down in some way ...

Ronald points out the challenges that these women may encounter as single mothers:

...let's put it this way; you have some parents whether they are together or not that are aware of what their child is doing and condone it, you have those that are aware and powerless to stop it because they are grown individuals, you have mums that are frightened of their sons and children and feel by saying anything they are in trouble and then you have those that will stand up and say no we are not tolerating this and I will ship you in!

And yet women are perceived as part and parcel of the very problem they seek to address:

Yes breakdown because I am not knocking mothers, but from my experience with friends the discipline is there but sometimes it takes a whole family to discipline and I think if dad is not there then you are not going to get the full effect of it. (Ronald)

This positions the role of women in a subsidiary position in relation to men. This is implicated both in how the problem is constructed on an overwhelming focus on the male experience and viewing 'UGC' as primarily a male problem and more importantly, once again ignoring how girls and young women are also implicated in 'UGC': (Brown, 2013). Ronald shared his concern about the focus of attention moving to young Black women:

> …now a growing emergence of girl gangs because they have to stand up and protect themselves in a man's world. ...there is a danger of reinforcing the stigma, they say that they want to understand it but the people who are researching it are only reinforcing the stigma... if this ends up in the same default then young Black girls will be demonised in the way that young black boys are...(Ronald)

Much of the way that 'UGC' is conceptualised through drawing on the idea of absent fathers, obscures other issues such as the role of girls/ young women, intimate and familial relationships, economic challenges, role of domestic violence, challenges associated with lone motherhood and the disadvantages experienced from institutional racism.

Hope is a lone mother whose son is currently in prison. She spoke about the tensions she experienced bringing up her children. She identifies some of the challenges lone mothers may face, from dealing with a relationship breakdown, trying to support the educational achievement of children and looking after their social and economic wellbeing. Hope feels she needs to shoulder some of the responsibility of the challenges her son has encountered, but she also draws attention to external pressures as contributing factors:

> Yes some single Black women do struggle. They struggle because they haven't dealt with the issue of splitting up …. With [son], his lack of education was also a factor with the disruption

between me and his dad. I never really sat him down and spoke to him …So yes, I have to take some of the blame. Maybe I should have helped with his education ….He wanted to work…He wanted to learn but he had to start from the beginning. He had to read those little books and the system failed him. I think because of the values he was brought up with that saved him.

Hope also spoke about how as a mother there is an increasing stigma associated with having a child involved in crime indicating that you have failed as a mother. The outcome is that often women are left unsupported and struggling to deal with multiple issues:

My heart hurts to see the children he was brought up with who are doing long sentences in prison. …you may find out in 6 months who is struggling …when you have boys you cannot carry that hate for the fathers. These kids don't get the support because the mother is caught up with other things.

Hope explains that, once her son was in difficulties with the CJS she tried to do her best to support him, but she suggests that this support is not always provided by other mothers:

I was always there but I never seen some of the other mothers. They don't go…. [Referring to courts/ prison]. I believe that a lot of mothers

have not moved on from the turmoil and pressures they were under that they haven't moved on and as soon as their child gets in trouble they don't support him.

Further work needs to be carried out to better understand the experiences of Black women who have a child/ren who is/are victims or involved in 'UGC'. The analysis of the data shows that whilst lone motherhood presents women with a number of challenges due to the multiple roles that they are forced to perform, this is not necessarily an indication that they fail or are unwilling to provide their children with support. Alison, details the ramifications of sending her son to a 'good school:'

..it is very easy to beat oneself up x number of years down the road, but when I look at my son now and see the damage that it did to him by taking him to a White school; it was misguided on my part anyway and it will probably take a long time for me to forgive myself for that …

My son says that he has not got any friends around here [laugh] so even when you think you are doing right thing …!

Whilst Susan expressed her concerns and confusion about what is appropriate and inappropriate ways of disciplining children:

If children have rights parents have rights too and if parents are devoid of the opportunity to appropriately discipline their children there are going to be problems and the statutory agencies take them under their wings...so you see what you see…

The data shows the multiple challenges of lone motherhood for Black women and even when they perceive they are doing the 'right' thing to ensure their son's successful transition to adulthood this may still not be enough to avoid their sons getting caught up with the CJS:

You try to protect them from all sorts and you can do the right thing and they can still get caught up in stuff and that is why I cannot buy into the it's necessarily solely about single Black women bringing up their children on their own, boys becoming men. …Oh god this is depressing! (Angela)

Further the emotional impact and the anxiety of being mothers in a climate where 'gangs and 'UGC' is overwhelmingly positioned as a problem is significant. Feeling powerless was something women shared with me and an example of this is an exchange I had with a mother at a community event in which she explained how she dealt with the situation by preparing herself for the call telling her that her son was dead, hospitalised or imprisoned. Bailey et al (2013) identify the lack of attention to the emotional consequences for losing or having a son injured due to 'UGC.' The outcome is that many mothers are often traumatised, in a state of trepidation and unable to find meaning. Bereaved

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families are also impacted by the treatment they receive as a result of their social locations as raced bodies (Lawson, 2012). Moreover, Lawson (2012) argues that police scrutiny of co-victims and the media representation of victims as known to the police are two ways in which grief experienced by these families becomes invalidated. My research indicates that such anxiety extends more broadly.

This fatalistic outlook was not an indicator that women were not involved in their son's lives and choices but were a means of equipping themselves for the potential of receiving bad news. Mothers also spoke about the difficulty in attending courts or visiting their sons in prison. This was not a marker of a lack of care but their way of dealing with a situation which they were powerless to deal with in any other way:

> I've sat in courts. I have been harassed by the police. They have even pointed a gun at my head. They started to come to my house with guns. I reached a point where I nearly had a nervous breakdown. I would be sitting up all night. They came one night, can we come in? As soon as [Son] came down stairs they arrested him. Within 6 or 7 years all the drama started with the police.

Glynn (2013) identifies how young men speak positively about the important role their mothers play in their lives and also acknowledge that mothers can also play an important role in their desistance from engaging in crime. Samuel

identifies the difficulties lone mothers experience and suggests a need for male role models:

> You see the contradiction or not or it is to do with another explanation, you know, because there is one argument that is saying here is that a mother is a mother and not a mother and a dad. So the mother cannot give a male, masculine identity formation and role modelling so we have to unpack it in that way.

Yet as a community worker in local prisons he is also conscious of the important role that mothers play in the lives of young men:

> So for me, we need to understand those guys who are saying 'she is my mum'. The one I met today we had to have some serious disclosure said tell my mum, talk to my mum. We went to see his mum and she was very supportive but because some of the mums have so much heartache with some of their sons sometimes they collude just to have peace sometimes and, some sons have bullied their mums.

The data reveals tensions between the discourse of absent fathers and the reality of the lives of lone mothers, between men and women and this is played out both in how 'UGC' is understood by participants and also in the responses underway in local communities (this is discussed further in Chapter Ten).

I just get really angry when Black men begin to beat Black women up as if we're not beaten up enough by society and, when they start to do it we're in trouble. So I think, it seems to me if we are going to move away from this impasse this sort of...we're in the trenches aren't we and the other one if over that side and we're over here and we're cursing each other like hell. It seems to me if we are going to get beyond that I think we are going to have to sit down and talk because I don't think it is helpful for black men or Black women to beat each other up that is exactly what White people want us to do! (Alison)

Participants do not have romanticised ideas about Black motherhood. What it does suggest is a need to accept that poor parenting is not solely something that impacts on the Black community:

I made my mind up and I started thinking about this long before I came here that there are some people who should not be allowed to have children partly because our society has become amoral or immoral and that just affects everybody. And I see kids behaving badly Black and White. Why? It could be that the father is not at home but that is not only reason because my father died but my mother kept it together. I think it is too easy and too simple to make Black women feel bad that their kid has gone off the rail (Alison).

Alison was keen to deconstruct the conceptualisation of absent fathers and lone parent as drawn upon within the dominant discourses informing understanding of 'UGC:'

> Until both groups, Black men and Black women, embrace the reality of our history, we have a shared history, we both experienced the oppression, we've both been victims of oppression and that has manifested itself in destructive ways that has affected both of us..... There is no getting away from it.

Participants' narratives illuminate that mothers often play significant roles in the lives of the young people involved in 'UGC' and show how this role is multifaceted. For Black mothers it is possible to view safeguarding as not only ensuring the health and well-being of their children but in terms of preventing them from coming into contact with state institutions such as the CJS. However, there are circumstances in which they may need to support young people through the CJS. As I detail in Chapter Eight, involvement in community activism offered Black women opportunity to be active involvement in working towards strategies they felt were required to safeguard Black children.

9.4 Summary and reflections

In this chapter I aimed to show that there exists a specific conceptualisation of the ACF with little account given to how the intersection of factors such as 'race' class, gender, religion and culture shapes individuals' experiences of family life. To this end, that lack of attention leads to a misunderstanding of the reality of family life (Goulbourne, 2003). As such, this poses substantial challenges and creates a plethora of tensions and contradictions within the policy machinery:

> But, to say that it is the family's fault... no! Because the family is not in control of the social policy that has impacted on the environment where that they are living and poverty, the family are not responsible for the lack of opportunity, work and understanding and cultural understanding, the family is not responsible for decisions being made up and down the country in council houses and in Whitehall where decisions and policies are being made without any real understanding of what is happening on the ground and that complexity. Where the family is responsible, maybe in regards to trying to survive... It is complex but how many of those around really understand… …because to reach me you need to understand and to understand me you have to take the time to get to know... (Ronald)

Ronald's anger and frustration as a community activist funded to work on the 'UGC' agenda is the disparity between the focus for action by policy makers and knowing that it falls short due to misunderstanding the reality of ACF life.

As discussed here and in Chapter Three, the establishment of ACC in the UK is part of a long history of settlement based on migration to the U.K. from the various Caribbean Islands to assist in the post second world war re-construction and to take up employment within transport, health and related industries. It is estimated that approximately a quarter of a million people arrived from the Caribbean to settle permanently in Britain between 1955 and 1962 (Fryer, 1984). The ability for many to migrate during this period rested on having familial support and familial support reflected the diversity of family formation found in the Caribbean. The transmission of cultural practices alongside the material reality that characterises the lives of some within the African Caribbean diaspora cannot be ignored. The data shows the personal and political dimension of ACF life. The story told by participants about their families, reflect the story of my family, I am the child of migrants. Seeking employment and what they considered a 'better' life for their seven children, my grandparents arrived in the UK in the 1950s. At the time of their migration, my maternal grandparents left seven children in the Caribbean in the care of various extended family members (not all blood related). For a number of years my mother and her siblings lived apart and due to financial constraints my grandparents were unable to return to the Caribbean for a number of years.   However, a portion of my grandparents' income was sent back to the Caribbean to support the care of their children.   All but my Aunty Ena, my grandmother's first born child eventually settled in the UK. Aunt Ena, as the eldest, stayed behind to care for her grandmother, with subsequent changes to UK immigration policies and marrying and starting a family, migrating to the UK was not an option for her. My mother was the first of my grandparent's children to migrate to the UK, the others arriving at intervals across the 1960s-1970s. As a young child, I can

remember the arrival of my uncle, the last of my mother's siblings to arrive. My recollection of my earlier family life is not unusual, merely one of many such stories that characterises a pattern of migration from the Caribbean during the post-war period that impacted on ACF life both here and at home (Goulbourne, 2003).

My father and mother never married and their relationship ended soon after my birth, but my father has always had some involvement with my care albeit with varying degrees of input across the years. As such, I am aware that there are inconsistencies in who performs the day-to-day responsibilities for maintaining family life (Goulbourne, 2003). Up until going to secondary school my sister and I spent the majority of our school holidays with my paternal grandparents. This was both an opportunity for me to spend time with my father and his family but also an economic necessity. So, for much of my early years, my care was carried out by my mother and wider family members; it was my maternal grandfather who I called 'daddy' and my aunty Adlin who was not a blood relation but someone who grew up in the same district in the Caribbean as my grandparents.

My experience of being part of an extended family including non-blood relatives was 'normal' and reflected the experiences of many of my peers. Goulbourne (2003) argues that the ACF is in part located in history but also a kaleidoscopic response from those from across the Caribbean to the new conditions to be found in British society. Being able to call upon a wider circle of people was essential. My mother was a nurse and worked long and sometimes unsociable hours so support from others in my family enabled her to earn a living and

support her children. I too have had to accept that support from my wider family with my own children has been an essential factor in my being able to work and return to education as a mature student while holding down a part-time job. As Chamberlain (2003) notes, this belies how explanations about the ACF rarely take into account the importance of both history and culture in shaping contemporary behaviour. She further notes that, this is irrespective of class. However, this is not to diminish how the pathology of ACF plays a significant role in masking a range of disadvantages stemming from broader social inequalities which are also implicated in how ACF experience families and family life. In this Chapter I have illuminated the various ways in which family is perceived within two ACC, drawing attention to tensions that arise due to failure to understand how ACF are an integral part of neoliberal governmentality (De Benedictis, 2012). Furthermore, that draws attention to the limitations that arise due to an ongoing failure to adopt an intersectional approach to capture the diversity that characterises ACF and family life.

Chapter 10: African Caribbean communities 'resistance' and 'activism'

10.0 Introduction

In this chapter I present my analysis of the data related to the strategies being undertaken to address 'urban gun crime' (UGC). In the preceding three chapters, I detailed the intersecting personal and political dimensions to be found in the data and the inseparability of these two domains. As such, participants' relationship to 'UGC' is shaped by personal experience and emotions and encompasses a means of self-definition and action. To this end, 'UGC' is indelibly viewed through the prism of 'race.' Here, I extend this analysis to the strategies identified in the two research localities in responding to 'UGC'.

The chapter is structured in four interrelated sections, 10.0 provides a framework for understanding the data presented, drawing attention to the context in which community work takes place and identifies the challenges to be found for those working in this arena. In 10.1 'Framing the relationship between community activism and ''UGC'' ' I examine the various strategies employed by community activists to address the issue of 'UGC'. 10.2 'Increased Mobilisation: A fight for change: a need for an alternative approach' explores the relationship between 'UGC' and community activism. 10.3, 10.4, 10.5 and 10.6 captures both the diversity and multidimensional nature of the strategies used with attention focussed on working with individuals, families, wider community and strategic bodies. In 10.7 details the challenges encountered in ACC responses to 'UGC' I identify the tensions and key challenges encountered for those working in this arena and in 10.8, I provide a summary of key issues.

10.1 Framing the relationship between community activism and 'urban gun crime'

> We do not have to be at the barricades to be revolutionaries; we do not have to be grassrootist to be radical. To apprehend the social consequences of what ourselves are doing and to set out to change it is in itself is a revolutionary act (Sivanandan, 2006, in Sivanandan, 2008: xiii)

> The police and other agencies need the support and powers to protect communities affected by gangs and to bring the violence under control. But gang and youth violence is not a problem that can be solved by enforcement alone. We need to change the life stories of young people who end up dead or wounded on our streets or are getting locked into a cycle of re-offending. Only by encouraging every agency to join up and share information, resources and accountability can these problems be solved (Home Office, 2011: 7).

These quotes frame the data presented in this chapter as they draw attention to particular distinctions in the goals of community activists and those working in statutory organisations to address 'UGC.' My aim is not to infer a simple binary where on the one hand there are community activists and the other statutory agencies as the data indicates how this fails to adequately account for the complexity found in the myriad of partnership working arrangements underway

in the two localities. The opening quotes allude to similarity and difference in the motivation, rationale and the goal between community activists and public bodies and this is implicated in data pertaining to the strategies and approaches used to tackle 'UGC'. Partnership working, whether performed within a community setting or with public bodies, rests on facilitating an interconnection and the interdependence between the various constituents involved.

The limited attention to 'race' within the policy machinery leads to denial of the significance of 'race,' the reality of racism and the process of racialisation to their African Caribbean partners. Alongside this, the restricted circumstances in which 'race' is employed homogenises African Caribbean communities (ACC) and tacit attention is afforded to difference. As such, work associated with 'UGC' reproduces the tensions found in strategies targeted at amelioration of a perceived problem within ACC (Anthias and Yuval Davies, 1992). The data reveals how the strategies addressing 'UGC' are multi-dimensional but also encompass multi-layered tensions. This tension is between individuals within ACC and between ACC and the power brokers residing in institutions such as Local Authorities and police (amongst others) with a remit to work on this agenda. This is due to community work and partnership working masking the role of power in these relationships.

Sivanandan (2006) extolls the importance of community action and the central role of community activism in bringing about changes in the lives of minority communities. Furthermore, he posits that there are social consequences to non-action. He also reminds us that as the goal of those involved in community activism is about making a difference in people's lives, community work is

challenging for those involved. As detailed in Chapter Eight, community work does not operate in a vacuum but is embedded in a complex matrix in which we see an intersection with factors such as 'race,' class, gender and other differentials between individuals and groups. Furthermore, community action in relation to issues such as 'UGC' cannot be fully understood without locating community action within wider political and policy goals (Reynolds, 2003; Iafrati, 2012). As detailed in the Introduction to this thesis the statutory response to 'UGC' is framed within a dominant conceptualisation and as such driven by a specific understanding of the problem (HMO, 2011). This dominant conceptualisation has legitimated a requirement to target specific groups with certain types of initiatives and activities leading to the introduction of a plethora of preventative work targeted at ACC and families (see Silvestri, 2009). Yet, as detailed in Chapters Eight and Nine the approach rests on a socially constructed representation of an ACC and families. These factors nourish specific approaches to working with ACC in which we see the normalising of power differentials between ACC and state institutions. Arguably, this is an example of the legacy of 'race' in terms of simply a way in which the old colonial and slave/master narratives continue to be reproduced in the way the media constructs the issue of 'UGC' and how the state engages with ACC. The outcome is that this contributes to fundamental tensions, in which partnership working is a misnomer and tension is visible in the work of those within the community and in their relationship with statutory agencies.

Since the post-war period there has been a role for community work within ACC (see Chapter Two). Reynolds (2003) highlights how the need for community work has not diminished during this time, but over the last 20 years there has

been a steady increase in the number of Black and minority ethnic communities welfare-based organisations, related to three key factors:

- Black people's increased collective mobilisation within their local communities to address locally-based concerns.

- Black people's continued community activism in response to their collective feelings of disengagement, disillusionment and disaffection with municipal statutory 'mainstream' (i.e. white) organisations in responding to their concerns.

- A perception of changes in the Black family wherein individuals no longer look to and depend upon extended family members to provide them with caring and welfare services and instead rely upon black welfare-based community organisations to fulfil this caring function (Reynolds, 2003:1).

Elements of all these factors were evident in the previous data chapter. Here I demonstrate how such factors coalesce and contribute to the tensions and challenges I uncovered in community based initiatives.

10.2 Increased Mobilisation: A fight for change: a need for an alternative approach

In Chapter Two, I argued that the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' was framed within a cultural deficit model in which 'race,' racialisation and racism are key features. This dominant conceptualisation conveys a specific image of young people in which young Black males are portrayed as spiralling out of control and instilling fear in a number of Britain's metropolitan cities (Wood, 2010). In Chapter Eight and Nine I argued that the situation is compounded by a deliberate ambivalence to 'race' normalised within a dominant discourse explicit linking ACC and AFCs to a range of negative outcomes and failing dismally in their duty of care in ensuring Black children's, specifically Black males, 'successful' transition to adulthood.   In Chapter Six, I argued that adopting an ethnographical approach provided me with a gateway to both observe and get involved in community based initiatives. I made clear that I was a part of the community in which the research was being carried out and that 'UGC' was not something out there to be objectively examined, but something personal and political (Mills, 1959, Letherby, 2003; 2013). This enabled me to spend time with a community group where I carried out a number of tasks and also facilitated access to a number of community spaces. During my fieldwork I attended, participated in and observed additional community based activity to the issue of 'urban gun crime.'   Here I detail my observation of two particular events held in Area 2.

The events were organised on the same day by two faith based organisations with an interest to develop community led partnerships to address 'UGC'. The

first event held on a Saturday morning, (10am-3pm) was a community symposium organised by a Christian organisation and led by two ordained ministers within the Black-led church who had established a community based organisation working primarily with young people at 'risk' or involved in 'UGC'. The event was aimed at bringing those identified as key stakeholders in the local community together. Whilst the event was advertised as addressing 'UGC,' speakers were invited to the event to share their knowledge around education, the CJS, business and health. The event was not aimed solely at members of the Black community as invitations were also issued to representatives within statutory organisation such as the Police, Local Authority and Education.

The same evening I was invited to a meeting organised by a Muslim led group. The approach used by this group was to issue invitations to a small group of individuals they perceived to be leaders within the Black community. This meeting was scheduled between 5pm-7pm and was followed by another meeting which was open to the wider community. Both events were by invitation, targeting members of ACC who were managing initiatives or were identified as key stakeholders or perceived as community leaders working in the area of 'UGC'.

In excess of 100 people attended these events my invitation follows:

Greetings

It was very inspiring to meet and converse with you at [names venue] recently.
As you know we are very concerned about the way our community groups work together.

Therefore in a bid to help the process of forging ever closer links for the benefit of the wider community, we are holding an event titled ███████████ ███████**

As a centre of influence and a community leader I would be delighted if you would attend.

Press release and flyer attached

There will be two parts to the event.

1.) A closed meeting with [name person] -
For community group leaders further cementing our common goals and continued communication.

2.) A public meeting to inform the wider community of our intentions and encourage them   to join in the process in whatever way they can.

I have added your name as one of the community leaders we would like to attend the closed door meeting with [names person]

Please let me know your thoughts and availability to attend I can be reached by email or on [contact number.

Regards

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the ███████████████ Alliance will be hosting that Symposium


And will address two issues of relevance to the African Caribbean
Community in [names city]


(a) 'The Criminal Justice System—its impact on the Black African

Caribbean Family Structure, values and mental health'.


(b) 'Economic Sustainability---the Black African Caribbean Community,
Employment and Entrepreneurship---Make or Break?'


We would like to invite two people responsible for stakeholder
representation from your organisation to ensure representation and
inclusion from across the community but also manage effectively our venue
and catering requirements.
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The invitations demonstrate a community led effort to; galvanise ACC to become involved in community based action, drive the community agenda and response to 'UGC,' build capacity of those working within the community sector and inform and support ACC. In this sense, 'UGC' elicits a range of responses in which people engaged in community action attempt to unite individuals. As the extract from my observational diary indicates this was often for reasons that went beyond concerns with 'UGC' to concerns associated with perceptions of injustice and inequality.

> Saturday, what a day! My day started by attending a meeting
> arranged to propose the creation of an African Caribbean Alliance.
> This alliance was considered important to facilitate unity and

greater working relationships between African Caribbean community groups and individuals working within the community. The event was well organised, informative and generated much thinking. It was attended by a range of people working in the community; there were also young people present. The event was presented as a Symposium and invitations were extended to Chief Executive of the local council, lead for gangs and gun related activities from the police, individuals from academia and business from the Black community. The idea was to hold a symposium where attendees could come along listen, learn and share their views, experiences etc. Getting all these groups in one room was demonstrative of community concern, but also observed also highlighted a number of the tensions within the community too and challenges in bringing people together.

The need for us to work together was key theme of all the speakers both from within and outside the community. A lot of angst was directed at the Local Authority rather than the police. Police appeared to have a good working relationship with community representatives attending. Many of the key themes discussed in the event reflected the key themes identified in semi-structured interviews – whilst gun crime was an issue raised the primary concern was with racism and the way the systems continues to fail Black people. The failure was accepted by all those present even if it was understood differently. I felt that there was something happening but difficult to decide if this is merely hopeful thinking or a reflection of an acceptance that things must change

My evening was spent at a meeting called by a Muslim led group. This was the first time I have attended an event organised and facilitated by a Muslim group. Once again, the principle concern resided around trying to support Black community/unity as a means of fighting inequality / unmasking racism in society as the speaker was concerned about how this was what damaged ACC and specifically impacted our young people. Can you imagine sitting around the table with representatives from; Church of England, Seven Day Adventist church, African Spirituality church, Local Counsellor and being part of such a meeting attended solely by Black people.

A point for my PhD is how these meetings are taking place simultaneously 'behind closed doors' but also in more open and racially mixed forums. A surreal experience – a call for unity/a holding out of the hand of friendship a recognition that power comes in unity – same messages of the morning albeit delivered by different actors within the community.

Both meetings were led by Black men in the community. Whilst there was a female speaker at the first event the event very much appeared to be concerned with how we as a community can support our young people, often our young males. At the second meeting there were a number of women sat around the table, these women represented a number of organisations, but once again the meeting was facilitated by men and specifically the major input was from men of faith.

In my notes I recount the effort to encourage ACC involvement in strategies around 'UGC.' However, I also note how approaches used to engage the wider community was dictated by community activists already engaged in this area of work. Consequently, there were circumstances in which meetings were open to all who had an interest in the issue of 'UGC but there were also meetings held in which only certain members of the community were invited. Hence, some meetings were closed and targeted at those perceived to be 'community leaders'; mostly men. I observed that women took key roles in organising events and in ensuring that the event ran smoothly on the day and, at one event, myself and other women in the group were asked to attend and provide support to the men leading the session. This support involved registration, showing people to their seats and other such roles. There was a clear gendered division of labour (Reynolds, 2003).

Whilst the events detailed above were aimed at those delivering community based services and/or currently working on the 'UGC' agenda, there were also events I attended in which there were no restrictions on attendance. There was an attempt to build a critical mass within ACC around this agenda and to get the word out as widely as possible to others in ACC. The community group in which I conducted my fieldwork used a range of approaches which included social media, community radio, flyers and word-of-mouth through churches. I attended both open and closed meetings and observed similarities in relation to the themes covered. The importance of ACC to get involved in work in their communities was identified as essential, with all people having a role to play in tackling inequality and disadvantage and in dealing with issues such as 'UGC'.

Meetings were often designated as a 'safe space' to facilitate discussion and debate and consider action.

In both research localities, the data illuminates community based initiatives being undertaken by a diverse group of individuals. For example, activities led or being carried out by individuals with no affiliation to a specific organisation, involvement stemming from an individual's professional role and them wanting to make a contribution to work in this area outside of a group. The meetings allowed for the identification of the skills, expertise and resources within ACC, it was commonly accepted that there were untapped social capital within ACC (Golbourne, 2003) and that this could be utilised on this agenda. An example is Rachel, who felt that the Probation Service could do more when working with young Black men. She spoke about how important it was to attend community meetings to learn from others and be in position in which she was able to better support young people from an ACC who she encountered in her role, but also be able to share her expertise in the community. She acknowledged the tension this brings:

> ...I want to do as much as I can do without incriminating myself…
> I think it is really important to work where I work but I am a Black person as well and I can see there is a breakdown in the community so I can try and do what I can do. I am a mother of a boy as well…

As previously stated, I attended a number of events organised by individuals from or working with a faith based framework. The role of faith influenced decisions some made to become involved with work in the area of 'UGC.' Whilst the framework might have been overwhelming dominated by individuals who were part of Black- led Churches, the involvement of people of faith was not mutually inclusive of this tradition. Samuel's view was typical:

> ...the experience that I had on the streets, for the period of time…, and the experience in the church …are two entities that needed to engage, marry, to have a wedding, so to speak, and to start producing something that's different.

There were also tensions between those whose faith was instrumental in getting involved in community work and those who faith was less visible:

> I think the faith thing, well the Church, the Black Church, let's be specific, certainly in this context I think it was about the saving souls thing… certainly near the end of my time the way that people positioned themselves around the meeting table you could draw a line and to the right you would have your church type and to the left you would have those who were not active members. That's not to say that they did not share a faith but you had active church types and those on the secular side. Everybody has a role to play but it is how those roles are negotiated, which I don't think they were. …You had mission creep as well because at the outset you

had a couple of practicing church people and as the time went on

that dimension of the group grew while the more secular side

diminished (Martyn)

A limitation of my research is an inability to unpick further the specific

contribution a faith-based response makes to addressing the issue of 'UGC'; to

better understand the role of religion, faith and spirituality. Further work is

needed to capture this dynamic more fully.   Nonetheless, I observed the

involvement of individuals and community groups from the Black-led Church

and their contribution to a community response is encompassed within ACC

response. 'UGC' is an area leading to the introduction of initiatives being carried

out by faith based organisations and this is reflected in findings from a

consultation carried out with 3,000 church members and leaders across the UK.

Findings identified that an overwhelming majority (89%) were convinced that

gun and violent crime was an issue the church must address. Further, almost

half of the survey respondents reported they would welcome an invitation to be

part of a Christian response to violent crime, the figure rose to 70% for those

living in high crime areas. The survey reported that churches were not looking

primarily for new laws, but want to contribute their own distinctive strengths –

pastoring and mentoring young people, supporting family life and parents,

utilising creative prayer, and building closer partnerships with the police and the

community – a response they believed would lead to a reduction in violent crime

(MetBPA and Premier Christian Radio, 2006).

A further division appeared to be between those who had past experience of

being involved in community activism. It stands to reason that individuals with a

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history of community activism were actively involved. Additionally, and arguably, the increasing attention to the issue of 'UGC' provided an impetus for further engagement in community activity and the development of interventions in this area. Angela, a mother and grandmother, said:

I have always been involved in community activities since the 60s and the Black era and a lot of the influences came over from America in the 60s but also because I think because I have quite a profound sense of justice, I don't like injustice and I feel where it exists whatever I can do as an individual I have do it. But I am very much an activist, I am a doer I'm not a theorist. So I have always been involved in things in the community and when things are happening people will find me. Basically my passion is my community.

For participants such as Angela, 'UGC' represented a new focus of attention. For Angela, 'UGC' was a contemporary manifestation of wider problems encountered by ACC. Community work in relation to 'UGC' also provided a space for individuals with no previous experience to become involved in community activism which led to new organisations and new actors getting involved. In areas 1 and 2, I met and spoke to people who had no past experience of community activism but in response to concerns about young people got involved in community work. This was often precipitated by a personal experience in which they were confronted by 'UGC' on their doorstep and wanted to use this to make a difference; to do something, to take some form of action which may potentially lead to change. These community activists

were often young men who reported having had personal experiences of 'gangs' or the criminal justice system. As discussed in Chapter Six, they often felt they had the 'authenticity' due to their personal experience to support other young people.

A common theme was the need to be part of an alternative response to addressing the issue of 'UGC'. This was an opportunity for self-definition, community driven, community led activity to address the lived reality of ACC (as detailed in Chapter Eight). There were feelings that there was a need to build a critical mass around the agenda and widen it to include a range of factors. Samuel said:

> Let's look at all those key movers and shakers like Martin Luther King, like Malcolm X, like Bukka T Washington, like Steve Biko, like Alan Boursack, like Mother Theresa, like Rosa Park, there is something about their tenacity and their ability to connect what is really happening with a framing around a strategy. When Rosa Park decided when they said, 'nigger get off the bus, get off the seat 'she said that day, 'NO'! That No is a defining marker and they comes a point in your life when you have to put a marker down and then get the political, spiritual machinery behind the marker that you put down to support the move into the new agenda.

Community activist strategies to 'UGC' positioned within a web of issues that were symptomatic of what were perceived disadvantages for ACC. For this

reason, it was these wider issues that informed and directed the community activists approach:

> I want some equity! I am not one of these people that talk about ... I don't want special treatment from anybody, but what I want is some equity and some justice. I often say when we talk about crime, a criminal is a criminal, there may be some extenuating circumstances but I want to feel safe as a member of the wider community so I am not one of these people, I don't want special favours from anybody, I don't want to be patronised, I just want a level playing field and some equity. That is what I am interested in... (Alison)

Individuals engaged with the issue of 'UGC' attempted to address all areas of African Caribbean life. Community activism was considered a means of tackling wider structural problems, such as institutional racism, social disadvantage and poor educational experiences and outcomes and lack of labour market opportunities. Participants were concerned about the social, economic and political position of ACC and aimed to address a broad range of factors perceived as essential in the fight to address 'UGC'. The focus on 'UGC' also provided an opportunity for a response that was inward facing through dialogue between individuals and individual groups related to things that the community itself deemed necessary. Consequently, the data demonstrates a range of involvement of individuals in a diverse range of community led activities (see Appendix 4:377). The diagram below informed by interview and observational data represents a way of capturing the diverse activity underway in both Area 1

and 2. It shows how community based activities and initiatives were multi-dimensional in terms of range and scope of the activities used. Activities involved measures targeted at individuals, families and community wide strategies. However, they also included strategies targeted at statutory organisations, national and local policies.
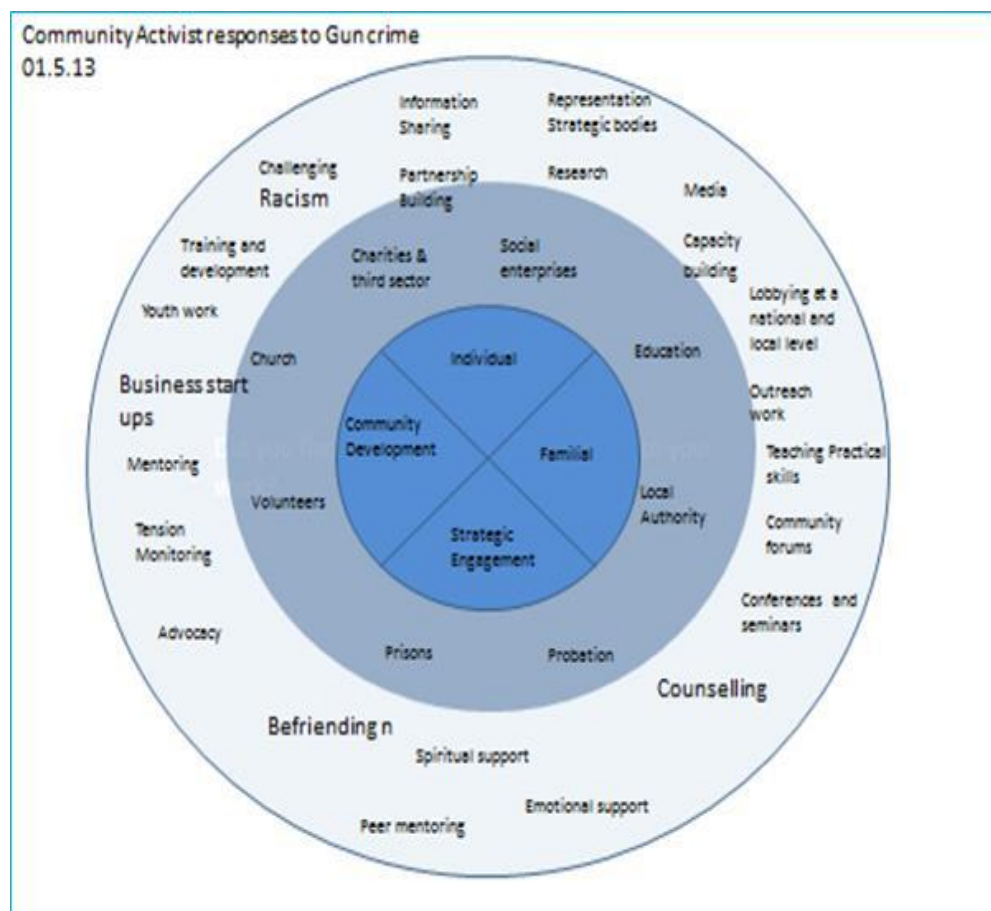
The diagram represents an attempt to organise the various types of responses observed or identified during fieldwork, in so doing it also demonstrates the various ways in which individuals can become involved in community activities associated with 'UGC'. It shows the diverse approaches implored by the community in an attempt to address and reflect the various ways that the issue

of 'UGC' is conceptualised by community activists. As such, it provides a visual representation of the multi-layered approach developed to address the issue by research participants. As Martyn explains:

> ...it would not be good for all of us to be operating from the same place. Life is diverse you have got to tackle it the diverse way. The issues are diverse, multifaceted so we need people at every level and that is why I determinedly continue to engage.

The data shows that the responses utilised by community activists reflects a perception and understanding of 'UGC' that locates the individual and a response to 'UGC' within a web of activity as a means of ensuring that action is undertaken to address not only individual need, but to support familial relationships, community development and address institutional and structural barriers.

10.3 Individual Support

Individual support focused on both prevention and support to individuals, whilst the statutory response is often focussed on work with individuals identified as 'at risk' or who are involved in 'gangs' and gun related crimes. Community activists attempted to undertake work with young people irrespective of their involvement or suspected risk. The support ranged from mentoring young people in schools, offering community based youth groups in which young people could engage in

the arts (music, dance, drama), educational support with curriculum subjects, alongside supporting young people involved with and wanting to exit gangs. The aim was to work holistically with individuals using an approach that was about centring their needs. This was carried out through a range of mediums.

Paul provides an example of the range of ways that supporting the individual may manifest. He is often asked by Black parents to advocate for them and support them in addressing issues their children may encounter around their schooling:

> On an individual level I have given my time to go and meet with parents and sit down with parents to talk to them about where they can go, what they can do; help them to work out a strategy to get to a particular solution of whatever the particular problem is.

Paul also highlights how providing individual support is important given the lack of statutory support available:

> One of the men that was involved in the focus group that I mentioned came to me some time later… bumped in to him in the street and he is 19 years old. He and his childhood sweetheart they had been together since the age of 13 or 14. They have got a young child now and were still together. He still lived in the area where he grew up in the gang. He wants to leave that life behind him but was finding it difficult because the moment he sets foot in the street there are these people that he has always moved with.

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About a year before he had been shot. He was shot in the face.
The bullet entered his cheek and exited through his mouth. That is
how close he had come to death…. And he has this reoccurring
nightmare that someone was going to come to shoot him and
shoot his child. He just wants to leave it. He just wants out.   I
raised that with the police. It was interesting because he has not
got a criminal record because he had not been caught doing
anything. There was no help available from anywhere. There was
no help available from police. No help from probation and so on.
The only advice he was given eventually was, if he and his partner
was to move to another city, tell them she was fleeing domestic
violence and they would be obliged to find alternative
accommodation. They wouldn't be very good initially but eventually
they would get a flat and he could move in. That was the advice
he got from CAB [Citizen Advice Bureau] the only option for that
young family. He said he was not prepared to do that and what he
wanted to do was to go out and make a raise, to make enough
money to start afresh. To him making a raise meant selling drugs,
more than likely transporting huge amounts of drugs, potentially
involving firearms. Eventually, eventually we managed with the
help of a senior police officer in [area] and social services, more
through Children and Young People Services in terms of protecting
the child; we managed to secure them a move. Had there not been
a child involved they're would be no help.

A common feeling was that even when support is available it is limited in its
capacity to address the multiple needs that a young person has. In supporting

the individual there is the need to try and do this holistically recognising the multiple factors that impact on young people:

> What I think Geraldine, is for me it's an holistic model, it means then that whether the body, the soul, the spirit that whatever component we deem to be impacting or driving a young man, a young women, a family into a lifestyle that is in contradiction to the law or their welfare and their wellbeing that can bring risk to themselves, their family and the community then we have something that can attach itself to that. Emotionally we can talk to them, psychologically, spiritually we can engage with them if someone so wishes. (Samuel)

It is important to note that as 'UGC' is synonymous with young Black males the needs of young women are often ignored or rendered invisible. Despite there being some development (which can see in a growing political concern about what is perceived as a growing 'gang' culture, 'gang' membership and 'gang' activity amongst girls/young women (Young, 2012 Firmin, 2011; HM, 2011; Batchelor, 2009) it is commonly accepted within the political and academic community that reliable research evidence is lacking and there is much that is unknown about the number, involvement and experiences of girls/ young women in relation to 'gangs' in the UK (Firmin, 2011; Pearce and Pitts, 2011; Centre for Social Justice, 2010; Young, 2012). The invisibility of young women is also evident in the data and points to another area where further work is needed.

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10.4 Familial Support

Family support was viewed as a response to recognition of the lack of statutory support for families experiencing a range of issues and seen as a means of supporting families who had limited knowledge and/or negative experiences of major institutions such as the police, education system, housing or health.   This may be an example of what Reynolds (2003) argues is a concern about the demise of the extended family or indeed concern about the fragmentation of the ACF as detailed in Chapter Nine. Support ranged from providing an empathetic ear, advocacy and spiritual support.   Rachel shared how setting up a support group for parents was precipitated by understanding the importance of support and the difference that this can make for both young people and their families:

> I am trying to save these kids from destruction. I don't want them
> to go through what [son] has gone through. I set up this group
> [mums/ parents support group] because when I met [name] he
> was supporting my son and gave him confidence.

However, she feels that parents have a role to play and this can only be done if they are able to share their experiences and concerns and are able to access information that enables them to better support their children:

> We meet once a month to discuss issues and do some healing
> through talking about our experiences.   We cannot heal our

children until we heal ourselves. So we share experiences and our next plan is to work with young people, it is at the early stages. We want to be able to say, 'we're parents'. We identify where some parents go wrong, looking at ways to send messages to parents through drama. We look at the issues young people are facing. We are just ordinary parents who need to work with parents in order to support the kids. I feel looking around a lot of parents there are things that they don't know how to approach. They don't know how to access services but we feel as parents from our experiences because we have all had these experiences we can be supportive. Through the group we can analyse things. You need to look for different ways of dealing with situations.

There are a number of contradictions in terms of the rhetoric around the family discussed in Chapter Nine; based on reaffirming specific ideas that are racialised and gendered and fail to take into consideration historical and cultural factors that shape people's experience of family life (Goulbourne, 2003). As such, the rhetoric underpinning initiatives and activities based on the family are often informed by a conceptualisation of the 'good' and the bad' parent (Ribbons Mc Carthy et al. 2013; Brown, et al. 2014). Nonetheless, this support was also in recognition of the perceived changes within ACF (see Chapter Nine) in terms of providing an approach based to kinship in which people were able to meet others who were experiencing difficulties within their family life.

10.5 Community Development

As Goulbourne (2003) notes, the tendency to perceive certain communities as unsuccessful does not equate with a lack of social capital within these communities. Within ACC community development demonstrates how collective values, networks and neighbourhood are used to foster economic and human capital (Goulbourne, 2003). Goulbourne (2003) posits that despite evidence that indicates a low level of utilisation of social capital within ACF and ACC, this evidence fails to adequately account for sharing of knowledge and skills within ACC and the additional dimension resulting from the growth of the Black middle class. The data shows community development encompassed attempts to galvanise ACC around the issue of 'UGC' and equipping ACC in developing and delivering initiatives to support and empower ACC to progress.

Angela describes how she saw an opportunity to ensure that embedded within her work was the opportunity to equip young people with skills, confidence and self-esteem:

> If we are saying that there are these issues how are we going to equip either those young people who are involved or the ones who are going to be involved. What kind of skills are we giving them? What kind of skills are we giving them? How are we getting them to think about the bigger picture? Because they are not always going to be young and they are not always going to be able to pop gun, but to try and begin. I know when you are young you don't always think about other things but we need to be begin to plant that seed. My thing is, if whatever work we do if it impacts on one

person that is a 100% success because if we get one young person to turn their life around and hopefully become a better father, a better uncle and a better citizen of the community then that is a success. …if we get one person to walk away from an event thinking, 'yes that person seh mek sense' then that would be a success and that is how I became involved.

For Angela, it is important to develop strategies aimed at preventing young people from getting involved in the first place. She believed that supporting young people in learning and developing transferable and marketable skills was essential. However, this was only part of the solution:

We are looking at issues around sexual health, rape, wellbeing anything that effects young people ...anything we can do to promote good emotional wellbeing as African Caribbean communities are disproportionately represented within the mental health system. ...I believe in giving people skills to make people feel good about themselves so one of the programmes we are doing is called 'Can't Cook, wont Cook' where we did some cooking sessions with some of the guys and that was really really interesting and inspiring because I thought they would have been resistant, but about 10 to 12 young men… a lot of the young men know how to eat but don't know how to cook. The enthusiasm and willingness to get involved and follow the instructions... it was phenomenal, it really was and we ran that for about four weeks with the guys... and it is certainly something

that we will be looking at...

Supporting young people and building their confidence and self-esteem was central to this type of work. Developmental work also included locating, analysing and disseminating information to ACC and this was done via various forums:

The group has moved to a place of informing the community in two ways; quarterly newsletters informing them about what is happening, what their rights are, making them aware of..., really empowering them with information bringing some positive news where some positive stuff are going on. If you look in the [local paper] very rarely do you see anything where Black people are promoted as doing positive stuff. We will do it our self! Where there are young people who have done some great things we will say they have done great things. Where there are new legislations being put out and our community don't know about it, we will put it out there and let them aware of it. We will hold conferences. Generally speaking, information is power and what the establishment does is release it or keep it back at will. They decide what they want out and they decide what they want to keep. What we will do, almost like an archaeologist, we will dig deep and find the information and then we will expose via conferences/seminar and via newsletters. We are at that stage of pulling that together.

During my fieldwork I attended a number of community events. Whilst the organisation, focus and effectiveness of these events varied, shared goals included wanting to share information and create a 'space' for those attending to engage in a dialogue, share knowledge and skills. This was perceived as an essential resource required to not only address concerns associated with 'UGC' but in progressing ACC. Goulbourne (2003) identifies challenges associated with social capital within Caribbean communities, but suggests that ACC are ideally placed to mobilise social capital. Community activists in my research undertook a range of activities (see earlier diagram). Alongside this, communicating with ACC was an essential component in which utilising mediums such as social media, community radio, newsletters, community newspapers, the church and word-of-mouth as a means of reaching out and sharing with others.

10.6 Strategic Engagement

In Chapter Three, I drew attention to the political revival of community in the latter half of the 20th century (Wilmot, 1989; Giddens, 1994; Madden, 2007). Strategic engagement by ACC can be understood as representative of this shift and attempts at addressing ACC representation nationally and locally. The strategic engagement observed during my research was often in areas that community activists felt it was important to ensure that the needs of ACC were represented and understood. Involvement with statutory bodies was a way of ensuring that voices of the community were included in the decisions being made, decisions which ultimately have an impact on ACC. Engagement was based on partnerships working with key stakeholders such as; the local

authority, police, education and health. The expectations being that strategic engagement would provide an opportunity to directly input into strategies, policies and practice developments. Whilst much of this operated at a local level, three participants in my research had been part of work taking place nationally. Strategic engagement was about change through influencing thinking and action of decision makers. For some participants, their daily role also presented an additional opportunity to influence local decision making, albeit this raised additional challenges and was often difficult to do (see below).

The need to form strategic partnerships was a key aspect of the strategy adopted by the group I observed. I observed a willingness to work with strategic leads as a means to try and influence both thinking and action:

> Positive things that came out of the group were; the powers that be, The Safer Partnership, the Police, and the Council etc. sat up and listened because the second meeting took place in the council chamber. And it was attended by the Chief Executive of the city council because he was invited, the senior of the two police commanders in Wolverhampton, the head of the Probation service, the guy responsible for Public Health from the PCT [names person]. It was clearly of interest to them because they had to spend money treating people and so on. They saw and heard for themselves, first hand, what the Steering group was articulating. (Martyn)

Whilst there was some scepticism expressed by certain members of the group, the invitation to meet directly with those working in strategic positions was welcomed. Generally, it was felt that the meetings offered an opportunity to gain some legitimacy, to show that the community wanted to engage and wanted to influence and be involved in work on this agenda. However, this was also a means of widening the discussion in terms of locating the issue of 'UGC' within broader contexts to address areas such as education, health and policing. The meeting provided an opportunity for face-to-face engagement with those with strategic responsibility. The idea was that the community groups would use the action plan as a mechanism to enable the group to provide a voice for the community and hold key stakeholders to account:

The concerns were concerns coming from ordinary people in the community, not people like myself who had been around making noise for a long time but ordinary parents and people in the community, parents and grandparents and so on who attended that meeting. That empowered the group and gave them some legitimacy to meet with the City Council and Safer Partnership. ...That was good because what it says to the community is that we come together and we express our concerns and, we make them stand up and take notice. For some people it didn't seem to be enough progress being made but at the same time, in my view, we had mad giant strides. We had come from a meeting of angry parents, we'd pulled together an organisation, given that we were all volunteers and no one was being paid, that was constituted, we'd got the public authorities the Safer Partnership listening and a kind

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of regular timetabled meeting of which the most senior people in the city would attend. It wasn't that they would send someone else in their place, they were there. It was chaired by the Chief Executive [city council]; it was attended by the two Police Commanders in the city and the head of Probation and CPS etc. etc. That was a massive achievement. There is no other group that had managed to achieve that and they were listening to us. It had got to the stage where they had agreed funding for a post at a reasonable level, about £40,000 a year and the post was initially for two years with an option as part of the role was to look at securing funding and we had drawn up an action plan (Paul).

Community activists were engaged in a range of activities although not all were effective, easy to deliver or led to the changes that those involved wanted to see nor did everyone hold the same vision reflecting the heterogeneity within ACC (as discussed in Chapter Eight). What was evident was that 'UGC' served as the means of bringing people together and this in itself was viewed positively by those involved and initially led to some feeling a sense of togetherness, created roles for individuals within the community settings, it encouraged people to work together and sent a message that there were some in the community with their interests at heart.

The ultimate aim was to ensure that people with statutory responsibility, the people with duty to deal with the underlying causes started to address that. As I said early on, these young

people didn't just decide one day to pick up a gun and go and shoot at their counterparts down the road… (Paul)

10.7 Challenges encountered in ACC Responses to UGC

The majority of community activists who participated in my research were part of a community based organisation and much of the data highlights challenges for those involved in work around 'UGC' working within community based organisation. Despite research that shows that community based organisations play a valuable role in terms of the contribution they make to the lives of their beneficiaries (Anthias and Yuval Davies, 1992; Reynolds, 2003; Craig, 2007; Andrews, 2013) inherent tensions are also characteristic for those running and/or working in this sector. Anthias and Yuval Davies (1992) argue that community groups are often staffed by volunteers who are unpaid. Further, for community groups to be successful requires a strong management team to support engagement with statutory bodies and ACC which has potential cost implications, particularly in times of economic uncertainty. There were variations in the level of involvement between those who were employed and those whose contribution was voluntary and unpaid. I observed how for some community activists trying to contribute to the community groups and manage other demands on their time such as work and family commitments made attending meetings and contributing to some of the group's core activities very difficult. For example, there were occasions in which the meetings of the community group were poorly attended or actions allocated to individuals in the group took considerable time to complete. This sometimes led to delays. Additionally,

insufficient resources also shaped much of the work carried out by participants in my study.

Reynolds (2003) draws attention to the impact on community groups of the challenging context in which they operate. The data reveals how factors such as having to compete for funding, meet funding and statutory obligations while attempting to prioritise the needs of ACC and work in ways appropriate to those needs placed additional pressure for those working in their local communities. Thus, relationships, the activities undertaken, the capacity to develop and sustain partnerships were all impacted by increasing competition between community groups within the same locality. In a climate in which survival rests on being able to access funding this led to creating tension between individuals and groups and had repercussions for the work being carried out. Whilst competition within this sector is not new, the current economic climate has had led to changes that have major repercussion for small community organisations (Iafrati, 2012; Brown et al. 2013). The data also captures an additional dimension in the accounts of participants related to notions associated with 'legitimacy'. Legitimacy underpinned perceptions of all areas associated with working in and with ACC. Participants identified the need to demonstrate legitimacy in order to develop and sustain the trust and respect within ACC, being considered as credible by those administering funding, being included in institutional strategies by bodies working in this area and in terms of being trusted and deemed credible by other community based organisations working in the area of 'UGC'.

Samuel felt it was important that those working in the name of the community were viewed positively by those they purported to serve:

> …these were people, some of them in my view, that had no credibility in the community but they were more interested in position and something on their CV and how that would make them look than by getting anything progressed.

Participants spoke about how presenting yourself as working on behalf of the community and being in receipt of funding meant ensuring you were held accountable to the wider community for what you did. The need to be accountable was also seen as important for those with media profiles who were not aligned to a community group or were known for work with ACC but were assumed to speak on behalf of ACC:

> Accountability. People need to be made accountable. …They can't just say 'O.K.'. We're elected, we're in charge. 'We are running things'. No the community are running things. You're doing their biddings. … The community trust these groups of people to take forward this agenda and when the community does not hear anything they say, here we go again. (Paul)

> They are too many people who have become meglaomaniacs in that position and I have seen that. … . I've seen examples of

people who have taken the role of leading but have no community work, community development background but who have become a megalomaniac. Just control freaks! They suddenly see this power. They are meeting with the chief of this and the chief of that and they just like it. I don't know [laughs] (Angela).

Being perceived as legitimate extended to perceptions of each other and the approach used by community activists; this was further exacerbated by the ability or inability to access resources to carryout work in communities. As previously identified funding was an increasing source of tension and led to divisions irrespective of whether or not there was a shared conceptualisation of the issue of 'UGC':

At the same time, [chair] was running his own private little business, his little enterprise. That was going on, where funding to tackle some of the diversionary activities that was agreed, was a good thing, most of the funding was going to [chair] private enterprise… Why aren't we being funded to do this work?' They did not see it has [chair] organisations… they saw it as [chair] son making money and being paid by the council and the police and so on to run these things. So clearly 'you're funding guns in the hands of [area] to fund guns to come and shoot us in [area]' and that's how it was being viewed. (Samuel)

Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992:173) state that having to compete within the hierarchy of oppression for ones' bread and butter does little to ease tension. The data indicates the climate in which community organisations may operate in terms of having to contend with the racialised stereotypes which depict community based organisations as poorly structured, wasteful and posing a financial burden. This negative perception of Black community organisation has arguably fostered the need to demonstrate legitimacy which contributes further to challenges encountered:

> I don't know if I am going to sound contradictory but I am speaking from my heart and the thing sometimes some of the issues with community groups are that we often lack infrastructure and proper governance. You know from you sign up to certain funding and certain things, certain compliance you have to do it. You just have to do those things and we are not the only ones cause many other different nationalities have messed up big time and that is not the judgment passed on them. We do it and that is the judgment passed on us, but I think for our own integrity and for the sake of our community and our young people and our elders we have to do things right. We need to take pride in doing things for ourselves and I would say that, one of the greatest honours bestowed on me is being in a position to work for my community. (Angela)

These relationships and perceptions of legitimacy are identified as important in ensuring community organisations are able to be success and in a competitive funding arena:

> They need to gain acceptance from statutory sectors whom they often rely on for resources and in terms of being deemed important so included in wider strategic discussions and decision making (Jonathon).

However, partnership working elicited other tensions between community activists and those tasked to work on this agenda in statutory organisations. Whilst there were attempts to include ACC in decisions taken at a strategic level this also led to questions of legitimacy associated with the how strategic bodied approached engagement with ACC:

> This is where personal issues really started to come to the fore because we had a Chair who had had significant advancement career wise in his workplace because of his involvement … The group had become known as [chair] group and that is how it was been addressed, talked about in the city by senior … . I was fed up of saying, 'it is not [chair] group. The group has got a name. [chair] is just the chair merely the chair but continued to be seen as [chair] group. (Samuel)

This is not to suggest that relationships between those considered to have representational legitimacy are unproblematic as an imbalance of power between the statutory and community sector was also a source of tension. Burton et al. (2004), assert that there are three main reasons given by government to promote community participation: it aids social cohesion and fosters social capital; it makes for more effective planning and delivery of public services that are seen as legitimate by those who participated in the decision-making; and it is a right that is justified and that demonstrates the exercise of citizenship. However, participants question the nature of the engagement with statutory bodies:

> In a nutshell they are not serious. They are short term measures, 1, 2, 3 year funding, they're cutting it again as we know. For me, they want to keep a hold of the whole agenda. All their people are the ones sitting on the big bucks making decisions that affect 'us' that they don't have to be troubled by. Most the decision makers hold these budgets and make the decisions of cuts, that is the bomb I am talking about, make the decision of cuts but don't have to live the decisions they make. They don't have to live with those decisions so it almost like they are carrying the whole agenda and they can manipulate it and control it for themselves. (Martyn)

The data illuminates challenges when engaging with statutory bodies, particularly when 'race' is ignored. Furthermore, it also highlights how engagement alone is not sufficient to bringing about change:

From the outset from summer 2006- that August 2006, we met with council and the police and the other statutory agencies and we basically said that as a community we believe that the services you're providing are not in the best interest of the community, it is not done at that level and we need that to change. They denied it, they felt that it was perception and all the rest of that and we were basically saying we were going to march if we don't see a change and that started some dialogue and that happened for three or four years. What was evident over this period of time is that that they had an agenda and they wanted us to flow with their agenda so although we gave them some information and they drew up an action plan to deliver against. When we came to the end of that there were 25 actions of which only 10 were delivered and I would say about 7 of them was questionable whether they had been delivered. What was very clear is that they had made waters very murky and very muddy so that it was very difficult to be able to hold them to account, very difficult to hold them to account so at that point we moved away from the table. We wanted to demonstrate that we know pretty much, four years down the line is not a waste of time because the bottom line is that you can say it was a perception but we now know it is not a perception, it is an absolute reality and, it is not like we didn't speak to you from day one. We came, we sat we discussed and wanted you to act, you didn't act and so from our point (Samuel).

Hence, the data also reveals the importance of 'race' and illuminated concern about the even when there was engagement with statutory bodies there was a reluctance to confront the issue of 'race'

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I think racism. I just think pretty much racism. Generalistic because in all of that and in all institutions here are good people and bad people, but there are people at the helm who can do a lot better. There is also a position of power and superiority and if you have always controlled the people and the mass it is very hard for you to start to relinquish some of those powers (Robert)

I think it was important for them to keep us talking around the table, it was important for them to have dialogue to be able to demonstrate to whoever the external agencies are to say that they are working with community... (Martyn)

Despite these challenges community activists still spoke about their desire for change, the need to continue to involve themselves in community work and the importance of this for change:

Let's talk about how influencing comes about. You can influence if you are in something and you are at a point where you are able because of the power, management, seniority and your clout can move it in a particular in direction, you can influence by just your good practice and people saying, how does it work for you? So that ethos that you have created becomes a change agent becomes pronounced, it's defining and people want to know what is that about so once that grows it grows into a revolutionary

machinery… I also have access and relationships with the most senior personnel in government if I need to, in the Church and on the street. So who knows me knows me. I don't want it to be a personality driven agenda but people see personalities and because they know who [name} is and that [name] has taken some serious risk and for what he was so that in itself brings some influence. I have because of my relationship with key influencers, I will write, I will talk, I will have meetings and where I need to be more strategically placed I will seek through democratic processes to be part of that machinery (Samuel)

10.8 Summary and reflections

In this chapter I have presented an analysis of the data pertaining to the strategies employed in my research localities in response to 'UGC.' I suggest that the work is diverse and multi-layered and this reflects participants' conceptualisation of 'UGC' and the action they see is needed. As discussed in the Introduction, the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' presents an image of a problem associated largely with young Black men living in marginalised communities in which factors such as 'gangs' 'hegemonic masculinity' 'absent fathers,' poverty, lack of opportunity have occupied centre stage in how UGC is understood (Aldred et al., 2008; Bullock and Tilley, 2008; Pitt, 2008; Sampson, 2008; Pitt). This has led to a range of preventative interventions that over focuses attention on individuals and their families (Joseph and Gunter, 2011) alongside attempts to encourage partnership working with ACC as key to 'UGC' prevention strategies (Brand and Ollerearnshaw, 2008). However, a limitation

uncovered in my research is how current strategies operated within a context viewed as 'top down' strategically driven in ACC play a subordinate role. As such, data shows an imbalance in how engagement is perceived and for some community activists engagement represents an unequal relationship in which power is exercised (Spicker, 1995). This is reflected in how decisions pertaining to funding, the distribution of national and local resources, what is done and who does what are informed by a specific understanding of 'UGC'.

Community activists are diverse and the data shows how they too are suspect to conflicting and competing interests (Wilmot, 1989). Whilst the participants in my research shared a racial or 'racialised identity,' they are representative of communities which are diverse and dynamic rather than static, and alter in response to external programmes as well as internal pressures. There are variations in the way in which community work is undertaken, in regards to the infrastructure and capacity of organisations involved, their ability to access resources, engage with local communities, the philosophical frameworks governing how they approach working in communities and the relationships to be found within and between them. Yet, community activism is not new and Chapter Three, detailed how activism within ACC developed in the post-war period as an act of resistance to racism in the factories and the neighbourhood of the inner cities within which African Caribbean and Asian communities worked and lived (Sivanandan, 1990). In this chapter, we see some continuation of a post war endeavour in which people continue to see a need to act together in order, to not merely address a specific problem, but to continue to challenge the inequities they perceive stem from their racial or racialised identities. However, the context within which community organisation operates is ever changing (Reynolds, 2003; Iafrati, 2012) and the data rather than

signalling a lack of commitment to collective action within ACC, shows that collective action has taken on new forms but remains anchored in the past, albeit with new challenges. Hence, it is possible to suggest that an area for attention is to better understand divisions within ACC. By this, I mean consider the variation ways in which ACC contribute to their local communities and how their contribution may provide additional insights to effective ways of working in ACC. More importantly is how irrespective of the barriers and challenges often encountered by those working in their local communities, community activism continues to be driven by a personal and political goal that maintains a focus on 'race,' as means of addressing racism and barriers encountered by racialisation.

Chapter 11 Conclusion

11.0 Introduction

> Discourses about humanity are complicit with structures of power
> that deny the humanity of the colonized. Such discourses make it
> appear as if issues such as racism were problems concerning a
> few irrational individuals and not the colonial condition as a whole
> (Fanon, 1988:39)

> Community must not mean a shedding of our difference, nor the
> pathetic pretence that these differences do not exist (Lorde,
> 1996:159)

The quotes above draw attention to two central themes presented in this thesis;
the myriad of ways in which 'race' is implicated in the lives of participants and
how they experience the social world and the miscellany that characterises
African Caribbean communities (ACC) and a diversity of views and experiences.
At the beginning of this thesis I detailed that the central aim of my research was
to explore how 'race' unfolds in the narratives of community activists and
shapes their understanding and responses to 'urban gun crime' (UGC). In
Chapter One, I noted my concerns about a dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC'
that appeared to reproduce certain assumptions about ACC. I argued that this
conceptualisation affirmed 'UGC' as a 'threat' to British society and a

determining characteristic of ACC. In doing so, it implicates ACC and families as key protagonists for a perceived 'crisis' across Britain's inner cities pertaining to the illegal use and ownership of firearms. I recounted how my interest was in part motivated by my identity as a Black woman and mother of Caribbean origin. I stressed the need to examine the extent to which 'UGC' is conceived in terms of a problem concerning ACC and its impact on British society. Therefore, my aim was to capture a story of 'UGC', which was to be the sum of multiple narratives from an insufficiently explored vantage point. Conscious that stories are only ever partial, my intention was not to strive for a definitive account, but rather an alternative perspective from below i.e. from men and women involved (or wanting to get involved) in community based initiatives related to addressing 'UGC'.

In adopting such a focus, I wanted to explore 'UGC' through the prism of community, cultural and political activism rooted in the perspectives, action and experiences of ACC. More specifically, I was interested to explicate potential resistance to the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' and how aspects of this tradition of activism within ACC had been mobilised. My thesis therefore presents an analysis of the relationship of 'UGC, community activism within ACC alongside consideration of my subjective insider/outsider positonality both as a researcher of 'race' and a subject of what was being researched.

In this final chapter I summarise the key findings and the significance of my work in terms its significance to research and policy surrounding ACC and 'UGC' and also outline the methodological contribution. In 11.1, 'So what's it all about'? I outline the implications of my findings to understanding 'UGC.' In 11.2, 'Why do you not hear what I feel', I consider what the findings have to say about

the relationship between ACC, community activism and the current policy context, shaping strategies to address 'UGC. In 11.3, 'Policy context the missing story' I share insights from my methodological approach. I end by offering thoughts about the future and in 11.4, 'The Journey continues', I share a recent encounter with three of my research participants as means of highlighting how this story is far from over but forms part of an ongoing journey. As such, I propose future areas for research stemming from my work.

11.1: So, What's It All About?: Key insights

As I reflect upon my research and writing journey I see my thesis as presenting an analysis grounded in lived experiences shared by African Caribbean men and women. Key finding stemming from my work shows that the invisibility of 'race' leads to concealment and omissions in how we understand the lives of a diverse section of British society. Ergo, failure by the state, it's institutions to confront 'race' is a means in which a visible, yet rendered invisible, section of British society lived reality remains marginalized. Accordingly, my thesis illuminates the systemic failures that arise as a result of the unwillingness of the state and others in positions of power to consider alternative ways of understanding the relationship between ACC and 'UGC'. In addition, it also provides a valuable insight how participants view 'race' as something that is institutionalised and naturalised into the very fabric of British society and implicated in social and economic disparities. Consequently, the stories shared provide evidence of how a challenge to British society is a need not solely for attention to be focussed on the violence perpetuated by a minority, but a need

to consider broader experiences of exclusion experienced by those living within ACC. This is captured by Paul:

..we have long since been criminalised, and that goes back to the seventies and so on, where young Black men were criminalised and demonised. And there was that phenomena of the young Black man and all the policy and discussion and so on targeted at tackling the problem of the young Black man. And again nothing was talked about in terms of racism or discrimination and so on just ...it was them as being a problem and their families as being a problem and those labels have never gone away. They have always been there and they still remain there.

Participants' narratives and my auto/biographical reflections provide a unique insight to a set of views and experiences about being Black and living in Britain that have been refracted through the discourse of 'UGC'. Whilst my doctoral journey started with the aim of explicating the relationship between 'race' and 'UGC', the reality is that for participants (and myself) it legitimated conversations in which people were able to share their feelings and experiences of 'racialisation and racism and being 'Othered.' As Alison said:

…once you dehumanise that you lose any love and the ability to love them because you've dehumanise them and, that is what society does and we can't join in with that in that dehumanisation.

Apparent in the data is the longevity of historical understandings of 'race' and how ideas are reproduced in contemporary thinking and serve in supporting dominant and powerful stereotypes about Black people. Hence, the evidence confirms 'UGC' continues to form part of a legacy underpinned by a process that reproduces the construction of the dangerous 'other'. The stories uncovered provide testimony to previous historical conditions and how they're reproduced today rendering Britain's Black populations ongoing recipients of repressive actions at the arm of the state and its institutions.

This thesis also contributes to an existing body of knowledge uncovering the complexity of community, in doing so, demonstrating that irrespective of inherent challenges and tensions community for some is a valuable vehicle in facilitating action. Evidence for this can be seen in the multiple responses identified in the data outlining the range of activities underway within ACC. Such activities offer a proactive response by ACC to negligence, systemic failures, institutional violence, racism, inhumane treatment and abuse of human rights (Inquest, 2014). Further, this thesis draws attention to how for ACC private troubles and anxieties around 'UGC' are understood and form part of wider processes that are produced and reproduced over time. The data presented in this thesis demonstrates the multiple ways in which 'race' racism and racialisation is tangential to concerns within ACC in which 'UGC' is viewed as a symptom.

Another dimension of my thesis is the way it draws attention to intersectionality and why it remains an imperative to scrutinise 'race' and how 'race' intersects with social divisions such as class, gender and religious convictions. My thesis

tells a story, and in doing this, it has produced 'oppositional knowledge' and 'counter narratives' (Lorde, 1984) which have the potential to form the basis of producing new theoretical insights into both the lived experiences of ACC and confronting racial oppression mediated through diverse forms and producing theoretical ideas rooted in a desire for change. A key aspect of my research, thesis and methodological approach was to create a space, albeit at times a contested space, for participants to share their fears, views, experiences and anxieties openly. In doing so, the thesis provides an insight into how some within ACC perceive their relationship to the state and its institutions and also to each other. It contributes to work that aims to disrupt the silences that prevail about how some Black people encounter 'race' and illuminates the diverse experiences in terms of how 'race' intersects with social division such as; gender, class, religion characteristic of the heterogeneity to be found within ACC.

This thesis adds to the body of work that critically challenges accounts of ACC in which members are presented as passive victims or as dysfunctional entities. Earlier reference was made to narratives from below. The data reveals additional insights to the way ACC exercise agencies and how, for participants in my study, their activism was a deliberate and embodied response to limitations within the social structure, social institutions, disadvantage and inequality and part of an ongoing battle for change. For instance:

> I felt very anxious for the whole community, not for me, it wasn't
> about personal safety. …I needed just to think about what was
> happening and how I as a Christian Minister would respond. The

following day it was the funeral and over a thousand people were expected… even if they were not in the middle of a gang they were on the edges of it and knew of them. I thought this would be my chance to actually address them in a real way as a woman, a priest and a Black woman… I just spoke from the heart about us as a people and our ability or inability to love one another; to love our selves. Somebody came to me afterwards and said, 'thanks for that Pastor cause I think dem hear you! I think dem hear you'! (Alison)

Change was viewed as personal **and** political and this raised strong feelings in participants. These emotions are visible in the narratives presented in all four of the data chapters in which we see expressions of rage, anxiety, love and hope. In Chapter Seven, the data shows both acceptance and resistance to the dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC'. I argue that 'UGC' delineates something about Black people, their communities and families and legitimates a need for increased scrutiny by the state and its institutions such as profiling and over policing of ACC and targeting of interventions based on perceptions of 'risk'. I maintain that this raises questions as to the extent that 'UGC' is an example of a contemporary 'moral panic' (Gilroy ,2003) 'UGC' sets a stage for a contemporary recasting of the characters who occupy lead roles in the moral panic that ensued around 'mugging' in the 1970s (Hall et al. 1978). Ergo, even when it is taken into consideration that each 'moral panic' has its own dynamic it also reveals something about a post-colonial racial state that is still trying to find ways to manage its colonial relationships with certain minority communities. The data presented here offers a sobering reminder of ongoing struggles

experienced by some living in ACC, but also provides insights to multiple strategies employed by ACC as a means of resistance.

11.2: Why Do You Not Want to Hear How We Feel?

> Faith and love are the two words that accompany me because without faith and hope we are going to be destroyed (Alison).

In adopting a critical ethnographical approach I was able to spend time in 'safe spaces' which as noted by Hill Collins (2000) presents opportunities for people to talk freely and envision a new future free from oppression. However, captured in the data are power inequalities that reside within ACC and how this leads to a diversity of experiences. As Alleyne (2002) contends there is a need to interrogate the very notion of community as its hegemonic nature means that it can function both as a vehicle for emasculation and/or emancipation. Despite the contradictions the data offers important examples of community as a vehicle for hope in circumstances in which people feel threatened or experience injustice. In focusing attention on 'UGC' it is possible to see how community is conceptualised as something active, dynamic and political and is employed as a mechanism for collective mobilisation to challenge racism, injustice and disadvantage. This is not to suggest that collective mobilisation under the rubric of community is easy, always effective, cohesive or unproblematic; as adopting an intersectional approach helps us to see how power mediated relationships and factors such as gender, class, religious beliefs, professional status create tensions between individuals and

between individual groups. However, the data shows that tensions are not necessarily a barrier for individuals and their attempt to galvanise action around community as a means of achieving change. Consequently, the overarching significance of this thesis is that it sheds light on the ongoing attempt by ACC for self-definition and in fighting racism. Additionally, it sheds light on some of the challenges and tensions that exists between Black community based organisations and statutory bodies.

11.3 UGC' Policy Context: Missing Stories

In my introduction I argued that what prevailed was a dominant conceptualisation of 'UGC' utilised within the political and media arena in which we could see a process of racialisation taking place. I shared my perceptions of a normalisation of the term 'UGC' which was repeatedly aligned to specific urban localities, 'gangs,' absent fathers, worklessness, violence and disadvantage. This facilitated what I viewed as a moral panic leading to certain types of political action; changes in the Law governing firearm offences alongside the introduction of programmes aimed at tackling youth crime and problems associated with marginalised young people (Silvestri, 2009; Joseph and Gunter, 2011). Today, these approaches continue, albeit with some minor nuances of language, under the coalition Government (see Ending Gang and Youth Violence, HMO, 2011).

The Ending Gang and Youth Violence strategy forms part of a wider government approach to tackling youth violence generally but also 'UGC' and is

put forward as working in conjunction with programmes such as the Troubled Families initiative (DCLG, 2011) and the Serious Organised Crime strategy (HMO, 2013). Consequently, across the political spectrum certain approaches dominate policy and practice when dealing with 'UGC,' and there remains a specific way of knowing that informs responses, which is captured in the quote below by the current Home Secretary, Teresa May:

> The Coalition Government is determined to identify measures that will be most effective in curbing gangs and the culture that breeds them... we cannot allow 'gangs' to continue to spread violence and erode decent civilised behaviour (HMO, 2013: 6)

The current administration identifies the need to tackle 'gangs' as central to ending youth violence and 'UGC' alongside other measures, which include; data sharing across state institutions, early intervention in the lives of those deemed to be at 'risk' and their families and the profiling of potential perpetrators (HMO, 2013:11). This strategy depends on the appointment of a dedicated team of people who have been identified as having an experience in dealing with 'gangs' receiving funding to work in 33 local authority areas. Currently the areas identified include: Bradford, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Sheffield, Derby Nottingham and London, areas purporting to have the highest level of 'gang' and youth violence. The rationale is that preventing young people from joining 'gangs', supporting those identified as the most vulnerable and ensuring that 'school, work and family offer a meaningful alternative' (HMO, 2013:8) are central to the war on 'UGC' and youth violence more generally. As previously stated, there is an evident similarity in the approaches adopted by both the

previous and current government and as noted by Silvestri et al. (2009) the jury is still out as to the effectiveness of initiatives these initiatives. Furthermore there is also a need to be cautious about transplanting initiatives from the USA as some of the programmes have not been rigorously evaluated. Whilst it is important not to discount the potential benefits and positive impact that some interventions may have on the lives of some individuals living in the most deprived neighbourhoods, my research illuminates a disjuncture between those working in local communities and those in positions of power. This can be understood in terms of the emphasis each party gives to addressing issues of individual agency and systemic failure. By this, I mean the data identifies a disparity between the tendencies for policies to focus attention on 'fixing' the individual juxtaposed to the focus of attention for participants in my research to tackling wider systemic barriers. These barriers were repeatedly identified as central to the reproduction of a racialised structural inequality. Accordingly, an inherent tension identified in the data and what was often put forward as posing the significant challenge is the capability for those tasked to deliver current 'UGC' strategies to engage and form meaningful relationships with communities in order to take the appropriate action to address ACC concerns around 'race' racisms and racialisation:

> Building meaningful relationships with local communities is one of the biggest challenges for local partners (HMO, 2013:18).

11.4: Methodological implications

> Wacquant (2008:282) reminds us that social research should not merely reflect public discourse and concerns, but should embark on a process of gathering evidence that uncovers the processes and mechanisms through which discourses and concerns leading to public action are constructed

The approach that I took exposes itself to a range of potential criticisms and I am conscious that an important question will be my over identification with the subject matter and participants. Yet, there are always limitations to what we do as researchers and I am aware that my visibility in my thesis may pose a challenge for those who consider objectivity a pre-requisite for those engaged in scientific inquiry. However, questions of methodological weakness are in themselves part of a particular tradition as Dubois (1965:128) reminds us '[t]he truth objectively expressed is constantly vitiated by the lie of the colonial condition,' as such, it often leads to missing out on factors which are central and provide scope for adding an additional dimension to our understanding.

For me, conducting the research from a privileged position as an 'insider' is a strength, albeit emotionally challenging. At the BSA Annual Auto/Biography conference in 2013 I spoke about how emotions unravelled during my doctoral journey. I spoke about the pain, the rage and the love emanating from my work. In doing this, I wanted to share what I had previously thought I had always known, but maybe I had not fully understood. That is, how as researchers we

are not immune from emotions and how conducting research as an 'insider' can lead to additional challenges. I agree with Barbour and Huby (1998) that as researchers our aim should not be merely to strive for emotional detachment without questioning the limits researchers encounter in doing so. I also have come to better understand what they mean when they state that as researchers we should not ignore the challenges encountered if we pursue reflexivity (Barbour and Huby, 1998).

In Chapter Six, I explained that my visibility in this thesis is testament to acknowledging the value to be found when as researchers we make explicit our connection(s) to what we do (Letherby, 2003; 2013). Throughout this research process I make no claim to 'objectivity' or to being a 'value' neutral bystander. Indeed, in Chapter One, I shared my anxieties and how they were informed by my experiences across multiple spheres such as; education, health and employment in which I had encountered racism and been reminded of what it feels like when perceptions of my Black body intersect with my material and social reality.' I was also aware how often I am forced to mask my emotions and stay silent when encountering racism and experience how 'race' manifests as racism as it navigates between 'ideological' and the 'real' world (Giddens, 1991). How the outcome is experienced as a form of symbolic violence in which power is unleashed and enacted upon those who like me are identified as the 'other' (Dubois, 1903). I was better able to understand why bell hooks (1995) felt the need to focus her attention on rage:

> Like all profound repression, my rage unleashed made me afraid.
> It forced me to turn my back on forgetfulness, called me out of my

denial. It changed my relationship with home…I seemed alone in understanding that I was undergoing a process of radical politicization and self-recovery.

A significant aspect of my research is that I was in a privileged position and my identity as a Black African Caribbean Woman not only helped to facilitate access to my participants but an insight that enabled me to explicate stories that can be hidden when researching ACC. I was unable to ignore the emotions captured in the stories shared by participants I met when attending community events as it reflected some of my feelings too. I am aware of the potential for emotions of participants and that of the researcher to surface when engaged in research. Indeed, in my earlier research exploring the experience of teenage pregnancy and young motherhood I have experienced a range of emotions when young women have shared their stories about domestic violence (Brown et al. 2011) termination and miscarriage (Brady et al. 2008) and poor access to health and social care services (Letherby, 2003). However, the emotional labour experienced during this journey cannot be under stated and at times I would have embraced the opportunity to be an 'objective' bystander, where I did not have to spend time trying to understand why I felt the way I did. Why I wanted to shout at a male respondent for unquestioningly accepting that Black women are partly responsible for 'UGC' that it is Black women wanting to strive to do better that is partly a cause for their children's failure. Or when the 'othering' was performed by Black women in their attempt to differentiate themselves drawing on discourses in which morality and class were readily accepted for justification for their characterisation of those deemed as not being 'good enough mothers'. The emotional labour experienced was in part my reaction to the stories recounted and I acknowledge that one can ever be truly

an insider (Naples, 1999) can never share or understand all participants views and experiences. My thesis would be very different if I had decided to remain invisible or taken a position with the expectation that I remained the 'objective' bystander distant from the issue under investigation. The contribution of the methodological approach informing this thesis is that it illuminates what is missed when we are absent from the work we do. My thesis allows for further insights about the choices I have made at each stage of the process and how these choices inform both the 'doing' and ultimately the 'knowledge' stemming from it. Adopting an auto/biographical approach to writing my thesis allows me to illuminate how the data reflects aspects of my own lived reality, my philosophical stand point, my ontological self and how I engaged in the construction of knowledge. Indeed, auto/biography facilitates' my partial presence in a wider story. I am able to share an understanding that illuminates my insider position about the systematic failure (Structure) and the restrictions this imposes on the individual (agency).

11.5: The Fight Continues: Areas of future research and activism

This thesis represents the start of a journey and has drawn attention to the important role that community activism continues to hold in ACC. The research also draws attention to how community based research has the potential not only to uncover stories and issues that are often hidden within communities but also how as researchers within the academy we can contribute to developing an evidence base for those involved in work on the ground in their local communities. Through this process I have had to reconcile my identity as a community activist and that as a researcher. This has not always been easy

however it has illuminated the importance of these aspects of my identity in terms of knowledge production. As I previously noted, my doctoral research has led to invitations to undertake research with community based organisations with the intention to uncover knowledge rooted in the lived reality of those living in ACC. Consequently, an area for future action rests in developing strategies that focus attention on the relationship between community activism and the academy and how we create safe spaces in which the voice of those often missing or silenced can be heard and how our understandings can be made richer through the application of frameworks which allow for alternative ways of knowing. This paves the way for the adoption of inclusive approaches and the development of an evidence base that captures the multi-dimensional factors that offer a more nuanced understanding of how factors such as 'race' racism and racialisation intersects with other social divisions.

This thesis also highlights potential gaps such as the need for research that enables attention to be afforded to the relationship between faith based organisations, specifically the contribution of Black-led churches make to addressing areas of social life in ACC and wider society, which would include exploration of Black-led churches and initiatives associated with 'UGC'. This is alongside a need for further attention to be given specifically to the lives of Black women; their roles as workers, sisters, mothers, grandmothers and daughters and more broadly the internally challenges experienced by women within community based initiatives.

Finally, there is much that can be gleaned from the findings of this thesis in relation to how statutory bodies not merely work with those from ACC engaged

in community based initiatives but are able to work effectively once partnerships with community based organisation are established. As such, further work is needed to explore the experiences of community activist working in partnership with statutory bodies.

Parting story …..

I think it is fitting to end this thesis as I began by sharing an encounter. As I was struggling to write my conclusion I was invited to an event by Paul. The event was showcasing a piece of drama written by young Black men about their experiences of the criminal justice system. The aim of the drama was to engage the audience in a discussion about their role and that of their relevant service in response to the story unfolding in the drama. The event was attended by representatives from the police, crown prosecution service, local social housing, mental health, prison service and the local community three of whom had been participants in my research. I was excited to meet them particularly as I was in the final stages of completing my thesis and had not seen them for a long time. I was interested in finding out what they were up to and how their community work was proceeding. Martyn explained that he had left his full time job at a local college, as part of local authority cuts Susan had been made redundant and Paul was working full time for the community based organisation hosting the event. In separate conversations all three lamented the challenges of community activism, the frustration, the division, the politics that made working together challenging and the time it often took to get things done. Nonetheless, they also spoke about a sense of responsibility, love and a commitment to making a difference and initiating change. Consequently, this

was a timely reminder that in reality the issues uncovered in the narratives shared in this thesis provide motivation and momentum for the next stage of the journey.

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Appendix 1

Profile of research localities

<u>**Area 1**</u>.

Area 1 is one of the largest local authorities in the whole of England and Wales. In the West Midlands it is the most densely populated local authority with 4,000 people per square kilometre. It has an estimated population count of 1,073,000 and represents an increase of around 96,000 (9.8%) since the 2001 Census. The average household size is 2.56 in 201, compared with 2.46 in 2001. The most marked growth is seen in the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups, with increases of 26.5% and 21.5% respectively. This age group is greatly influenced by student movements and international migration in which 238,313 residents were born overseas, of these, 44% (103,682) have been resident in the UK for less than 10 years. In so saying, established migrants outnumber newer migrants in all but four wards. This area is noted for its diversity and has a broad range of people of different nationalities, religions and ethnic backgrounds.

Between 2001 and 2011 the number of people of working age increased by 83,968 (13.9%). This compares with 6.2% for West Midlands and 9.2% for England. The Black Caribbean population makes up 4.4% of the population (47,641). Over half, 25,096 (65%) of the Black Caribbean population are in employment are in employment at all levels of the Labour market. However, Black Caribbean groups are more likely to work in lower skilled occupations (see table below)

	Black Caribbean
(High skilled) Managers, directors and senior officials	5.07%
Professional occupations	17.49%
Associate professional and technical occupations	11.43%
Administrative and secretarial occupations	13.02%
Skilled trades occupations	8.66%
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	15.75%
Sales and customer service occupations	8.13%
Process, plant and machine operatives	6.71%
(Low skilled) Elementary occupations	13.73%

(Nomis, 2011 Official Labour Market Statistics)

Despite statistics showing that Black Caribbean has having high levels of employment it statistics from the National Office of Statistics in May 2014 reported Black Caribbean had the highest unemployment proportion amongst all groups and a higher claimant unemployment proportion for all major ethnic minority groups

Area 2

There are a number of similarities between Area 1 and Area 2. Area 2 is one of the most densely populated local authority areas in England with a population of 249,500 people, which is a rise of 12,900 since 2001. There are 102,200 households in the city, an increase of 5,100 more households than in 2001. The population of Area 2 is also noted for its diversity and has a broad range of people of different nationalities, religions and ethnic backgrounds. Alongside an established migrant community, in recent years new arrivals from European Accession countries migrated to the area. There area has witnessed an increase in the Black and minority ethnic population and a reduction in the Non-BME population. The 2011 Census results shows a significant increase in BME population, which stands at 36.5% (2011). The higher percentage of City Ethnic composition includes all Asian population at 18.1%, all Black population at 6.9% and all mixed population at 5.1%. BME residents are primarily concentrated within the inner city. Over the past decades there has been an increasing number of Black African and Black African Caribbean accommodated in social housing and 42 per cent of individuals reporting as African and African Caribbean live in social housing. Labour Market patterns are similar to that of Area and if we specifically examine this in relation to young Black males what we see is that, young men (aged 16-24) of Black African and Black Caribbean ethnicity are somewhat more likely to be in employment than the local average. They have about the same rate of unemployment but are less likely to be still in education. Compared to young Black African and Black Caribbean men in the wider West Midlands, those living in Area 2 are less likely to be in employment and more likely to be unemployed. In other words this suggests they are, on average, relatively disadvantaged compared to young men of the same ethnicity elsewhere in the West Midlands, but do not appear noticeably more disadvantaged than other young men locally. Broadly speaking a similar pattern applies to the 25-49 age groups. They are disadvantaged compared to other parts of the West Midlands but men of Black African and Black Caribbean ethnicity do not appear any more disadvantaged than other young men locally.

There is some evidence from the Census to suggest that those from Black African and Black Caribbean ethnicities may be to some extent concentrated in lower skills and lower earning jobs. Compared to the local average young Black African men are more likely to be working in caring, leisure and other service occupations, less likely to be working in the three most highly skilled occupational groups, and less likely to work in skilled trades occupations. This position may be associated with lower wages and less chance of progression. The patterns for Black Caribbean men are somewhat less distinct.

• The average weekly income by ethnicity from 2011 to 2012. This highlights that there is a greater proportion of Black and mixed ethnicities on lower household incomes than white and other ethnic groups.

• Area 2 has the highest percentage of JSA claimants in the West Midlands by area. This suggests that the male population in Area 1 are more likely to have difficulties in finding job opportunities in comparison with other areas in the West Midlands. Again this suggests that due to social and economic disadvantage these groups are more dependent on welfare provision[10].

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[10] *A benefit unit is defined to be a single adult or a married or cohabiting couple and any dependent children; since January 2006 same-sex partners (civil partners and cohabitees) have been included in the same benefit unit.

Appendix 2

Interview Participants

Paul was born and grew up in the West Midlands. He lives with his partner and has no children. Paul was excluded from school but completed his compulsory education at a local college. Paul has a post graduate qualification. He has been involved in a range of community based initiatives and has also held post within Education and the civil service.   Paul has been a trade union representative and has previously worked in the racial discrimination and harassment. Much of Paul's community work has been with young men from the African Caribbean community.

Robert was born and grew up in the West Midlands. He has been married for a number of years and is a father.   His involvement in community work is influenced by his experience of growing up in the inner city in the 1980s. In addition, Robert has some personal knowledge of people who have ended up in prison or have been killed due to their involvement with gangs and drugs. Robert is a practicing Christian and considers his faith as playing a key motivating factor in his work. Robert is currently a Chief Executive of a local voluntary sector organisation.

Martyn was born and grew up in the West Midlands. He is married and a father. Martyn's comes from a sporting background and currently works in the Further Education. In addition, to this work Martyn is chair of a community based organisation and also runs a project for young people that engages them through sport. Martynhas had first-hand experience of 'UGC' and lives in the inner city.

Susan was born and grew up in the West Midlands. Susan spent time as was a single mother. Susan is currently a civil servant and local magistrate and for 12

months was an active member of a community based organisations with a specific focus on 'urban gun crime.'

Alison is married with children. She lives and works in the West Midlands. She has been a vicar for over 25 years and is currently based at a local inner city church. Alison is not affiliated to a community based organisation, however engages in a range of community focused activities. Alison's motivation for involvement is informed by her faith and her community and states that she has not lost that excitement and that passion for God, for what she believes God is capable of doing.

Kyle is married and a father. He was born in Jamaica and immigrated to England aged 16 in the late 60s. He settled in the UK. Kyle was not educated in the UK, but went to college and then University. Kyle is a local radio presenter and practicing Christian and spends much of his time doing does a lot of ecumenical work. Whilst Kyle is very interested in community work and does this in many different guises, he does not work on the ground and much of his input is at a strategic level.

Samuel is married and a father. Samuel comes from a Social Worker background and was a practitioner for over 20 years. Samuel is a practicing Christian and part of one of the largest Black majority churches in the UK. Samuel currently runs a community based organisation and identifies his involvement stems from his concerned about how we responded to young people, more so, 'un-churched' young people. Samuel full time employment concentrates on working 'on the ground' with the African Caribbean community, particularly with young Black men.

Vincent is married and is a father. Vincent was born in the Caribbean but came to the UK in his teenage years. He has six children, five girls and a son, (not all are biologically related to his wife). Vincent has a criminal record and has spent

time in prison. On release, he attended college to train as a youth worker and has delivered sport related programmes to young people living in the inner city.

Ronald was born and grew up in the West Midlands. He is married and is a father. Ronald grew up in a single parent household and has never met his father. Ronald had a very bad experiences of schooling, spent a number of years on the streets involved in a range of illegal activity and time in prison. Ronald currently runs a community based organisation, is a practicing Christian he has an MBA.

Shirley was born and lives in the West Midlands. She is married and has a child who is currently attending secondary school. Since 2007, she has been employed as a Probation officer. Shirley is not currently affiliated to a community based organisation, but has an interest in this area and attends meetings and seminars organised around these issues.

Anna immigrated to the UK aged 14 and trained as a nurse in the 1970s. Anna is a mother and grandmother and has spent the largest proportion of her time in the UK living and working in the West Midlands. Anna describes herself as having a strong tie to the West Midlands. For the past 18 years Anna has managed a community based project targeted at people from African Caribbean communities with a mental health need and describes her motivation for her community work is influenced by her love for her community.

Rachel was born and lives in the West Midlands. Rachel has four children which she has raised on her own in their latter teenage years. Rachel has lived in the in the inner city all her life and has always had an interest in working in her local community with families and young people. Rachel is currently employed by the local Authority as Youth Worker and has set up a community group for parents whose children have been involved in 'UGC' and/ or gangs. Rachel's motivation for getting involved in this type of community activity stems

from her own personal experience and currently her son in prison for a gang related offence.

Appendix 3

Community organisation Action plan

The areas identified for action are summarised below:-

School exclusions and modified timetable
Proposed Action
1.   Improve identification of those at risk of involvement in gangs/use of weapons through:- - better information sharing across all agencies working with children and young people at risk of disengagement from school - development of attitude screening measures for routine use with children and young people to provide early identification of those at risk and have concerns about use of weapons and gangs
2.   Develop prevention work with primary schools, including commissioning drama workshops and involving parents.
3.   Improve the publicity about support services for parents and children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of exclusion.
4.   Establish a fast track admission procedure for the transfer of secondary aged pupils who are excluded from school, without a school place or are new in the city.
5.   Work with the identified representative Head Teacher to develop approaches for targeting schools and neighbourhoods where support and mentor structures are required.
6.   Through the Multi Agency Network Group, continue to encourage the sharing of good practice to learn and implement from the best.

Youth Empowerment and Consultation **Proposed Action**
1.   Learning from events held previously - Commission an event with BME young people to explore the most effective vehicle for giving them a positive voice on issues that concern them.
2.   Linked to the above, review with young people those facilities, activities and support they value most with a view to focusing resources on these.
3.   Explore how the Young People at the Centre model could be extended to address the issues raised in this action plan.
4.   Review good practice in youth empowerment across the country, with a view to using this as a basis to develop a Wolverhampton-specific approach, drawing on lessons from successful approaches elsewhere
5.   Develop and pilot 'Children in Conflict' art approach

Community Engagement and Consultation

Proposed Action

1. Establish temporary posts for 2 years, providing half time clerical/administrative support to the Guns and Gangs Steering Group and a full time project worker to support the development and implementation of the Action Plan, working alongside the Steering Group.
2. Carry out a review of the capacity building and support needs of Black and minority ethnic (BME) voluntary and community sector organisations and networks, to identify if there are any barriers that prevent them from participating fully in commissioning processes and service delivery.
3. Map the distribution of resources within local communities and assess how important these resources are to local communities.
4. Ensure that the evaluation of the Local Area and Neighbourhood Arrangements (LANA) includes an examination of how BME communities are currently engaged and what needs to be done differently to achieve better involvement
5. Invite the Steering Group to meet with local political parties to discuss how the representation of BME councillors could be improved.

Access to work and employment – (dates here are draft subject to inclusion within City Employment Strategy)

Proposed Action

1.   Build on current construction training work and identify how opportunities will be expanded with major contracts,

2.   Raise awareness and publicise information about the range of existing programmes to support young people and other key groups to achieve higher aspirations.

3.   Explore the scope to build on basic skills work in priority neighbourhoods by providing links into other programmes e.g. Next Steps Programme run by Black Country Connexions.

4.   Examine the potential for establishing a local business development programme for BME businesses and establish support structures for these businesses to compete for contracts

5.   Assist the Steering group to be a company in its own right

6.   Identify entrance points into the Council as one of the largest employers in the city, and work with the Youth Council and Guns and Gangs Steering Group to consider best ways of disseminating opportunities

Appendix 4

Types of community events attended during fieldwork

Community information sharing event The aim of the community sharing event was to feedback to the local community the work being undertaken by the Community Group. These events were organised in a range of community centres across the city.
Community meeting During my involvement with the groups two community wide meetings were held. These were public meetings where key stakeholder from the statutory sector were invited to hear the concerns of the community
Community strategic meetings In light of the development of a community action plan the groups were invited to work together with leads across a range of statutory services. The meetings were attended by the Senior representatives of the Local Council, Police, Primary Care Trust, Education (School and colleges). The meeting was chaired by the Chief Executive of the local Council.
Citizen Advice Bureau's Annual conference. An invitation was received from the local CAB to share the work of the community group at their annual conference. I was one of two representatives of the groups invited to do a presentation at the event.

Appendix 5

Example of interview themes

- Understanding about 'urban gun crime' (is it an issue for ACC)

- Understanding about 'gangs' (is it issue for ACC)

- Views about ACC and family

- Views about community activism

- Views about why young people get involved in 'UGC' and gangs

- Views about the impact of 'UGC' on individuals, families and community

- Views about national and local Strategies, policies, initiatives related to 'UGC''

- Views about the role of statutory , voluntary and community sectors role in addressing 'UGC'

- Views about how ACC have engaged with 'UGC'

- Views about how 'UGC' is represented (media, policy, within ACC)

Appendix 6

Participation sheet and consent form

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study Title:

African Caribbean Communities understanding and responses to 'urban gun crime'

Purpose of the Study:

The aim of the research is to examine the significance and meaning of ' urban gun crime' within African Caribbean communities and explore their responses to 'urban gun crime'.

The specific objectives are:

- To explore perception about 'urban gun crime'
- To explore experiences of 'urban gun crime
- To examine responses to 'urban gun crime'

Why have I been chosen?

You are being asked to take part in this research because you are a member of an organisation or someone with an interest of getting involved in work in your local community service related to 'urban gun' crime

Who is organising the study?

The research forms part of a doctoral study being undertaken by Geraldine Brown at Coventry University.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you if you decide whether to take part. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect you in any way.

What will happen if I take part?

We will ask you to participate in an interview or focus group. Interviews and focus groups will be carried out at a time convenient to you. We anticipate that they will last approximately one hour. Once all interviews and focus groups are completed, you will not be required to take any further part in the study.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is anticipated that, due to the nature of the topic under discussion there is the possibility that some interviews may be upsetting. Geraldine has considerable experience of researching sensitive issues and, if necessary, will be able to signpost people to the relevant support.

What are the possible benefits?

This research will provide an opportunity to elicit your views about the issue of gun crime within African Caribbean Communities and contribute an evidence base that can be included in the development of policy and practice.

What if something goes wrong?

If you are unhappy with any aspect of this research then you should contact the Director of Studies in the first instance.

Contact Details:

Dr Gurnam Singh,
Teaching Fellow/Senior Lecturer

Social Work Department

Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

Coventry University

Priory Street Coventry

CV1 5FB UK

Tel 024 7679 5823

Email g.singh@coventry.ac.uk

If you still have concerns and wish to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the research then you should write to:

Prof Ian M Marshall

Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research)

Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5FB.

Fax ++44(0)2476 88 8030

In your letter please provide as much detail about the research as possible, the name of the Researcher and indicate in detail the nature of your complaint

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Any information about you will be made anonymous with the use of a pseudonym. If you consent to having your interview tape- recorded, all tapes will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. Transcripts from the research will only be viewed by the research team and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. All data from the research will be destroyed after 5 years.

However, circumstances where we are unable to keep information confidential include:

- Disclosure of emotional, physical or sexual abuse of a minor (under 16 years old)
- Disclosure of a criminal offence

What will happen with the results of this study?

The results of the study will inform future theoretical and practical understanding around how members of the Caribbean community understand experience and respond to the issue of 'gun' crime. The result of the study will also be of benefit to policy makers and practitioners.

Who is organising the research?

The research is funded by the Applied Research Centre for Sustainable Regeneration, Faculty of Business, Environment and Society, Coventry University

Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed by Coventry University's Research Ethics Committee.

Should you require any further information about this research please contact:

Geraldine Brown

Applied Research Centre in Sustainable Regeneration

Futures Institute

Coventry University Technology Park

CV1 2TL

Email: g.brown@coventry .ac.uk

Tele: 02476 794545

Thank you for taking part in this research study

Appendix 7

Consent Form

Study Title:

How do members of African Caribbean Communities understand and respond the issues of 'gun crime' and 'gang culture?'

Name of Researchers:

Geraldine Brown : Applied Research Centre for Sustainable Regeneration, Coventry University

<u>**Please initial box**</u>

1. **I confirm that I have read and understood the Information Sheet dated** ☐

(30.09.09)for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.[11]

☐

☐

3. <u>**I agree to take part in the above study.**</u>

4. <u>**I agree for the interview/ focus group to be tape recorded**</u> ☐

_____   _____   _____

Name of participant   **Date**   **Signature**

_____   _____   _____

 Researcher   **Date**   **Signature**

_____