Exploring the narratives of the few:
British African Caribbean
Male graduates of elite
Universities in
England and Wales

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Doctor of Philosophy

January 2016

Acknowledgements

First I give honour to God for blessing me with the many educational opportunities I have been provided in my life. Having a grounded faith has enabled me to tackle many unforeseen challenges during my research journey. It is impossible to thank all of the people who have supported me in various ways to the completion of my thesis in this brief amount of space. Thanking the small handful of people here doesn't do justice to the numerous others whose patience, advice and support have been considerable throughout my doctoral studies. My thanks go to my supervisors, David James and Katy Greenland who have provided valuable advice and critique during supervisions and on my many drafts. I would like to thank Sally Power and Sara Delamont for their interest in my research during the initial MsC/PhD application process. Without their support and 'capital' information I would not have been aware of the programme and would most likely not have applied for research funding.

I would be remiss if I did not sincerely thank the Economic and Social Research Council for funding this research and providing me the opportunity to undertake this project.

I would like to thank Chris Thomas, Denise Rogers and Ceri Venners for their invaluable 'critical friend' contributions to my thesis. I also extend my thanks to my friends and fellow doctoral researchers within Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences who shared this often turbulent and tumultuous journey with me.

Lastly, I would like to especially thank my participants for agreeing to partake in this project and generously sharing with me their accounts of their journeys through compulsory and elite higher education, without whom my research would not exist. I wish them continued success in pursuing their dreams during their early career paths.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my partner Clive, my parents Betty and Constantino and my sister Nicole to whom I am eternally grateful for their love, patience, spiritual, emotional and financial support throughout every stage of this research journey.

ABSTRACT

Within Higher Education, a substantial amount of research has explored black students' experiences within post 1992 universities (Elevation Networks 2012; BITC 2010; RfO 2011; Leathwood 2004; Read et al. 2003). Research indicates that British African Caribbean men (BACM) are well represented in higher education (Richardson 2010). However, when the type of universities these students attend is examined, research indicates that substantially more black students attend post-1992 universities than 'old universities' (Bhattacharyya et al. 2003; Elevation Networks 2012). In 2010 less than one per cent of all Oxbridge students were black. Between 2010 and 2012 less than five per cent of all students entering Russell Group and Oxbridge universities were British African Caribbean (Boliver 2013). Only limited research has explored the outcomes of ethnic minority students studying at Russell Group universities (Fielding 2008; Richardson 2008) and much of this has been quantitative rather than qualitative. Furthermore, minimal research has explored the experiences of black students and black men in particular through their experiences of attending elite UK universities. This dissertation explores the counter-narratives of the few British African Caribbean men who have successfully attended and graduated from elite universities in England and Wales. This research examines these students' recognised as well as unrecognised, resources and capitals to gain an understanding of the factors that have assisted them in their matriculation to, and graduation from, elite universities. It is hoped that these findings will be beneficial in helping staff involved in the admission processes at elite universities to gain a better understanding of areas that need improvement in order to increase the numbers of British African Caribbean male students attending elite universities. Lastly, this research hopes its findings will be beneficial in influencing more black men in future generations to aspire to attend elite UK institutions.

Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

*Whatever life we have experienced, if we can tell our story to
someone who listens, we find it easier to deal with our
circumstances.*
(Wheatley 2002: para 3)

Research suggests that the Labour Government's 'widening participation
agenda' may have increased black and working class student matriculation
rates into higher education (Harrison 2012). Widening participation has been a
significant UK policy since the publication of the Dearing Report (NCIHE 1997),
which found that a young person's chances of entering higher education were
strongly determined by the socio-economic status of their family. A young
person from the highest social group – comprising professionals and senior
managers – was around six times as likely to take up a university place as one
from the lowest group (NCIHE 1997). In 2003, the New Labour Government
developed a 'Future of Higher Education' White Paper which set out to widen
participation by 50 per cent in people in higher education[1] in an effort to meet
the UK's skill needs. 'Aimhigher' became the UK government's flagship national
initiative for widening participation to higher education for young people from
disadvantaged social groups (HEFCE 2004:7). The initiative involved a wide-
range of activities, including summer schools, tutoring and mentoring,
employers' links, work-based learning, curriculum enhancement and university
taster days (Harrison 2012). Even though the widening participation agenda has
now been abandoned by the Government, due to a lack perceived evidence of
its effectiveness (Gorard et al. 2006), a period of rapid growth in the UK higher
education (HE) sector occurred. Higher education student numbers rose from
just under two million in 2000/2001 to around 2.5 million by 2010/2011 (Reilly et
al. 2014). Black student participation also increased. However, this rise has
been primarily observed within post-1992 schools rather than the elite Russell
Group universities, inclusive of Oxbridge.

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[1] This pledge was not met under Labour, and under the Coalition government of 2010, widening
participation is no longer a policy priority. Aiming Higher was abolished in July 2011 (Harrison,
2012)

As discussed in the literature review, less than one per cent of all Oxbridge students were black between 2010 and 2012 (Boliver 2013). Within the 24 prestigious Russell Group Universities less than five per cent of all students entering between 2010 and 2012 were British African Caribbean (Boliver 2013). This makes it crucial to understand their experiences at elite institutions. Important questions about their trajectories to, as well as their success within these universities merit further investigation. This dissertation explores the accounts of 15 British African Caribbean men (BACM) about their journeys from secondary education through their acceptance, attendance and graduation from elite universities. In addition to probing their trajectories to and through these institutions, I also examined their representations of their culture and performativity in these environments. Questions of how these men identified and managed their encounters with racism and discrimination are also analysed. Most importantly I explored these men's accounts of capitals and resources that they identified as factors that assisted them in succeeding within the predominantly white elite field of higher education in an effort to understand how their numbers might be increased in the future.

1.1 Research Aims, Questions and Purpose

The under achievement and exclusions of BACM in secondary schools is undisputed and has been demonstrated in a plethora of published research (as referenced in the abstract). However, I contend that there is a lacuna of qualitative literature on the experiences of successful BACM in higher education – particularly within elite universities in England and Wales. I would suggest that much can be learned from these BACM who have successfully navigated secondary education, elite HEIs and are beginning their early careers. The overarching aims that this research is concerned with exploring are:

> ➢ What is the student experience like for BACM 'home' students studying at predominantly white elite universities in the UK?
> ➢ How have 'race'/ethnicity, gender, class and culture influenced these students' constructions of their identities and their ability to gain access to, attend and graduate from elite UK universities?

Furthermore, three underpinning questions of this research are:

1. How have black males' secondary educational trajectories impacted their experiences in elite institutions?

2. What kinds of resources and capitals (e.g. familial, socio-economic and cultural) do elite university black students perceive as well as fail to recognise themselves to have? And are these men able to successfully exercise these resources within elite HEI environments?

3. Did participants experience discriminatory incidents during their educational journeys and if so how did they manage these situations?

My research seeks to address the gap in the literature concerning the aspirational educational experiences of BACM students who have been successful within elite HEIs. This research contributes to the understanding of how BACMs become achievers in elite educational fields. Exploring their educational trajectory experiences can help to shed light on the capitals and resources that their accounts identify as influencing their successful progressions. This research explores the strategies these men have adopted in order to navigate and achieve within elite, predominantly white institutional environments. This research primarily addresses BACM's journeys from secondary schooling into elite higher education through the exploration of their spoken accounts, 'counter-narratives' of their experiences.

1.2 Chapter Summaries - Overview

Due to extensive literature on the topic of black students in secondary and higher education, this literature review is divided into four chapters. Chapter two provides the research aims and purpose. It also discusses the history of black students in secondary education. Chapter three considers the most important concepts and theories related to 'race'/ethnicity, masculinity and the significance of the intersectionality of 'race' gender and class to understanding black student experiences. Chapter four sets out key concepts from Bourdieu, rational action theory and meritocracy and looks at their relevance for educational outcomes (Bourdieu 1986; Goldthorpe 2002; Glaesser and Cooper 2012). Chapter five discusses how tenets of Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings 1998; Yosso and Solorzano 2002) can intersect with Bourdiesian

concepts to explore black men's educational journeys. Chapter six outlines my methodology, methods and design by which I undertook my research with my participants.

Chapters seven, eight, nine and ten provide the findings and analysis of my participants' accounts. Chapter seven explores my participants' experiences in secondary school and sixth form and explores capitals and resources that they identified as being reasons for the successful entry into elite higher education. Chapter eight continues with black men's thematic accounts of their experiences with class, race(ism) and gender (masculinities) issues while attending elite universities. Chapter nine explores my participants' narratives about bodily hexis: how they positioned their bodies with respect to the performance of their culture (Bourdieu 1977a, 1977b) and/or moderated their blackness (Wilkins 2012). In chapter ten I explore how my participants' different worldviews influenced the ways they responded to and/or managed racist and discriminatory occurrences. Chapter 11 provides an analytical summary of my findings. Chapter 12 concludes the dissertation by providing some policy recommendations of ways to increase black students awareness and access to elite universities while simultaneously reducing these pupils feelings of 'otherness'.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The contribution of this literature review chapter is to address a gap in the literature related to the experiences of black British men who have attended elite universities in the UK. The research explores the trajectories of British African Caribbean men (BACM) [2] graduates across the domains of secondary and sixth form education into elite Higher Education (HE). The literature on 'race'/ethnicity in higher education (HE), graduate and destinations of HE leavers often examines the broader black minority ethnic (BME) experiences. There is a paucity of published research specifically related to British African Caribbean (BAC) experiences in Higher Education (HE) - particularly within elite HE. Occasionally I will refer to the label 'BME', and 'black' instead of BAC or British African Caribbean men (BACM) because often the available data is inclusive of all BME groups - and either the extraction of data specific to BACs has not been examined or the quantitative data sets were too small to provide validity specific only to BACs. For purposes of this research, elite universities are inclusive of the Oxbridges, the Russell Group and the former 1994 Group institutions in England and Wales. This research explores 15 BACM's educational experiences. The theoretical framework for this research draws upon Bourdieu's (1977) concepts of habitus, capital and 'the field' and cultural reproduction. It progresses to discuss Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Solorzano 1998, Solorzano and Ceja 2000; Gillborn 1998, 2006a; Ladson-Billings 1998, 2005) and why it is an appropriate tool to implement with this research.

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[2]BACM will be representative of black men who were either born in the UK or have lived in the UK for the majority of their lives and identify themselves as being from British African Caribbean descent.

2.2 Counter-narratives: A Critical Race Theory Tool that Provides BACM a Voice in Research

Narratives can provide diverse insight into the 'happenings and actions of human lives' (Polkinghorne 1995: 5). Fundamental to gathering interview data is the significance given to stories that are narrated from the interviewee's perspective (Ritchie and Lewis 2003; Riessman 2003; 2008). Narratives can provide detailed accounts of individuals lives to help "grasp his or her point of view, in relation to his or her vision of the world" Malinowski (2002: 19). Narrative accounts can supply researchers with the space to observe the multifaceted identities of their participants. In the tradition of oral storytelling, narratives can be seen as a valuable way to explore the multiple-dimensional levels of participants' experiences by gaining meaning of the history, culture and identity of their co-constructed social reality (Stanley 1993). A more in-depth discussion on the co-construction of meaning within narratives is discussed in the methodology section.

As part of a marginalised group in society BACM have often been represented in a pathologised, stigmatised and exploitative manner in qualitative and quantitative educational research. This has for example, suggested that they have higher rates of behavioural issues and that they are less educationally capable or inclined with anti-dispositions towards learning (Gillborn 2008b, 2010a, 2010b; Gillborn et al. 2012; Wright et al. 1998; Crozier 2005; Howarth 2006; Kitching 2011; Phillips 2010; Archer 2008; Grover 2013). Originating in the U.S. over 30 years ago as a counter response to similar pathologisation and exploitive research on African American and Hispanic-Latino ethnicities in education, researchers (Solorzano and Yosso 2002; Cook and Dixson 2013; Ladson-Billings 1998; Ladson-Billings 2005) began engaging with new and alternative methods through the capturing of their participant's voices in their research studies. These methods came under the banner of Critical Race Theory (CRT) tools (Critical Race Theory and its origins are discussed in detail in chapter 5). A key tool in CRT is the use of counter-narratives or counter-stories. A counter-story is defined as:

> A method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences
> are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society). The
> counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging
> the majoritarian stories of racial privilege. (Solórzano and Yosso
> 2002: 32)

A CRT researcher acknowledges ethnic minorities' experiences and perspectives of their realities as an accepted basis of knowledge (Bernal 2002). CRT researchers are often motivated by interests to promote democracy by challenging stereotypes about marginalised people in an effort to make research processes more egalitarian by contributing to better understandings of their participants. According to Ladson-Billings (2006) a CRT researcher's role is to provide readers with a 'context for understanding the way inequality manifests in policy, practice, and people's experiences' (Ladson-Billings 2006: xi). CRT can be used as a mechanism for the shaking up 'dysconscious' racisms. Dysconscious racisms are uncritical habits and behaviours that implicitly 'accept dominant white norms and privileges' with no acknowledgment of alternative views of society (King 2015: 135). People who espouse this habit of mind do not lack 'an *absence* of consciousness ... but an *impaired* consciousness' (King 2015: 135). Using CRT and reflection to review my participant's counter-stories may shed new insight on their secondary and higher educational experiences with 'race', class, gender and forms of racism. CRT methods privilege the voices and experiences of the marginalised as a way of challenging marginalisation and societal power constructs. CRT used in educational participant experiences can be seen as a way of raising awareness of educational issues that may lead to transformation in terms of environmental improvement in academic fields. These methods can provide an alternative view of research on ethnic minorities through the acceptance of their own self-defined perspectives of their experiences. Their counter-narratives can provide insightful responses and/or challenges to existing literature about their ethnic group's experiences and identities (Solorzano and Yosso 2002; Ladson-Billings and Donnor 2005; Gillborn 2005; King 2015).

CRT also takes into account Strauss and Corbin's (1978) concept of theoretical sensitivity which demonstrates one's awareness of the subtleties of meaning in

data. Researchers can approach a research environment with varying amounts of sensitivity depending upon previous knowledge, awareness and experience relevant to the researched area. This may be developed further during the research process. Theoretical sensitivity brings out circumspection of the subtleties of the meaning of data by having ability to gain meaning and understanding of data while consequently being able to distinguish the important from the unimportant. As a researcher of African American descent I believe my background enabled me to be more theoretically sensitive to my British Caribbean males' counter-narrative experiences. A more in-depth discussion of CRT is provided in Chapter four of this literature review.

The use of counter-narrative experiences linked with identities is contested. Some researchers have questioned the degree to which an individual's experience can be understood as 'authentic knowledge' (Jackson 2003; Lather 2009; Chadderton 2011). These researchers argue that the privileging of experience is undermined if the researcher believes that his or her participants' have access to a single coherent reality which they are able to understand and express. Thus, any research that includes counter-narratives of participants' experiences needs to acknowledge that the participant is offering an account of their experiences as remembered in the here and now.

2.3 Making Sense of Participants' Stories: Subjectivity and Co-Construction of Meaning

It is important to recognise that participants' meanings can be expressed in other ways besides speech, such as body language, humour, silence and dress, which can also inform the researcher (MacLure 2009). In interviews, research participants may resist certain lines of questioning. Questions asked of participants may be unclear to them – or they may conflict, camouflage or misrepresent things in their stories, particularly if they feel uncomfortable with a topic that is being discussed. Participant data can also affect a researcher emotionally or politically (Walkerdine et al. 2004) and she or he may surmise things in reaction to the participants' words or express things that are not explicitly spoken. Thus when researching my participants it was important that I acknowledged the sensitive and subjective nature of my research. Walkerdine

et al. (2001: 84), say that *'no matter how many methodological guarantees we try to put in place, the subjective always intrudes'*. However, Clarke (2005) asserts that when researchers really listen to their participants and enable them to tell their stories, researchers are unlikely to hear what they expect. The story that a researcher conveys has been filtered through the lenses of his or her own values, beliefs and constructs and is "dependent upon our prior understandings of the subject of our observation" (Siraj-Blatchford and Siraj-Blatchford 2006: 237). Additionally the way that participants perceive their researcher influences the emergent data. Therefore, it could be argued that a researcher does not so much collect data as much as it is generated though a co-construction of the researcher's involvement with his or her participants.

In dissent of CRT researchers' contentions that counter-narratives and student voice may be useful in promoting empowerment for the benefit of social justice, some researchers (Kvale 2006) view this perspective as simplistic since all research can be seen as exploitative and involving power imbalances. As a researcher I am always conscious and cognizant of the subjective nature of research collection. The counter-narratives that my participants share with me are essentially data (Kvale 2006), which I – not my participants – make the principal decisions about how to interpret and represent in the analyses (Crozier 2003; Jackson and Mazzei 2009; Chadderton 2013).

Even where participants are involved in the interpretation of the data, this does not mean that their experiences are "authentic" (Lather 2001). As discussed in more detail in my methodology chapter, I acknowledge that participants' voices are inevitably transformed by the research process. Research that claims to represent the voices of others can only really provide a *representation* of participants' accounts of their experiences. However, like Skeggs, I believe that the 'intimate positioning of myself with "others" helps me to be closer to my participants and 'enables me to see differences and feel inequality' (Skeggs 1997a: 132–3). It is more realistic to suggest that my research involves an ongoing exchange of power and resistance which may aid in re-centring the dialogue about BACMs experience in elite universities.

2.4 The Historical Context of BACS in Britain

Within the historical, political and social context, there is extensive historical evidence of black migration to the UK since the seventeenth century (Law and Henfrey 1981, Law et al. 2008; Walvin 1973). In the nineteenth century black communities were established in British cities such as Cardiff and Liverpool where social relations of inter-ethnic marriage and cohabitation were constructed and continue today (Berthoud 2005). Post-World War II Caribbean colonial citizens were encouraged to migrate to the UK to help rebuild its tattered economy. The government enticed African Caribbeans to Britain with the incentive of the 'British Dream' of the opportunity to enjoy economic prosperity. During the 1950s and 1960s Britain's promotion of mass immigration of African Caribbeans led to their numbers growing from approximately 18,000 people in 1951 to 548,000 by 1971 (Peach 1991). In reality Coard (1971) and Ramdin (1987), affirm that the UK emigration plan was nefariously devised to provide Britain with cheap labour from its former colonies for which these economic migrants would receive the least desirable jobs, housing, pay and schooling which would position them at the bottom of the working class ladder – regardless of the work skills[3] that they had brought with them from the Caribbean (Glass 1961; Ramdin 1987; Cross and Johnson 1988; Collins 2001). Additionally a constant stream of negative stereotypes of black people in the media fuelled divisions between black and white working classes who vied for limited resources (Coard 1971). Jones (2003) explains that Conservative Member of Parliament Enoch Powell's 1968 rhetorical movement against black immigration in defence of English identity, saw immigration as a hindrance to British people. Powell contended that working-class English people faced threats to their homes, their jobs, their identity and the very nature of British society due to the influx of non-white immigration. At the initial time of his expression of disapproval with non-white immigration, several polls suggested

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[3]One reason that led to the demotion or deskilling of BAC men lay in the disparity between the West Indian and British economies. African Caribbean emigrants found that their prior handyman or jack-of-all-trades skills that were invaluable in their predominantly agricultural and craftsman focussed countries of origin were considered worthless in the industrial UK. There was also the question of certification. Many Caribbeans who possessed technical and professional skills such as engineering found that their expertise was not deemed as a credible or recognised qualification in the UK which relegated most of these new emigrants to low skilled menial jobs (see Ramdin 1987; Cross and Johnson 1988; Collins 2001).

that his opinions were shared by 74 per cent to 82 per cent[4] of the UK population (Schwarz 1996, 2011). It is suggested that Powell's view on non-white immigration were anti-black and racist (Law et al. 2008). By the 1970s a hostile political backlash to the growing influx of people of colour in the UK ensued. Interestingly the UK government was responsible for originally initiating the call for more immigrants that it later decided required the imposition immigration controls on African Caribbeans and other British colonials. The Government achieved this goal by discharging these peoples' formerly inalienable right to UK citizenship through a sequence of legislations from 1962 through to 1997 (Goulbourne 2002; Marwick 2003; Rosen 2003).

There is extensive evidence of pervasive anti-black racism and discrimination associated with violence, hostility and the denial of the same opportunities as white people in housing and the workplace (Law et al. 2008; Berthoud and Blekesaune, 2006). Direct and indirect racial discrimination and exclusion of access to private rented accommodation, social housing and owner occupation in the UK has also been extensively documented with further evidence of discrimination in access to mortgages and use of estate and letting agents (Harrison and Phillips 2003; Ratcliffe 2002; Reeve and Robinson 2007; Robinson 2007; Tomlins 1999). Within the workplace, Black Caribbean and Black African men continue to experience higher unemployment rates, higher levels of semi-routine work and lower hourly earnings than white British people (Heath and Cheung 2006; Li and Heath 2008). Compared with other ethnic minorities, black Caribbean men[5], face considerable employment penalties. Heath and Cheung (2006) found that their unemployment differentials could not be explained by the age, education or foreign birth. Amongst second generation British born and educated black African Caribbean men[6], they found significant net disadvantages in unemployment, earnings and occupational attainment in the labour market. Heath and Cheung call these ethnic disadvantages 'ethnic

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[4] Gallup recorded 74 per cent, Objective Research Centre (ORC) 82 per cent, National Opinion Poll (NOP) 67 per cent, and the *Express* 79 per cent in favour of Powell's anti-black immigration contentions (Swartz, 2011: 48).

[5] Unlike black Caribbean men, black Caribbean women were found to have higher employment rates than similar white women. Caribbean women appear not to face any disadvantage associated with lack of employment – although their 'bonus' (i.e. reverse penalty) was steadily declining until the early 1990s (Heath and Cheung 2006).

[6] Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnicities also experience a similar ethnic penalty

penalties', a term used to refer to the poorer labour market outcomes that ethnic minorities experience even after educational attainment and age factors have been taken into account (Heath and Cheung 2006).

Within the criminal justice system, it is well documented that British African Caribbean people are treated very differently with them standing disproportionately higher risks than white suspects of being arrested and tried (Bowling and Phillips 2002) . Furthermore, BACs are six times more likely than a white person to be stopped and searched, almost three times more likely to be arrested and receive longer average sentences than white criminals in England and Wales (ONS 2013; Wright 2013).

Notwithstanding best efforts, the Department for Work and Pensions research for the Government's Equalities Review which was created to develop a Single Equality Act, found that:

> Despite 40 years of legislation to protect people from discrimination, evidence suggests that there are still social, economic, cultural or other factors that (…) limit or deny individuals the opportunity to make the best of their abilities and to contribute to society fully. (Berthoud and Blekesaune 2006: 1)

In other words, recent policies and initiatives aimed at increasing ethnic minority employment had not made significant impact on reducing the disparity between whites and black ethnic minorities. That reality of ethnic penalties in Britain are well-established facts. Racism manifests itself in a multiplicity of ways ranging from institutional discrimination to socio-economic disadvantage – all of which have also had an effect on black people's educational outcomes. Hall states that there is a tendency to omit race via a process of 'white amnesia' from the internal dynamics of 'hegemonic structure "whiteness"' in British society, in an effort to repress history (Hall 1978a: 26). He contends that immigration and race have become external flow problems that the government wants to control. Furthermore I argue that 'race' has been explicitly associated and intersected with class for BACs since their arrival in the UK, as they have persistently expressed their experiences and struggles with unfair working and housing conditions – and unjust and unequal educational opportunities for their children

which are discussed in the next section, 2.5: 'the black student experience of secondary education'.

2.5 The Black Student Experience of Secondary Education

This section addresses the historical context of BME and BAC pupils in UK secondary education. For over forty years there has been a plethora of literature that discusses the failure of the black child and in particular BACM in secondary education from their low attainment and high exclusion rates (Coard 1971; Gillborn 1998; Mac an Ghaill 1988; OFSTED 2006; Sewell 1997; Wright et al. 1998) to low teacher perceptions and expectations of their capabilities (Modood and Shiner 1994; Gillborn 2008a). The London Development Agency's research on the educational experiences of BAC pupils found that they regularly experienced disproportionate amounts of impartial treatment. The report consensus was that:

> Low teacher expectations played a part in the underachievement of African-Caribbean learners. In addition, inadequate levels of positive teacher attention; unfair behaviour management practices, disproportionately high levels of exclusions and an inappropriate curriculum took their toll on levels of achievement. (The LDA report 2004: 7)

Research suggests that the relationships between teachers and students play an integral role in rates of exclusions. Therefore it is not surprising that disproportionate numbers of black children are excluded from schools (Wright et al. 1998; Howarth 2006; Bull 2006). BACM have also been traditionally overrepresented within schools designed for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) or categorised as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) (Gillborn and Gipps 1996; and Wright et al. 2000; Graham and Robinson 2004; Pather and Strand 2006; DfES 2012; Strand 2012[7]) Furthermore Gillborn (1995, 1998,

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[7]Strand's (2012) recent research with national data found that forty years after Coard's (1971) work, black Caribbean and Mixed white black Caribbean students are *more than* twice as likely to be identified with
(BESD) compared to white British students. Furthermore these minority groups continue to be disproportionately identified even after controlling for socio-economic disadvantage (Strand 2012).

2008a and 2008b) asserts that black pupils were disproportionately controlled and criticised, not because they broke clear school rules any more frequently, but because teachers perceived them as a threat. This process has been identified through routinised curriculum procedures and assessment policies and practices which have resulted in 'marginalizing black pupils' (Gill et al. 1992: pviii).   Interestingly, research from Local Education Authorities (LEAs) indicates that initial academic achievement of BAC pupils is often higher at Key Stage 1 when they begin school, than that of other ethnic groups. Yet over time their over performance declines to the extent that BAC pupils end up being one of the lowest performing groups by Key Stage 4 (DfES 2003a; Gillborn 2008a, 2008b). Archer and Francis (2007) contend that part of the reason for this decline is due to the negative racist pedagogy that minority ethnic pupils have long experienced in Western schools. The above-mentioned research suggests that heavy emphasis on negative interpretations of behaviour and the lack of emphasis on academic ability combined with low expectations is institutionalised within many schools and has had a detrimental effect on the education of BAC children.

For decades black minority ethnic (BME) groups within British schooling were systematically funnelled into mainstream white British education that failed to recognise diversity or multiculturalism (e.g. Mullard 1985; Swan Report 1985). Black children were assumed to be a detrimental burden to white school achievement, thus they were bussed to different area schools in an effort to spread out and minimise their negative impact across schools. School authorities hoped such dispersal would encourage BME children to 'assimilate' and adopt the dominant white culture (Archer and Francis 2007; Mullard 1982). It is contended, that from the 1960s through the 1990s, various UK Governments disappointed BAC parents and their children through a failure to include an Afrocentric perspective to education and culture within British schools (Tronya 1987; Gillborn and Gipps 1996; Gillborn and Ladson-Billings 2004). Inclusion within the curriculum of diverse images of people of colour and BAC contributions to the UK history and society could have acted as a positive factor to marginalised young peoples' identities and learning (Gillborn and Ladson-Billings 2004). Researchers contend that a multicultural curriculum

could act as a counterbalance to the biased hegemonic Eurocentric view of education, history and culture in the UK that essentially makes black peoples contributions to society invisible (Sewell, 1997; Jiwani and Regan, 1998; Gillborn and Gipps 1996; Gillborn and Ladson-Billings 2004). Fortunately policy approaches to 'race' have evolved through the years, however the pathologisation of minority ethnic pupils as underachievers remains an issue today (Meighan et al. 2007; Gillborn 2008b). Archer and Francis (2007) point out that within educational, governmental and political arenas, issues of 'race'/ethnicity are almost exclusively acknowledged today within the context of under-achievement. They found that this is apparent in issues related to ethnic minorities as well as working class white students of educational underachievement:

> The issues of ''race''/ethnicity have been subject to "a pernicious turn in policy whereby the discourse on engagement in inequalities issues has been naturalised into a discourse of neoliberal meritocracy and individual responsibility 'or blame' for BME achievement differentials … [which]… denies racism as a potential reason for differences in achievement levels of BME and white students and hides inequalities within congratulatory public statements. (Archer and Francis 2007: 2)

Archer and Francis (2007) contend that issues of 'race', ethnicity, racism and class in educational achievement have been side-lined in favour of governmental and educational discourses focused on meritocracy and personal responsibility for one's academic achievements.

2.6 The Location of Black Pupils

Historically, BAC pupils have been concentrated within working class, often deprived urban areas where they comprise of a significant proportion of the population. Currently 31 per cent of London's population belongs to non-white ethnic groups (13.3 per cent Asian or Asian British, 10.6 per cent black or black British). Over 46 per cent of the British BME families reside in London (Daycare Trust 2010). BME children are more likely to live in low income households (DfES 2005). Research indicates that socio-economic background is a strong indicator of educational success, with working class children generally faring

worse than those from middle class backgrounds (Ball et al. 2002; Reay et al. 2001a, Reay et al. 2009a, 2009b, Reay et al. 2011). Currently, white or black Caribbean boys eligible for free school meals are among those making the least amount of academic progress in schools (House of Commons 2012). The Sutton Trust highlights the fact that:

> independent school pupils were three and a half times more likely than Free School Meal (FSM) pupils to attain five GCSEs with grades A*-C including English and maths … [and] … at the 25 most academically selective universities in England, only 2% (approximately 1,300 pupils each year) of the student intake was made up of FSMs, compared with 72.2% of other state school pupils, and just over a quarter of the intake (25.8%) from independent schools. (Sutton Trust 2010: 2)

This data demonstrates socio-economic factors are an influential challenge to educational attainment. The statistics are even more troubling when reviewed in relation to elite universities, 'at the most selective universities of all, including Oxbridge, less than 1 per cent of students are FSM pupils – compared with nearly half the intake from independent schools' (Sutton Trust 2010: 2).

However, while poverty is a partial explanation of educational attainment, the correlation is stronger for white ethnic groups than for BAC pupils (DfES 2003a). Specifically, social class does not appear to explain why BACMs from middle class backgrounds do less well than working class boys from other backgrounds (Education Commission 2004; Strand 2011). The Macpherson report (1999) asserts that 'Institutional racism' (IR) is a primary factor in the longstanding controversy over low attainment levels amongst BAC pupils. IR is defined as:

> The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. (Macpherson 1999; paragraph 6.34)

The Macpherson report both identified and provided a condemnation of systemic IR within the police services. However the report extended its purview further to include the condemnation of any government service that fails the public. It has been asserted by many researchers that the British educational system meets these criteria (e.g. Coard 1971; Mac an Ghaill 1988; Graham and Robinson 2004; Richardson 2005, Gillborn 1998; 2005; 2006a).

2.7 Black Students in Higher Education

The relationship between ethnicity and higher education is somewhat more complex than the story of BAC secondary education. For over a decade research has indicated that a higher proportional percentage of BACM and ethnic minorities attend HE in the UK than the proportion of the white peer group (Modood 2012). Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) data supports this finding in its national analysis 'UCAS End of Cycle Report, December 2014' on full-time undergraduate higher education (UCAS 2014). For people living in England, Wales and Northern Ireland UCAS found that entry rates to university for all ethnic groups increased in 2014, reaching the highest recorded values for each group – except the Chinese group, where entry rates in 2011 were higher. Women had higher entry rates than men within both Free School Meal (FSM) and non-FSM populations. Non-FSM pupils were twice as likely to enter HE as FSM pupils (UCAS 2014: 88). Class had an impact on who attended university in 2014 and the type of university that they attended. The entry rate of non-FSM pupils to higher tariff[8] providers was 4.1 times larger than that of FSM pupils (UCAS 2014: 89).

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[8]UCAS assigns a tariff score to full-time HE applicants' entry qualifications according to the grades or levels they achieved. Tariff scores are often a minimum requirement used for entry determination. In recent years analysts have used the tariff scores required by institutions to divide them into groups based on whether their overall entry requirements are "high tariff", "medium tariff" or "low tariff" (UCAS 2012: A New Classification of Higher Education Institutions. Online. Available at:
http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/assets/assets/documents/Futuretrack_Summary_2012_-_A_new_classification_of_HEIs.pdf

UCAS' December 2013 End of Cycle Report[9] provided more insightful data on issues of ethnicity and class in relation to 18 year olds who had attended State schools and had gone on to attend higher tariff universities (Oxbridge and Russell Group institutions). It found that entry rates for FSM and non-FSM pupils from all ethnic groups to higher tariff institutions had increased since 2006 with the largest proportional increases coming from the black ethnic group. The black ethnic group experienced a 20 per cent increase for non-FSM black students and an impressive 60 per cent increase for black FSM students entering higher tariff educational institutions. However, despite this surprising increase, by looking at the full purple line in table 1 (below) it is apparent that the black group, particularly non-FSM pupils continue to suffer from a huge disadvantage compared to other ethnic minorities (UCAS 2013). White FSM pupils are the only group who have the lower levels of entry into higher tariff institutions groups with respect to catching up with the other non FSM ethnic groups who attend high tariff institutions.

Table 1: UCAS Free School Meal Data on Entry Rates to High Tariff Institutions

English 18 year olds from state schools by selected ethnic group: entry rates to higher tariff institutions by free school meal status
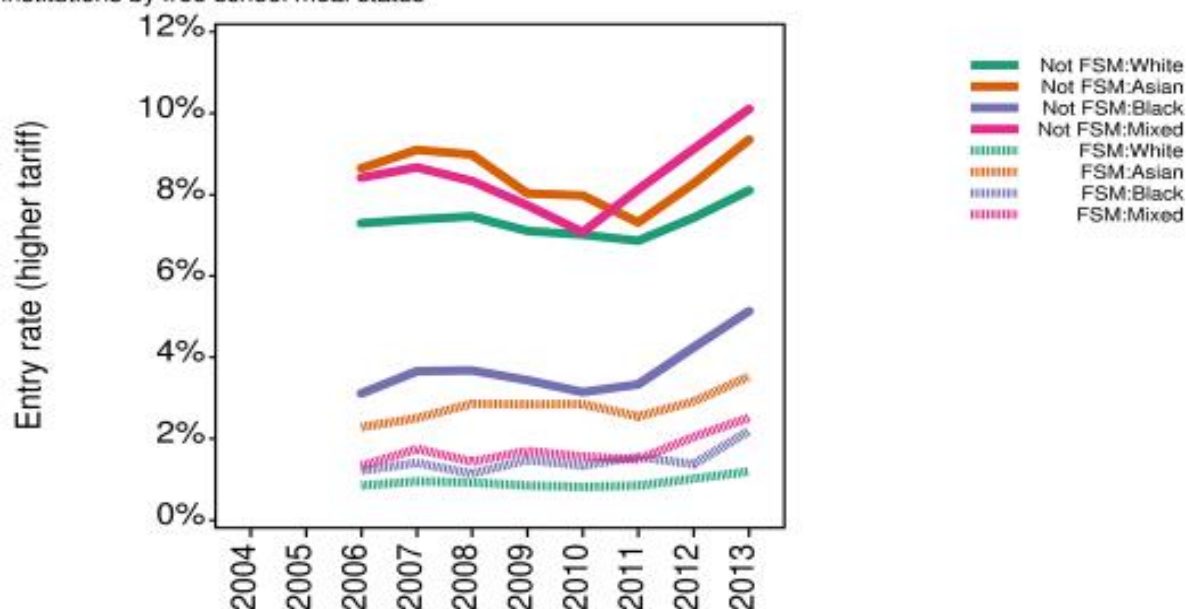
Source: Figure 73 from 'UCAS End of Cycle Report 2013', www.ucas.com

 Source: UCAS. 2013: 79

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[9]Note: UCAS's 2012 and 2014 reports do not address ethnicity, only class via FSM and non FSM pupils. I have provided the most current available date on 'race' and class from UCAS's December 2013.

Early 2000s large-scale quantitative studies exploring widening participation identified BME students as being more likely than white students to participate in HE (Connor et al. 2004). However on average, students from black Caribbean and Bangladeshi backgrounds were more likely to be concentrated in low status institutions compared to Chinese, other Asian and Mixed Ethnicity students (Connor et al. 2004). Their research also found an over-representation of BME students in HE compared with their white counterparts with a predisposition to study certain subjects, such as science, technology engineering and mathematics (STEMS[10]) and law. These researchers found that the tendency for a predominant number of BME students to study certain subjects contributed to deviations in their acceptance, retention and attainment in HE. In other words these researchers' evidenced that black students' disproportionate inclination to apply for STEM and other highly competitive and frequently oversubscribed subjects is a significant factor that serves to further reduce these applicants' chances of being accepted at elite universities. However within the context of Oxbridge, Boliver (2014b: para 19) disputes this contention:

> [It] … is at odds with data obtained via Freedom of Information requests from Oxford University and Cambridge University …[which] revealed much lower offer rates for ethnic minority applicants to medicine – a heavily oversubscribed course at both universities – even for those with three A* grades at A-level.

It is not entirely clear why more black British students[11] are not accepted at Russell Group institutions. What is known is that their under-representation is the result of multiple factors in a multi-stage process that begins long before the reach the university application stage. The Russell Group does not publish its admissions statistics. In order to assess these institutions, admissions outcomes complex extrapolation and analysis of UCAS data is required, which is what Boliver explored (Boliver 2014a; 2014b). In concurrence with her

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[10] Top areas that BME students studied in England included: medicine, dentistry, mathematical sciences, business, accounting, computer science and engineering, technology and law
[11] In addition to black British students Boliver's (2015) research also found that young people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds who apply to highly selective universities were less likely to be offered places than their comparably qualified white peers.

findings we could better understand and have more answers 'if [the Russell Group] were to grasp the nettle and publish detailed and transparent analyses of their applications and admissions data' (Boliver 2014b: para. 19).

In the past ten years BME groups have represented four percent of students entering Russell Group universities (Boliver 2013). According to the 2011 census and based on HESA data for the 2012/2013 academic year, British African Caribbean young people between the ages of 15-29 years comprise 3.3 percent of the population in England and Wales, with British Caribbeans representing 1.1 per cent of this figure and British Africans 2.2 per cent. Black young people represent 6.1 per cent of all students attending UK universities. Yet only 2.6 per cent of students attending Russell Group institutions are black (Boliver 2013). In Comparison, 81.2 per cent of young people in England and Wales are between the ages of 15-29 years. 80.4 per cent of people attending UK universities are white and 82.8 per cent of all students attending Russell Group institutions are white (Boliver 2014b).

Over 50 per cent of all domiciled black students attend three post-1992 universities located in central London: London Metropolitan, South Bank, and East London (Shilliam 2014: para 38) with one university, London Metropolitan University, admitting more black Caribbean students than all of the elite 24 Russell Group universities (THE 2012; Sims 2008). Four times more BACM attend post-1992 universities than all of the 'old universities' (Elevation Networks 2012). Shiner and Modood's (2002) and Connor et al. (2004) research assertions are reconfirmed by Boliver (2013, 2014b) who found that despite entering higher education in good numbers, there is a tendency for some black and minority ethnic groups to be concentrated at less selective institutions located at the bottom of the university league tables (Modood and Shiner 1994; Shiner and Modood 2002; Boliver 2013).

Furthermore, the Higher Education Academy's Equality Change Unit 2008 Assessment of higher education found it problematic that old universities were more likely to be better resourced with degrees received from these institutions providing higher premiums in the job market (Singh 2009). Fielding et al. (2008)

went further by observing that institutions with a high proportion of BME students experience a lower student satisfaction rating than those with proportionally less BME students (see also Richardson 2008). It is contended that the consolidation of universities and polytechnics into a sole educational system has led to increased stratification that has created a new ranking of institutions (Reay et al. 2001b; Pugsley 2004). Consequently queries concerning ethnicity and class in relation to tertiary education are being raised not only about who goes to university, but also about 'who goes where, and why?' (Ball, Reay and David 2002: 354), implying a pattern of 'locked-in inequality' (Gillborn 2008b: 64).

Table 2: Census 2011 and HESA 2012/2013 data on domestic students attending UK universities (Source: Boliver 2014b)

	% 15-29 year olds in England and Wales[1]	% students attending universities in the UK[2]	% students attending Russell Group universities[2]
White	81.2	80.4	82.8
Black Caribbean	1.1	1.5	0.5
Black African	2.2	4.4	2.1
Black Other	0.6	0.3	0.1
Pakistani	2.8	2.4	1.8
Bangladeshi	1.2	0.8	0.6
Indian	3.2	3.4	4.2
Chinese	1.5	0.9	1.5
Other Asian	1.9	1.7	1.8
Other (incl. mixed)	4.5	4.2	4.5

[1] Census data for 2011 (https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/dc2101ew)
[2] HESA data for the 2012/13 academic year (students of unknown ethnicity have been excluded from calculations)

Table 3:

2011 Census Data on British Caribbean and British African Students in Elite HEIs Higher Education[1]

Ethnicity	% of 15 - 19 year olds in England and Wales	% of students attending university in the UK	% of students attending Russell Group universities[3]
White	81.2	80.4	82.8
Black Caribbean	1.1	1.5	0.5
Black African	2.2	4.4	2.1
Black Other	0.6	0.3	0.1

[1] Census data from: Boliver, V. 2014. Hard evidence: why aren't there more black British students at elite universities?. *The Conversation* 44(July)
[2] Census data for 2011: https://nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/dc2101ew
[3] Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data for 2012/2013 academic year (students of unknown ethnicity have been excluded from calculations)

(Source: Boliver 2014b)

In Table 3 (above) 2011 Census and HESA data show that 82.8 percent of students attending Russell Group institutions are white compared to just 0.5 percent of British Caribbean Students and 2.1 per cent of British African Students (ONS 2011 in Boliver 2014b).

BAC student rates of admission within Oxbridge are lower than the other Russell Groups (Alexander and Arday 2015; ECU 2014). Tables 4 and 5 (below) provide the 2013 admissions rates at Oxbridge. The Oxford 2013 rates of admission indicate that 25.4 per cent of white applicants 13 per cent of black British African applicants and 14.3 per cent of black British Caribbean

applicants were admitted. At Cambridge 29 per cent of white applicants, 9.9 per cent of black British African applicants and 24.3 per cent of black British Caribbean applicants were admitted. On the surface these percentages do not seem that disquieting. However when one looks at the actual numbers of 2013 BAC applicants who applied to Oxbridge there is reason to be concerned. Of the 177 black British African submissions to Oxford only 23 applicants were accepted. Only 5 of the 35 black British Caribbean Oxford applicants were accepted. Whereas 2,233 of the 8,782 white applicants to Oxford were successful. 15 of the 152 black British African student applications to Cambridge were successful. Only nine of the 37 black British Caribbean applications to Cambridge were successful. Whereas 2,118 of the 7,307 white applications to Cambridge were successful. Thus the percentage rate of successful applications of white students (25.4 percent) compared black British African and Caribbean applicants is almost half the rate of success (13 and 14 percent respectively.

At Oxford the white applicants success rate is 29 percent compared to 9.9 percent for black British African Students and 24.3 percent for black British Caribbean students. This suggests that black British African Students have successful acceptance rate is almost a third of white applicants. Whereas black Caribbean students fare better in comparison to white applicants with rates of acceptance only being 4.7 percentage points apart. However, I would suggest that the 24.3 percent rate of acceptance for black British Caribbean students is somewhat misleading as only 37 students even applied to this university in 2013.

Table 4:

Oxford Applications, acceptances and success rates of home students by ethnic origin, 2013[4]

	Applications		Acceptances		Success rate
	No	%	No	%	%
White	8782	80.7	2233	86.1	25.4
Black or Black British - African	177	1.6	23	0.9	13.0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	35	0.3	5	0.2	14.3
TOTAL[5]	11556		2643		22.9

[4]Available at: http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/admissions-statistics/ethnic-origin

[5] Total applications and acceptances are inclusive of the following ethnic backgrounds: Gypsy or Traveller, Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi, Asian or Asian British – Indian, Asian or Asian British - Pakistani, Other Asian background, Other Black background, Mixed - White & Asian, Mixed - White & Black African, Other Mixed background, Chinese, Arab, and Other Ethnic background

Table 5:

Cambridge Applications, acceptances and success rates of home students by ethnic origin, 2013[6]

	Applications		Acceptances		Success rate
	No	%	No	%	%
White	7,307	76.7	2,118	83.1	29.0
Black or Black British - African	152	1.6	14	0.5	9.2
Black or Black British - Caribbean	37	0.4	9	0.4	24.3
TOTAL[7]	9,526		2,548		26.7

[6] Extracted from: Table 8.1 Home applicants and acceptances to Cambridge by ethnic origin and gender 2013
Available at:
http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/sites/www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/files/publications/undergrad_admissions_statistics_2013_cycle.pdf
[7] Total applications and acceptances are inclusive of the following ethnic backgrounds: Black Other, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Asian Other, Mixed White & Black Caribbean, Mixed White & Black African, Mixed White & Asian, Mixed Other, and Other

Persistent inequalities have given rise to political concerns that young people from minority and disadvantaged backgrounds are failing to access more prestigious universities (Brown and Hesketh 2004). Some have contended that black students are not getting the requisite grades to get into elite universities and that the lack of admissions to elite universities is due to black students lack of success in secondary education. A spokeswoman for Oxford university admissions subscribes to this belief and said 'in 2009, 29,000 white students got the requisite grades for Oxford compared to just 452 black students'

(Guttenplan 2010). However a 10 year study of UCAS data challenges this imputation. Boliver (2013) analysed data from 1996 to 2006 on 49,000 UCAS applicants related to social class origin, school background, ethnic group, and actual grades achieved at A-level or equivalent. She determined that**:**

> Pupils from state schools and ethnic minority groups needed higher   A-level results than those from private schools to get into Britain's top universities. (…) Figures show that state school candidates who apply to Russell Group universities, on average, are likely to have two grades higher than private school applicants. Those who secure places have at least one grade higher than those from private schools. (Garner 2013: para 1 and 5)

Boliver's study also found that the problem was partly due to people from state school backgrounds not applying to the elite Russell Group universities. However, she also found that for ethnic minority applicants (black and Asian applicants), part of the problem was also down to '*something else'* going on during the admissions process. University applicants with the same A-level grades were found to be equally likely to apply to Russell Group universities regardless of their ethnic background. However students from black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds were shown to be significantly less likely than white applicants to be offered places, even with the same results (Weatherall 2013; Shiner and Modood 2002; Boliver 2004, 2013; Noden et al. 2014; Parel and Ball 2013; Parel and Boliver 2014; Zimdars et al. 2009). Boliver (2015) asserts that there has been research to support this peculiar reality for over 20 years (see Taylor 1992). Furthermore, figures obtained from a Freedom of Information Act (FOI) request by the Guardian for applications to the university in 2010 and 2011 revealed that in some of the most competitive courses white students are up to twice as likely to get a place as black applicants, when they have the same A-levels marks as their white counterparts (Parel and Ball 2013). FOI figures revealed that in Oxford University's most competitive subjects, white to BME students disadvantage was more disparate.

Within Oxford University's economics and management courses, 19.1 per cent of white applicants received offers, compared with only 9.3 per cent for those from ethnic minority background. White students were more than twice as likely to receive an offer to study medicine as those from ethnic minorities – even

when the same triple A* grades had been achieved[12]. In summary, Boliver's research found that in certain subjects BME students get fewer offers from Oxbridge than white students – even when they have the same grades as their white counterparts.

It is important to note that in addition to Oxbridge, representation of black students throughout the Russell Group remains low. Black students[13] remained at the same percentage of the whole student population in Russell Group universities in 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 - 2.7 per cent (ECU 2013: 203; ECU 2014: 358), yet they represent 3.3 per cent of the UK population. Although this rate is not far from their actual representative figure of the country's population, it is important to recall that on the whole undergraduate black students are overrepresented in higher education and in 2012/13 experienced the largest increase in the proportion of all BME students attending university to 6.3 per cent (ECU 2014:114). Once this overrepresentation is taken into account, the Russell Group's admission rates of black students appear less positive. Thus black student representation has continued to increase in non-Russell Group institutions, particularly at the less prestigious universities that comprise of the Million+ Group[14]. These institutions have the highest percentage of black students' representative of their undergraduate populations (11.9 per cent). Additionally black students at the million+ group comprise of the highest percentage of all ethnic minority groups represented on its campuses.

One suggestion for the 'something else' that may be occurring in elite university admissions processes is that there is misrecognised (Bourdieu 1998) ethnic bias arising on the part of people on the admissions committees (Boliver 2015). Consequently, Boliver (2015) and other researchers (Back 2004; Pilkington

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[12]43 per cent of white students who went on to receive three or more A* grades at A-level got offers compare with only 22.1 percent of minority students

[13] The Equality Change Unit (ECU) defines black as being black or black British: Caribbean, black or black British: African and other black background

[14] The Million + groups is comprised of the following universities: Abertay University, Anglia Ruskin University, Bath Spa University, University of Bedfordshire, University of Bolton, Canterbury Christ Church University, University of Cumbria, University of East London, Edinburgh Napier University, London Metropolitan University, London South Bank University, Middlesex University, Staffordshire University, University of Sunderland, University of West London ,University of the West of Scotland and Southampton Solent University (http://www.millionplus.ac.uk/who-we-are/our-affiliates/).

2012) argue that it may be the case that this supposition is overlooked because universities are usually regarded by staff who work in them as liberal and progressive spaces where discrimination and racism are generally presumed to be missing from higher education. However the National Union of Students and the Equality Challenge Unit's research on ethnic minority students and staff experiences in UK universities found prejudice to be customary (National Union of Students 2011; Equality Challenge Unit 2011 in Boliver 2015).

The full picture of BAC students' low representation in elite universities cannot be placed solely on admissions committees misrecognised acceptance criteria determinations. Through their research with less privileged students, some researchers (Reay et al. 2005; Boliver 2013; Shiner and Noden 2014) have evidenced that students' internal dismissal to consider applying to elite universities could be a factor in low rates of admissions. They contend that some white and ethnic minority working class students make conscious decisions not to apply to more prestigious institutions. These choices are often made because the students do not think they will 'fit in' and they perceive the institutions as not being for 'people like them' (Reay et al. 2005: 19). Researchers have described these prospective students decision-making process as examples of 'psychological self-exclusion' (Reay et. al. 2001: 863). Shiner and Noden's (2014) research reaffirmed students self-proscribed exclusion from elite universities. They found that there was a tendency amongst black Caribbean and black African students to target their applications at non-elite universities that were located near where they lived. With the majority of black and BME students attending secondary school in London, I have termed this propensity to pursue tertiary education near home the 'London' effect, though the Birmingham or Manchester effect is an equally suitable term.

There is a disproportionate amount of literature that focuses on the negative issues within the black community such as high incarceration rates (Walby et al. 2010), secondary school underachievement (DfES 2006b, 2006c; 2007), exclusion and expulsion in secondary school (Gillborn 2008b; Wright 2010; Wright et al. 2000, 2012; Crozier 2005) and high levels of academic failure at all levels of education and graduation/completion rates (Richardson 2008). In

contrast to this literature, my research is specific to the experiences of those successful BACM who represent what I have termed *multiple minority status*: They are black, male and are successfully mobile in their graduation from predominantly white elite higher education institutions.

2.8 Higher Education (Outcomes) Hierarchies and Social Mobility

Higher education is frequently considered as a mechanism to foster social mobility. However it has often resulted in recreating existing deep-rooted patterns of hierarchical class and privilege (Bourdieu et al. 1990; Bourdieu 1998; Brown and Hesketh 2004). Even with the reorganisation of higher education from an elite system to one designed to support mass HE, those who are from more affluent backgrounds have tended to benefit more than those from working class backgrounds. Instead of having a positive effect on the reduction of class stratification, it is contended that the expansion of mass higher education has contributed to a widening of inequality through a decrease in social mobility (Hills et al. 2010). While higher education recreates existing class hierarchies, its role in relation to ethnic disadvantage is more subtle. In general, black and minority ethnic students enrol in universities in high numbers, often from somewhat underprivileged positions (Modood 2004; Connor et al. 2003; Connor et al. 2004; Archer and Hutchings 2000).

However when academic outcomes are measured there are differences in white compared to black students' attainment. HEFCE's analysis of ethnic students' progression in full time higher education indicates that amongst students who are awarded a first or upper second, white students had a 25 per cent higher attainment rate than black students (Singh 2011).

Participation in higher education has promoted upward social mobility within minority and working class groups (Iganski et al. 2001; Platt 2005), demonstrating a 'drive for qualifications' that has been attributed to a mind-set associated with economic migrants. This has included a prevailing aspiration among middle class and middle aspirant black people to improve their condition for the betterment of their family (Rollock et al. 2011; Vincent et al. 2012a,

2012b). Furthermore black middle class aspirant and middle class parents uphold the value of education and help instil 'appropriate' behaviour in their children to prepare them for dealing with issues pertaining to 'race' in secondary school environment. These black parents are involved in their type of advocacy in an effort to protect their children while providing them with tools and forms of capital that will aid in promoting their aspirational dreams for them (Vincent et al. 2012b; Modood 2012; Gillborn et al. 2012). Having sketched the wider historical context of BACM in secondary and higher education, the next chapter discusses some of the relevant concepts and substantive theories that provide a lens to explore and understand BACM's experiences in HE.

Chapter Three: From Race to Microaggressions

Chapter three discusses some of the key concepts relevant to the study of BACM's experiences in elite HE. This chapter provides a personal and historical context for understanding 'race' /ethnicity and blackness. Gender, discrimination, microaggressions and teacher perceptions and expectations are also introduced. This is done to aid the reader in understanding the findings chapters (chapters seven through ten) where I explore my participants' educational experiences in secondary and higher education.

3.1 'Race', Ethnicity and Black

There is a growing body of academic literature that explores the impacts of 'race', class and gender on the attainment of BACM's in education (Channer 1995; Sewell 1997; Mirza 1992, Gillborn 1995; 1998; 2008a; 2010b; Rollock 2012a). However it is useful to first define and discuss 'race', history and culture as a precursor to a discussion on their intersectionality. Race is a somewhat problematic construct in which class is lived (Hall et al. 1978). Its meaning has changed over time and varies according to the socio-historical perspective (Brodkin 2004; Sharpe 2005; Kyriakides et al. 2009). Social scientists indicate that the term 'race' is a 'socially, politically and culturally constructed category that cannot be grounded in a set of fixed trans-cultural or transcendental racial categories' (Hall 1992b: 254). Hall (1993) contends that cultural identities are in persistent flux, which is reflected in the changing terminology used to describe ethnic groups.

Biological research advances show that the entire human 'race' evolved from one common ancestry thereby discrediting the notion that human beings can be sub-divided into distinct ''race's' (Salifu 2007). Thus racial categories have no basis in the natural world but were created by humans (Cavalli-Sforza et al. 1996; Grosvenor 1999). Grosvenor (1997: 10) states these terms are used to 'imprison individuals within the closed dialectic of 'race'. Singh (2004: 25) discusses the development of theories of 'race' as a racist ideology created primarily to justify the slave trade and colonialism, with 'no other function than to

justify racism and domination'. Wright, Thompson and Channer (2007: 149) contend that racist signification ensures that 'whiteness' is constructed as natural and neutral, establishing the idea that the 'universal individual' is deemed to be white (and male). Whereas people of other ethnic groups, non-whites are constructed as having 'racialised identities' (Dabydeen et al. 2007) and are designated the category of 'others'.

A challenge to suggesting a move away from the above-mentioned concepts of ethnicity is that to a certain extent these categories have become entrenched accepted societal norms. Alternative interpretations to address 'race' can raise a multiplicity of difficulties surrounded by trying to determine how to mediate conflicting diametrically opposed meanings of how identity is inferred. An example being whether it is understood as something that is fixed, or a concept that is continually evolving (Hall 1997). Consequently, discussions moving away from how 'race' is currently categorised can move its interpretation backwards rather than forwards into discourse that is often imbued with stereotypical language and characterisations. Singh (2004) also maintains that the widespread reluctance to acknowledge the influence of 'race' thinking' contradicts the notion of its persistent existence. Thus, irrespective of the fact that 'race' *is not* a physical reality, its consequences as a *political reality are* very real (*Archer and Francis 2007). The term 'race', therefore, continues to have relevance for everyday and academic discourses and is often referred to by some researchers in inverted commas (' ') in order to acknowledge its ambiguous nature.

An ethnic group or ethnicity is a socially-defined category of people who identify with each other based on common ancestral, social and cultural experiences (Oxford English Dictionary 2014; Smedley and Smedley 2005). Membership of an ethnic group tends to be defined by a shared cultural heritage, ancestry, language and/or dialect that can manifest itself through symbolic systems such as dressing style, physical appearance and religion (Peoples and Bailey 2011). The distinction between 'race' and ethnicity is considered highly problematic. Ethnicity is often assumed to be the cultural identity of a group, often based on language and tradition, while 'race' is assumed to be based on biological factors

(Cornell and Hartmann 1998). 'Race' is usually classified as a biologically distinct sub-category of the human species (Cornell and Hartmann 1998). 'Race' is a more controversial subject than ethnicity, due to its common association with political and power relations. Social science researchers affirm that 'race' is a social construct whereby physical differences vary extensively across and within 'races' (Hall 1993a; Jackson 1999). Thus concepts of 'race' and ethnic identity cannot be used as a single homogenous category (Anthias 1992; Gilroy 2006). Identities are always contradictory in nature and comprise of fragmented, decentred and diverse situational representations (Gilroy 1987; Bailey and Hall 1992; Skeggs 1994; Grosfoguel 2004).

Hall (1997) asserts that ethnicity is regularly structured and associated with negative references of 'race' to which pejorative connotations are implied about what it means to be an 'ethnic minority'. He notes a historical colonial hierarchy of racial categories where 'white' became identified with being cultured and the 'black' was associated with people of colour who were considered to be of an uncivilised underdeveloped nature. British colonial history indicates that there was an understood white man's burden or duty to civilise ethnic natives within their colonies (Lane 1995; Huttenback 1976; Schreuder 1976). hooks (1992) declares that as a result of such historical perceptions, inferiorization of ethnic minorities continues in accord with white ideological hegemony. Yet unanswered questions persist in terms of who constitutes the 'ethnic majority' in society. Ethnicity deals with cultural differences of which 'race' is only one 'ethnicity'. Hall (1988) declares that ethnicity is a strategically necessary concept because it:

> Acknowledges the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual. Representation is possible only because enunciation is always produced within codes that have a history, a position within the discursive formations of a particular space and time. (Hall 1988: 271)

We are all essentially 'ethnically located'. However the cultural specificity of white ethnicity has been made 'invisible' by epistemic historical forms of racial oppression. This arose as a rationalisation for human slavery in Western

European societies at a time when philosophies promoting individual and human rights, liberty, democracy and justice were becoming embraced (Tocqueville, as cited in Stone 1977). The utilisation of 'race' distorts, exaggerates and maximizes human differences by stereotyping people, their social behaviours, statuses and rankings (Smedley and Smedley 2005).

Perennial debates have persisted among cultural theorists about the changing representations of the terms 'black' and 'black culture' in reaction to being identified by the mainstream as 'other' (Gilroy 1987; Hall 1993b). Sometimes categories include people of mixed origin as black and sometimes they do not, making it difficult at times to draw comparisons. 'Black'/'black' can also be a dubitable term as it is often used as an comprehensive term for all non-whites who face discrimination on the common grounds of 'race' (e.g. BME). For purposes of this research, I use 'black' to refer to people of African Caribbean heritage (e.g. Africans, British African Caribbeans, African Americans). Ironically throughout the years when these issues have been researched and reviewed by DfES (2003a; 2005; 2006a) and DCSF (2008; 2010), 'race'/ethnicity were often overlooked in favour of focusing only on the issue of social class and gender despite the plethora of literature that identifies 'race' as a central issue intersected with class (Modood and Shiner 1994; Reay and Mirza 1997; Sewell 1997; Allen 1998; Gillborn 1998; 2008b; Wright et al. 2000; Rollock 2012a; Shiner and Noden 2014). For over two decades, researchers have lobbied for the incorporation of black and mixed 'race' history and culture within secondary school curriculum to enable teachers to place themselves in relation to the school curriculum in terms of their own history and their current teaching practices (Reay and Mirza 1997; Warmington 2012; Haynes et al. 2006a, 2006b; Gillborn 2008a). However it is also important to acknowledge that how 'race' is defined and what it means different in different circumstances. Alexander (1996) states that the definition of black in a community context is something that is continually negotiated, it is 'always changing, ever imagined and reimagined, open to inconsistency and ambiguity in its application (Alexander 1996: 70). In Alexander's (1996, 2000) research with British African Caribbean and Asian youth in London, she depicted her participants as presenting expressions of 'double-consciousness'. She explains that her

respondents were conscious and familiar with stereotypes about black youth and expressed a strong desire to point out that these should not be accepted as the exclusive definitions of black identities. However her participants' self-constructions embodied a compilation of these stereotypical images in part as a means of survival in their communities. Consequently this represents an antithetical discursive struggle between wanting to dispel certain black stereotypes yet feeling the necessity to represent or perform some of these stereotypes as a means of credibility and survival in one's community. Normative discourse consequences are also explored in whiteness studies which is discussed in chapter five, section 5.3.4: 'Whiteness and whiteness as Property'.

3.2 Racism, Discrimination and Prejudice: Its' Changing Guise

> The most damaging forms of contemporary racism [are] namely, those of the elites. Political, bureaucratic, corporate, media, educational, and scholarly elites control the most crucial dimensions and decisions of the everyday lives of immigrants and minorities: entry, residence, work, housing, education, welfare, health care, knowledge, information, and culture. They do so largely by speaking or writing, for instance; in cabinet meetings and parliamentary debates, in job interviews, news reports, advertising, lessons, textbooks, scholarly articles, movies or talk shows, among many other forms of elite discourse. (…) Elite discourse may thus constitute an important elite form of racism: Similarly, the (re)production of ethnic prejudices that underlie such verbal and other social practices largely takes place through text, talk, and communication (van Dijk 1992: 145-146).

Like 'race' and ethnicity, definitions of racism are problematic and contested as they often differ from person to person due to the consequences of their diverse and differing lived experiences. Much research focuses on 'race', but seldom are the intricacies of 'everyday' racism discussed, particularly within the UK. Though relevant to UK life experiences, surprisingly much of the research in this area has been conducted in the United States. A definition of racism follows:

> It is routine and often subtle, especially to white eyes. Racism engages ideologies and structures, depends on both ideas and behaviors, and 'is all around us.' … Racism occurs in courts, classrooms, grocery stores, religious conventions, all-white

suburbs, in the media, on the job, at fast food and fine restaurants. Finally, racism is individual and structural (Simpson 2003: 15).

This definition of racism is useful in understanding the variety of ways that black men and ethnic minorities in general experience racism on a daily basis. Racism is often reduced to discussions that focus on overt, attitudinal or behavioural racism (Feagin 2006). For purposes of this research it is understood as a complex societal system of ethnically or "racially" based domination and its resulting inequality (van Dijk 1992). Within the definition of racism, individual prejudice and discrimination are found to be phenomena of larger structural societal problems that come from racial inequality that maybe covertly or overtly expressed in aspects of everyday life (Doane 2006).

Racism consists of social practices of discrimination at a small scale local level, and relationships of power abuse by dominant groups, organisations and institutions on large scale (global) levels of examination. Most forms of analysis focus on the macro level of racism (see, e.g. Perry 2001; Fine et al. 2012; Dovidio et al. 2002; Essed 1991; Wellman 1993; Wetherell and Potter 1992). There tends to be a reluctance to discuss systemic racism (Feagin 2006) or what Essed (1991) calls 'everyday racism' where 'notions and actions infiltrate everyday life and become part of the reproduction of the system' (Essed 1991: 50). This occurs when discriminatory practices of members of dominant groups and institutions form the visible and invisible symptoms of everyday racism. These practices are rooted in racist prejudices and ideologies (van Dijk 1984; Hirschfeld and van Dijk 1988). Systemic racism is an entrenched oppressive system whereby racist doctrines, attitudes and beliefs are reproduced at individual and institutional levels (Essed 1991; Feagin 2006; Perry 2011; Simpson 2003). Many of the interactions that BME people experience during their interactions with the dominant white group are not necessarily egregious conspicuous acts of racism – although these still occur and are serious. They are less frequently observed. Instead, due to the changing guise of racism and discrimination, BME interactions with the dominant group often involve subtle racial microaggressions.

3.3 Microaggressions: The Dilemma of Whether to Identify and Confront Them

Microaggressions is a term coined in the 1970s by U.S. psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce, MD (Pierce 1995). He emphasised the need for people to look beyond overt forms of racism to see the 'subtle, cumulative miniassault [which] is the substance of today's racism' (Pierce 1974: 516). However the term 'microaggressions' has been compellingly used by researchers in health care, psychology, and education since then. In their research on the African American students' experiences with racism on a U.S. college campus, Solorzano et al. (2000) describe racial microaggressions as brief, commonplace of "subtle insults (verbal, and/or visual) directed toward people of colour, often automatically or unconsciously" (Solorzano et al. 2000: 60). These everyday exchanges can be behavioural and/or environmental. Insults can be intentional or unintentional yet they communicate denigrating, derogatory, or negative racial slights to people of colour (Sue et al. 2007; Allen 2010; Allen 2012; Smith, Allen and Danley 2007; Rollock 2011). For example, these occurrences can include a person being exposed to a work circumstance that unintentionally assaults his or her racial identity (Gordon and Johnson 2003; Sue 2003; Sue et al. 2007). At an early age within British society BME groups develop a keen awareness of the various forms of racism which they assess and categorise into various forms of implicit yet abrasive insults; which they subsequently begin to develop coping strategies to manage these occurrences. An inherent characteristic of these incidents/microaggressions is subtlety, which is one of the primary reasons why people of colour rarely address or challenge their instigators about such occurences.

It has been asserted (Sue et al. 2007), that often perpetrators of microaggressions are oblivious to the insults they have communicated to racial and ethnic minorities. A selection of various types of migroaggressions are provided below in Table 6. Adapted from American research conducted by Columbia University psychology professor Derald Wing Sue and his associates on these subtle insults (Sue et al. 2007), many of these microaggressions are also apparent in British society. Though these discriminatory practices are not always intentional, they are often socially shared and negatively presumed

subjective embodiments of the dominant group(s) about themselves, as the 'Us' in relation to the 'Them' or 'Others' in society (van Dijk 1999: 147).

Table 6: Examples of Racial Microaggressions Source: Sue et al. 2007: 282-283 THEME	MICROAGGRESSION	MESSAGE
Alien in own land When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born	"Where are you from?" "Where were you born?" "You speak good English." A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language	You are not American You are a foreigner
Ascription of intelligence Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their 'race'	"You are a credit to your 'race'" "You are so articulate" Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science question	People of color are generally not as intelligent as whites. It is unusual for someone of your 'race' to be intelligent All Asians are intelligent and good in math/sciences.
Color blindness Statements that indicate that a white person does not want to acknowledge 'race'	"When I look at you, I don't see color." "America is a melting pot." "There is only one 'race', the human 'race'."	Denying a person of color's racial/ethnic experiences. Assimilate/acculturate to the dominant culture. Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being.
Criminality/assumption of criminal status A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their 'race'	A white man or woman clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a black or Latino approaches or passes A store owner following a customer of color around the store A white person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it	You are a criminal. You are going to steal/ You are poor/ You do not belong. You are dangerous.
Denial of individual racism A statement made when whites deny their racial biases	"I'm not racist. I have several black friends." "As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority."	I am immune to racism because I have friends of color. Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression. I can't be a racist. I'm like you.
Myth of meritocracy Statements which assert that 'race' does not play a role in life successes	"I believe the most qualified person should get the job." "Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough."	People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their 'race'. People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.
Pathologizing cultural values/ communication styles The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/white culture are idea	Asking a black person: "Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down." To an Asian or Latino person: "Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal." "Speak up more." Dismissing an individual who brings up 'race'/culture in work/school setting	Assimilate to dominant culture. Leave your cultural baggage outside.
Second-class citizen Occurs when a white person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color	Person of color mistaken for a service worker Having a taxi cab pass a person of color and pick up a white passenger Being ignored at a store counter as attention is given to the white customer behind you "You people . . ."	People of color are servants to whites. They couldn't possibly occupy high-status positions. You are likely to cause trouble and/or travel to a dangerous neighborhood. whites are more valued customers than people of color You don't belong. You are a lesser being.
Environmental microaggressions Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on systemic and environmental levels	A college or university with buildings that are all named after white heterosexual upper class males Television shows and movies that feature predominantly white people, without representation of people of color Overcrowding of public schools in communities of color Overabundance of liquor stores in communities of color	You don't belong/You won't succeed here. There is only so far you can go. You are an outsider/You don't exist. People of color don't/should value education. People of color are deviant

Modern racism has evolved from the explicit to more subtle forms of racism which have been classified as (McConahey 1986) symbolic racism (Sears 1988), and aversive racism (Dovidio et al. 2002; Bonilla-Silva and Baiocchi 2001). Researchers emphasise that these forms of racism are more likely than ever to be masked as they have evolved from the "old fashioned" forms, where undisguised racial hatred and bigotry were deliberately and openly displayed, to a more nebulous form where they are problematic to recognise and accept. Consequently, the difficulty in identifying and proving covert racism makes it easy for microaggressions to be explained by instigators as inoffensive situations that have been misunderstood by the offended due to individuals' over-sensitivities. Many recipients of microaggressions have nagging questions about whether the offense(s) really happened (Crocker and Major 1989). Identifying microaggressions can be challenging particularly when other explanations seem possible. Many people of colour describe a problematic feeling that they have been assaulted or disrespected – or that something is not right (Franklin 2004; Reid and Radhakrishnan 2003). Consequently some people of colour may find conspicuous and explicit forms of racism easier to handle than nebulous microaggressions (Solorzano and Ceja 2000). The above table of microaggressions reflects how they operate to create psychological dilemmas for both the instigator as well as the offended person of colour.

Raising complaints about microaggressions can be complicated and counterproductive in university settings. Without the presence of effective strategies to manage racism, the offended can be left in vulnerable positions within the student to student and student to staff power relationship flows. Research (Sue et al. 2007; Wilkins 2012) suggests that often victims of microaggressions make calculated conscious decisions to adopt coping strategies that enable them to suffer in silence rather than expend copious amounts of energy necessary to challenge these offenses. These strategies, identified as 'moderating blackness' by Wilkins (2012), enable black students to distance themselves from microaggressive occurrences by arguing that the proponents' words or actions are subjective in intent and merely symptomatic of ignorance rather than calculated racism. However it is contended that only by recognising and investigating microaggressions can people offended by them

begin to confront some of the hidden racisms within elite higher education (Sue et al. 2007; Wilkins 2012; Harries 2014). Microaggressions are discussed and explored in more detail in chapters eight and nine as many of my participants provided me with examples of strategies they used to cope with these offenses.

3.4 Institutionalised Racism and Gender Issues in Education

> Colleges and universities seem to function as incubators for the soon- to-be (or wannabe) guardians of the status quo. (Ladson-Billings and Donnor 2005: 295–296)

Researchers (Solorzano et al. 2000) argue that the daily experiences of racial aggression and microaggressions that are described as aversive racism may more significantly influence racial anger, frustration, and self-esteem than 'old' traditional overt forms of racism.

In a 2013 Guardian article, Landin discussed the institutionalised habitus within UK elite institutions which makes them averse to acknowledging racisms presence and influence on their campuses (Landin 2013). Landin suggests that universities consider themselves to be liberal knowledge centres of academic freedom where racism could not possibly exist. Reflecting on an experience at Oxbridge where he and a lecturer of colour were more severely cross-examined than white counterparts before being allowed entry through the universities gates, Landin states:

> It is assumed that so long as one declares liberal ideals, they will automatically exist. That works fine for those who enjoy a position of privilege: white, straight men are unlikely to encounter casual prejudice of the kind I witnessed at the gatehouse. And if racist views remain in the lecture hall, presented as just another perspective, what's the harm? Yet when discrimination continues to be an everyday reality, allowing racism to retain its footholds under the guise of "academic freedom" is a serious matter. (Landin 2013: para. 15)

Dr. Priyamvada Gopal, faculty and former Dean of Churchill College Cambridge recognises that there is a 'real reluctance to discuss 'race'' on her campus. She contends:

The university appears to consider itself post-racist without ever having had a meaningful wider debate on how 'race' functions in institutions … There's an assumption that racism is something that happens elsewhere. This means that people are quite afraid to raise questions or problems around 'race' and racism. The silence is problematic and needs to be undone. (Landin 2013: para. 18)

In the context of higher education, systemic racism functions on multiple levels. Research on racism in higher education has generally focused on the experiences of ethnic minorities in general, and their student - student encounters and student - institution experiences attending post -1992 universities (Elevation Networks 2012; RfO 2011; Leathwood 2004; Read et al. 2003). As we saw in chapter two, more recently research has explored admission decisions, recruitment and retention processes relative to ethnic minority students attending elite universities (Boliver 2011; Boliver and Byrne 2013; Shiner and Noden 2014). However, unlike the plethora of studies in the US that explore the experiences of black men in elite HEI (Solorzano et al. 2000; Harper 2009; Harper et al. 2009; Smith et al. 2007; Allen 1992) there appears to be a paucity of studies exploring British African Caribbean men's experiences attending elite UK institutions.

There is a basic distinction between 'sex', which is a biological difference, and 'gender' which occurs through the process of socialisation, similar to the way that 'race' is socially constructed (Archer and Yamashita 2003; Archer and Francis 2007). As individuals interact in social settings, they learn to 'perform' gender (Butler 1990). However 'not all performances of gender are equal: some are more influential and carry more power than others' (Archer and Francis 2007: 32). Notably, gendering creates different experiences according to its intersectionality with 'race' and class. Morris (2007) explains that intersectionality approaches examine "the ways in which gender is racialized and 'race' is gendered" (Glenn 2002). Thus 'race' 'alters the very meaning and impact of gender and gender alters the very meaning and impact of 'race'' (Morris 2007: 491-2). The gender focus of this thesis explores black men's experiences. It is my assertion that my research is also compatible for exploring the intersectionality and interconnectedness of 'race', gender and class.

3.5 Culture: Using it to Understand the Institutionalisation of Racism

Culture comprises of the behaviours, beliefs, and other characteristics that members of groups or society have in common. Groups define themselves and are defined by others through culture and people due to their ability to conform to society's shared values. Thus culture incorporates an assortment of societal facets inclusive of language, customs, values, norms, mores, rules, tools, technologies, products, organisations, and institutions (e.g. family, education, religion, work, etc.) (Bourdieu 1977a). Bourdieu qualifies his definition of culture by defining it as the best of the aforementioned things which are defined and recognised as such by the dominant classes (Sulkunen 1982). Cultural theorist and sociologist Stuart Hall defines culture as a 'grounded terrain of practices, representations and customs of any specific society' (Hall 1996c: 439).

Culture is specific and localised. Sociologists of education have explored the intersections of class, 'race' and gender (e.g. (Hammersley and Woods 1984; Willis 1977), from which understandings of institutional inequalities have been developed through the examination of intersections of cultural and social differences (Gilroy 1992; Mercer 1994). It is important to recognise that concepts of culture cannot be completely detached from the physical because people are located and discriminated against on the basis of appearance (Tizard and Phoenix 1993; Solomos and Back 2000). In other words, even though 'race' is considered a socio-cultural construct, it is often considered to possess natural and authentic identity and meaning, rather than being artificially constructed, because racism can occur due to people's perceptions of a person's 'race' (Ali 2003; Nayak 2006a; Nayak 2006b).

3.6 Black Boys' Subcultures and Teachers' Expectations

Nayak (2003; 2006b) and McCulloch et al. (2006) suggests that subcultures are frequently theorised as 'counter-cultures' that are contrary to the values, beliefs and social practices of the dominant society which are intimately tied in with social class. These researchers of youth studies contend that subcultures can amalgamate informal values that may be realised through shared activity such

as interest in a particular form of music or dance style. Nayak asserts that social class is strung through the everyday fabric of their lives. He states that subcultural groups and class are interwoven 'into codes of respect, accent, dress, music, bodily adornment and comportment [which are] … tacitly understood and deeply internalized' (Nayak 2006b: 828). During adolescence, young people seek to establish their identity (Byfield 2008). It is contended that many black children living in white dominated environments struggle with certain facets of their identities, their 'race', as well as struggling to fit within the predominant, mainstream cultured society (Byfield 2008). Connell and Connell (2000) and Phoenix (2008), who have conducted research on performativity of students in schools found that youth and masculinity is repeatedly defined by being about confrontation, aggressiveness, 'hardness', and hierarchical power relationships that are racialised.

Majors (2001), Sewell (1997) and Kreisberg (1992) assert that black boys at school ascribe to a black male subculture interweaving gender and 'race'. This describes and explains some of their behaviour and disengagement in secondary schools. Sewell (2007) claims that black boys are often perceived as representing the latest style or trend that students desire. He describes these black youths as being in a dichotomised position where they are seen as 'Angels and Devils' in UK education (Sewell 1997: ix). They are considered 'angels' with respect to their perception by other students who see them as innovators of style and popular culture fashion trends which provides them with 'black' street culture respect and credibility. Yet at the same time they are seen as 'devils' in classrooms by many teachers who interpret their dispositions as being oppositional to the school environment (Sewell 1997: ix). In concurrence with Sewell, Rollock (2007a) asserts that black students who operationalise black urban culture in their appearance and behaviour are perceived as being directly at odds with the aims of the school which decreases their chances of obtaining success. Sewell (1997) found that many of the 15-year old black boys she studied experienced disproportionate amounts of punishment in schools compared to other ethnic groups.

Mac an Ghaill (1994) found that some black youths perceive academic achievement as un-masculine or effeminate out of fear that their peers will see them as soft or weak if they enjoy learning. Thus doing well in school is rejected in favour of being recognised as cool and hard by one's peers which Jackson (2002) describes as a 'self-worth protection strategy'. Some researchers (Sewell 1997; Martino and Mayenn 2001) contend that black boys are part of a self-fulfilling failure prophecy because their own performativity helps to lead to their academic demise. Rollock's more recent research with black boys found that their academic performances were found to be low because teachers perceived them as possessing and bringing an anti-learning culture with them to schools (Rollock 2007b). The problem of masculinity is not a new one as Epstein et al. (1998) acknowledge. Over twenty years earlier Willis (1977) wrote about how working class boys often reacted to the alienation and middle class schooling values with resistance strategies.

Another analysis of black boys' underachievement in schools comes from the assertion that teachers misconceive their behaviours. This argument asserts that black boys are more likely to be singled out and excluded from top tier classes by teachers' misinterpretation of their behaviour and capabilities rather than that they possess anti-school, anti-learning mind-sets. (Wright et al.1998; Gillborn 2008b). Research suggests that some teachers' negative interpretations of student behaviour, based on racial stereotyping, leads them to regard black children as threats (Mac an Ghaill 1988; Bryan et al. 1988). Consequently copious emphasis is given to regulating their behaviour, rather than encouraging their academic outcomes. Gillborn's research with students found that:

> Black students were disproportionately controlled and criticised,
> not because they broke clear school rules any more frequently, but
> because teachers perceived them as a threat. (Gillborn 1998: 14)

Student-teacher relationships play an intrinsic function in exclusions. Thus it is not a surprising revelation that inordinate numbers of black children are excluded from schools (Wright et al. 1998; Pomeroy 1999). Traditionally, black children have also been inordinately funnelled to Special Educational Needs

schools (Bryan et al. 1988; Pather and Strand 2006). Negative interpretations of black children's behaviour, the deficiency in emphasis on their academic ability, coupled with teachers' low expectations of these students is common within the constitution of many schools that are responsible for educating them and has a detrimental effect on their outcomes.

Gillborn (2008a, 2008b) contends that black children are being condemned to failure early in life because of teachers' racist attitudes. He argues that new tests that have been implemented in primary schools to measure children's competence are not only damaging black pupils but that at secondary school level, teachers are entering them for lower tiers of GSCE exams because they believe black pupils are perpetual underachievers.

3.7 Hegemonic Masculinity, Culture, Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality

Masculinities of boys and schooling has been extensively explored by researchers (Mac an Ghaill 1994; Epstein et al. 1998). Additionally UK qualitative studies have explored how 'race' and gender sometimes are intertwined in relation to how some black boys identified academic achievement as un-masculine and un-cool (Mac an Ghaill 1988; Sewell 1997). Some boys developed a slick walk (Gillborn 1990: 29) or trendsetting style of dress (Sewell 1997) and mannerism (Swidler 1986) to establish clout and respect in their community. This demeanour is also an example of hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Connell 2000; Epstein et al. 1998; Sewell 1997; Youdell 2003) specific to schools, which emphasises swagger, coolness, hipness 'and a sense of being an ordinary bloke with no pretensions' (Martino 1999: 251). Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2003; 2012) contend that there are individual men and groups of men such as effeminate boys and gay men, who are perceived by others as not being masculine enough, and therefore considered inadequate male role models. Conversely, black boys and working-class white boys are seen as having *too much masculinity* (Willis 1977; Sewell 1997; Mac an Ghaill 1988; Mac an Ghaill 1994) which has led to excessive exclusion rates at school (Wright et al. 1998; Youdell 2003; Youdell 2006).

Like all previous generations, black boys have developed their own youth cultures. As a direct result of globalisation this process has escalated to a point where people are able to communicate with cultures across the world (Codrington 2006). African-Caribbean boys are influenced by famous black American superstars such as Tupac, Notorious B.I.G, Nas, Puff Daddy (PD) and Jay-Z as well as UK rappers Rudimental, Naughty Boy and Dizzie Rascal (to a lesser extent). These artists play an influential role in shaping the cultural development of boys' musical taste and dress (Sewell 1997; Back 1996). As a result, black boys may also portray 'non-conformist' appearances through their hair and dress (e.g. wearing low hanging trousers) and colloquial language as well as through music that conveys a 'statement' of an oppositional or rebellious identity (Martino and Mayenn 2001). Those who do not understand this culture may perceive these boys as rebels and threats (Sewell 1997).

Many famous American rap artists' music also glorifies gang violence while also portraying images of their own immunity to gang killings (Low et al. 2013). Some promote images of massive financial wealth as a standard normality. These representations can promote dubious messages to their audiences which influence young people's behaviours. Black British society has been saturated by the major influence that has come from African American youth rap and hip-hop culture (Hesmondhalgh and Melville 2001). African-Caribbean youths have organised areas in their communities that replicate the experiences they listen to in prominent American rap songs because some boys in this country view this American rap artist portrayal of life as something that they wish to strive to attain (Briggs and Cobley 1999). All of these influences have an impact on youth culture across the 'race's but there is a particular emphasis on African-Caribbean boys. Furthermore I argue that there is an attraction from BACM to replicate and adapt aspects of African American culture and performative behaviour that these black British youth perceive as resources, social capital which translate into forms of respect and credibility within their communities.

It is contended that some black boys feel alienated and excluded from white society and culture because their self-esteem has been assaulted and their existence due in part their performativity of their culture is perceived as a threat

(Sewell 1997; Martino and Meyenn 2001). Black masculinities are complex and multifaceted. Within different environments masculinity concepts are performed, negotiated, and/or contested. In the United States, Jackson and Hopson (2011) have called for research on black masculinity to move beyond a 'singular' focus to a place where black masculinities are theorised. They state that there must be a shift 'in how we imagine black masculinities, black men, black boys, and black males' (Jackson and Hopson 2011: 3). These researchers say that one way of resisting the negative representations of black masculinity is through 'acquiring one's 'voice,' which enables them to speak on their own behalf by helping to *counter* a social environment that has silenced and/or ignored racially marginalised voices and positive images of black bodies. Some critical 'race' researchers affirm that centring black men's voices in research (Orbe 2003; Griffin and Cummings 2012). These researchers contend that doing so serves as a form of black male agency that enables them to be represented as intellectually and educationally invested in a field that has been relatively deficient of research literature on black men in HEIs (Orbe 2003; Griffin and Cummings 2012). I would suggest that to a greater extent in the UK there is a lacuna of research that represents the voices of black men within elite UK HEIs.

Intersectionality is a sociological feminist theory introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989). Intersectionality is a methodology for studying "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relationships and subject formations" (McCall 2005). It seeks to 'examine how various biological, social and cultural categories such as 'race', gender, class, and ethnicity' (Collins 2000: 42), interact on multiple and sometimes simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic social inequality. Intersectionality asserts that oppressions within society through such means as racism, sexism, homophobia and religious0based bigotry, do not act independently of one another but are interconnected forms of subjugation that represent the intersectionality of multiple forms of discrimination.

3.8 A 'Post-Racial' World?

Within some portions of society there is a perception that we now live in a post-racial world which led to the shift away from discussions about racism and classism's effect on issues such as social injustice and educational inequality. Instead the UK government has focused discussions on meritocracy and hard work being the balanced and fair benchmark of everyone's success in life. The result has relegated the intersectionality of class and racial concerns to subtle, institutionalised, legitimatised and moderately concealed aspects of society. The *new society* has supplanted discussions about tolerance and multiculturalism where discussions formerly analysed issues relating to class disadvantage, racial discrimination and other forms of societal inequality. This calculated detour away from classism and racism towards tolerance and multiculturalism and has been described by Žižek as a move to detoxify the interests of 'others' in society (Žižek 2010).

Intersectionality emphasises that 'social life cannot be separated into discrete and pure strands' (Brah and Phoenix 2004: 76). Thus for purposes of my research, there is a probable relationship between Critical Race Theory, black feminist theory and the theory of intersectionality. Each recognises the need to employ theories that have been historically used to explain class inequalities in relation to explanations of how 'race' and gender inequalities are perpetuated. Examining and challenging these inequalities can help to foster awareness of their presence in an effort to prevent future similar injustices.

Sociological research appears to explore and analyse student educational outcomes primarily based on gender, class and status. Frequently 'race' due to its contentious position as a social construct is not afforded a principle position in sociological, educational and policy analyses. In fact in the UK when sociology researchers have argued that 'race'/ethnicity should be included as a central element with gender and class in educational mobility, many have experienced attempts to ignore or suppress their work because it diverges from the usual accepted sociological and educational doctrines (Gilligan 2010; Travis 2010; Hill 2009). Accordingly I and other researchers of issues of colour assert that it is necessary to address the intersection between gender, 'race' and class (with 'race' as a central tenet) to help explore possible situations of institutional

racism (Anthias 1999; Collins 2000; Gillborn 2008b; Rollock 2012a). In chapter four I set forth appropriate theories that can be used with my research participants. Bourdieu's early work in the field or 'race'/ethnicity as well as his concepts of habitus, field, capital and his theory of cultural reproduction (Bourdieu 1977a) in relation to education are discussed. Critical Race Theory and its useful intersection with Bourdieusian concepts is also addressed. Rational Action Theory (RAT) and Meritocracy (Breen et al. 1997; Glaesser and Cooper 2012; Goldthorpe 2002; 2003) are discussed in terms of how they are often drawn upon with in this area of educational exploration.

Chapter Four: Bourdieu, Rational Action and Meritocracy

4.1. Overview

Chapter four provides an explanation of key terminology and theories to habitus, field, capital and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu 1986), Rational Action Theory and Meritocracy (Goldthorpe 2002; Glaesser and Cooper 2012) that were beneficial in exploring and making meaning of my participants' accounts. Bourdieu's theories have been a central component of my research analysis. Specifically his concepts of habitus, field, capital and his theory of cultural reproduction (Bourdieu 1977a, 1977b; Giddens 1976) with regards to education as an operative of cultural reproduction. The intersectionality of class and 'race' as factors for black underperformance in education is discussed. Additionally the theoretical framework of Rational Action Theory (RAT) and Meritocracy (Goldthorpe 2002; 2003; Breen et al. 1997; Glaesser and Cooper 2012) in relation to educational outcomes are discussed. As previously discussed in chapter two, CRT and the theory of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989; 1995) have been incorporated alongside Bourdieu's work in my research with BACM. There is much that addresses Bourdieu's work on class and gender (Skeggs 1997; 2004a; Reay 1998a). However many scholars fail to realise that Bourdieu's early works also addressed issues related to 'race'. Thus this chapter begins by outlining some of his views on this topic before embarking on a discussion of his concepts of habitus, field, capital and cultural reproduction.

4.2 Bourdieu on Race: The Significance of 'Race' and Caste in His Early Work

Research indicates that Bourdieu's early works in Algeria identify him as someone who saw racism through the lens of colonialism and hoped for post-colonialism (Seibel et al. 2004; Yacine 2008). During the 1950s to early 1960s the French empire's infrastructure was experiencing major stresses from colonies that were fighting for and successfully attaining their independence (i.e.

Syria and Lebanon) to conflicts and resistance in other parties of the empire in Madagascar, Tunisia and Morocco (Sorum 1977). In 1955 Bourdieu was drafted as a soldier in the French Army in Algeria. Upon completion of his year of required service, Bourdieu stayed on in Algeria and conducted ethnographic photographic fieldwork on the plight of the Kabyle Berbers of northern Algeria. The Berbers became significant to Bourdieu's political examination of experiences and treatment of the south-western Béarnais people within French culture and society (Bearn is the region where Bourdieu was born), from which the development of his theory of the symbolic violence is credited with originating (Bourdieu 2003; Go 2013).

Some researchers (Go 2013; Goodman 2009) have affirmed that for Bourdieu 'race' was a significant concern to his theoretical work on class. Bourdieu wrote of the precolonial Algeria in contrast to the 'destructured, ruptured, and fragmented society that 130 years of colonial occupation had irrevocably destabilized'(Goodman 2009: 3). As a result of his research and some of the friends he made in Algeria, Abdelmalek Sayad in particular, Bourdieu's writings and criticisms of empire drove him deeper into debates about French colonialism.

Over the course of his writings on Algeria Bourdieu developed a definitive standpoint on the role of empire. Research indicates that Bourdieu was familiar with (though not in complete agreement with) Frantz Fanon's and Germaine Tillion's writings on the negative psychological effects that colonial servitude and their beliefs in the need for independence by the masses rising up against the French empire. Although Bourdieu did not endorse their perspectives, he did believe that colonialism needed to be eradicated. In Bourdieu's first major work, *Sociologie de l'Algérie* (1958), he wrote that "the colonial society is a system whose internal necessity and logic is important to understand" (Bourdieu 1958:120). In *The Algerians* (1961), Bourdieu examined colonialism and theorized it as a system of racial oppression involving a 'relationship of domination' which was structured as a 'caste system of racial segregation' that made colonial society 'Manichean in form' (Bourdieu 1961:120, 132-34; Go 2013). Researchers (Go 2013; Goodman 2009) contend

that for Bourdieu 'social class is less important than race' (Goodman 2009: 133). In fact, Bourdieu saw racism as being built within the structure of colonialism as a legitimating mechanism. He wrote, 'The function of racism is none other than to provide a rationalization of the existing state of affairs so as to make it appear to be a lawfully instituted order' (Goodman 2009: 133). Additionally, Bourdieu theorized that colonialism was a system of racial subjugation promoted through the means of duress facilitated by the dominants in society (Bourdieu 1979). The Algerian war for independence from France exposed 'the true basis for the colonial order: the relation, backed by force, which allows for the dominant caste to keep the dominated caste in a position of inferiority' (Bourdieu 1961: 146, cited in Go 2013: 55).

Bourdieu highlighted the colonial state's impact and monopoly on violence through its use of racial privilege as one of the foundations of colonialism from which it is suggested he drew on the work of Fanon (Haddour 2010; Lane 2000 in Go 2013). A fundamental area of juncture in Fanon and Bourdieu's work emerges in Bourdieu's perspective of the structure of colonialism. In opposition to structural Marxism yet in accord with Weberian theory Bourdieu highlighted that the 'colonial system was based on a "caste" (by which he meant race supported by political privilege) rather than "class"' (Go 2013: 57). Evidence suggests that for Bourdieu, caste trumped class: Bourdieu states, 'caste spirit stifles class consciousness' (Bourdieu 1961:133; Go 2013) which was similar to Fanon's approach, which placed more emphasis on racial difference. Bourdieu said:

> Without destroying the colonial system of which it is the product; it would be the height of phariasaism to condemn the racism and the racists spawned by the colonial situation without condemning the colonial system itself. (Bourdieu 1961:150)

Bourdieu emphasized that racism was constructed within and as a tenet of the colonial system and could never be eliminated unless it was completely dismantled from which he said, 'only a revolution can abolish the colonial system' (Bourdieu 1961:146).

In summation Bourdieu clearly described the terrible oppression of colonialism which he saw as promoting a caste system based on subjugation of people based on their race. In the colonial period for France and the British Empire, a caste system of racial oppression was managed through the use physical force, weapons and violence in order to preserve white dominance. Bourdieu's theories of class habitus and race use an element of subordination that also aligns well in a post-colonial era based on the understanding that 'race', like class, is manipulated and exercised based on an unequal distribution of various capitals possessed by the dominant group (white people, rather than middle class people). The capital that white people possess is implicit in their whiteness (Gillborn 2008a; Leonardo 2002; 2004; Smith, Yosso, and Solorzano 2007; Solorzano et al. 2000) which often is misrecognised by white and black people who justify achievement and success solely based on merit. This misrecognition of whiteness may be converted into a form of symbolic violence when white people fail to recognise their dominant position and make subtle offensive remarks and actions, 'microaggressions' against people of colour. In contrast to overt violence used in the colonial era symbolic violence 'is gentle, invisible violence, unrecognized as such, chosen as much as undergone' (Bourdieu, 1990a: 120).

4.3 Class Habitus and Institutional Practices in the Field

Social class is likely to be a central factor affecting BACM learner performance. Social class divides the population economically, culturally and socially and permeates facets of society based on individuals' (and groups) access to power. Class is a persistently operationalised social phenomenon that shapes and often constrains the lives of individuals. In the past two decades, similar to 'race', class has often taken a backseat in discussions about inequality in education as neoliberal meritocratic policy has moved to the forefront of these debates (Gillies 2005; Atkinson et al. 2011; Tyler 2013). This shift in policy promotes and suggests that the world is a relatively fair and balanced playing field where individuals irrespective of 'race' or colour get out of the society what they put into it based on hard work and determination. Skeggs notes how class discussions have often been silenced in a way that issues pertaining to class

differences have become so embedded in society that they are 'institutionalised and legitimated and well established' rather than debated (Skeggs 1997b: 7). A consequence of this silencing is that those from advantaged class backgrounds are able to continue to more easily exploit opportunities than those from lower/disadvantaged backgrounds without being challenged. Thus in the situation of BME people there are 'factors distinctive to particular minority groups that may result in racialised exclusion. Modood defines this as an 'ethnic penalty' (Modood 2004: 90). I will explore why this appears to be the case later in the chapter.

4.4 Field

Bourdieu explains that social actions take place in particular sites or fields which are managed by particular ways of functioning. These functions concurrently act as boundaries that distinguish one field from another. To gain and retain membership in a specific field requires individuals to possess a substantial amount of knowledge about the field. Bourdieu states:

> It is difficult to conceive of the vast amount of information which is linked to membership of a field and which all contemporaries immediately invest their reading of works: information about institutions - e.g., academies, journals, magazines, galleries, publishers, etc, and about persons, their relationships, liaisons and quarrels, information about the ideas and problems which are 'in the air' and circulate orally in gossip and rumour. (Bourdieu 1993a: 32)

Part of the challenge for members of a particular field is having a good understanding of which 'academies, journals, magazines, galleries, publishers, etc' possess the greatest amount of currency so that members within the institution (whether it be in the arts or education) are recognised and respected as having legitimacy or status within the field (Rollock 2007a). However Bourdieu contends that inequality arises because the assessment of what is and is not valued within a field is determined by the dominant groups within the field. Bourdieu says that these 'systems of domination' (Bourdieu 1993a: 2) reveal themselves in virtually all the values and positions assigned to social action and assets in the field (Rollock 2007a). It is important to note that the

value placed on currencies in the field are arbitrarily and socially determined and imposed, yet do not represent any degree of absoluteness or intrinsic truth or value (Rollock 2007a). Furthermore, members of the field or social space often are unaware of the implicit value-systems, which have become routinised and embedded in their institution therefore enhancing the masking and scope for inequity. The field can become a location of contention and conflict where it becomes a site of tension, and in some cases conflict, where dominated or subordinated groups struggle to access power through resources and dominant groups grapple to maintain it (Rollock 2007a).

Fields are the forces and positions which are comprised of people who possess different types of *capital (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic).* The relationship to habitus is always dynamic and mutually dependent. Bourdieu viewed fields as often involving games with stakes or prizes to which some forms of habitus give greater access than others (Bourdieu 1993a). For example within secondary education, the curriculum choices offered by schools provide a clear indication of the schools *type* of institutional habitus. Course subjects often differ between state and private schools with traditional 'academic' subjects predominating in the private sector schools. 'New' subjects tend to be more prevalent within state sector institutions. The same holds true for courses offered at GCSE and A levels. Reay et al. (2005; 2009a, 2009b) assert that institutional practice is deep-rooted in educational institutions that act as a 'semi-autonomous' means by which class, 'race' and gender are played out in the lives of students and the choices they make.

Additional areas that that fall within the area of economic, cultural and social capital that I wish to explore with my participants include:

> ➤ Are these BACMs at elite universities all from middle class backgrounds like the majority of their white student body counterparts, or are there some working class students who through their hard work/development of capital have been able to be accepted and successfully graduate from elite universities?

➢ What do BACMs identify as the assumed power differentials in the creation of knowledge? Do they challenge the existing power dynamics within the existent white middle class habitus of their universities – the knowledge that comes from elite educators/researchers – or do they accept what they experience as the status quo?

➢ Much research suggests that the middle classes' possession of cultural capital in the form of HE is reproduced from one generation to the next generation of university attendees and future graduates to replicate educational advantage (Bourdieu and Passeron 1979; Bourdieu et al. 1990*;* Reay 2004a, 2004b; Gunn 2005). This in turn leads to the middle classes ability to also garner social capital which provides them access to networks through family and friends, which consequently provided additional advantage enabling them access to a table offering a better level of education (elite HE); that is snowballed into them gaining access to relevant work experience and a HE- focused peer group (Archer et al. 2003). Is this a common experience of the BACM within my research? (This is an area that I will return to shortly in the cultural reproduction section).

4.5 Class as Social Capital: Contingent and Embedded Choosers

Ball, Reay and David (2002) use Bourdieu's concept of social capital to explore the different ways that BMEs from working class and middle class backgrounds select HEIs. Bourdieu suggests that social capital provides the middle class with distinct educational advantages when selecting which HEIs to consider attending. Social connections are mobilised to gain insight into which are the best resourced and high status universities for maximising career prospects. Ball, Reay and David (2002) separated their research subjects into two categories of choosers; 'contingent choosers' and 'embedded choosers'. The former tend to be the first generation in their families to attend university and were working class. 'Embedded choosers' tend to be members of families with

a history of university attendance and were middle class. Thus, they had access to what Bourdieu described as middle class social capital.

4.6 Social and Economic Capital Embedded within Elite Universities' Habituses

Social capital is one of sociology's most popular concepts for researchers interested in addressing and improving educational inequalities. A substantial amount of research at the secondary school level suggests that social capital is positively associated with academic achievement and psychosocial and behavioural outcomes (Morrow 1999; Dika and Singh 2002). Some academics within the sociology of education have conceptualised social capital as human capital that is a source of positive community norms, expectations and social that arise from close networks and personal ties (e.g. Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000). However there has been a growing disagreement with Coleman's approach which has led to the rise of contesting perspective that consider social capital as resources which are firmly rooted within networks (Dika and Singh 2002; Horvat, Weininger and Lareau 2003).

Bourdieu interpreted social capital as an array of resources or assets, embedded in networks that can be accessed by social actors (Bourdieu 2001). Recent studies have shown positive effects that family resources can have on educational outcomes for secondary students (Rollock et al. 2011; Vincent et al. 2012a; 2012b). Using Bourdieu's framework, researchers have found social networks to be sources of social capital whereby the family was influential in providing students with resources to facilitate success in the educational system and future occupations (Devine 2004; Horvat et al. 2003; Lareau and Weininger 2003; Lareau and Horvat 1999; Bourdieu [1983] 2001). Access to economic capital can have a direct positive advantage on students' ability to afford the costs associated with participating in secondary and more importantly higher education. Bourdieu's resources-in-networks perspective provides an awareness of inequalities in, and access to social capital in education (e.g., Grayson 2004a; Horvat et al., 2003; Lareau and Weininger, 2003). University years represent an important stage for not only academic and personal development but also the accumulation of social *and economic* capital. It is

understood that economic capital converts most easily into tangible material assets. However it is often expressed by social and cultural capital, which leads to a misrecognition of the economic implications of symbolic exchanges (Grenfell and James 2004). Grenfell and James state that if education is, 'a sort of 'gift exchange', a game where social inequalities are reproduced in ways that are systematically misrecognized, it also operates through individuals strategic positioning' (1998: 22). Misrecognition is central to the power dynamics and efficiency of education. Bourdieu intimates that:

> capital (or power) becomes symbolic capital, that is capital endowed with a specific efficacy, only when it is misrecognised in it arbitrary truth as capital and *recognised* as legitimate as (…) an act of *practical* knowledge. (Bourdieu 1990b, cited in Grenfell and James 1998: 112)

I explored with my participants how social capital embedded in networks influenced academic achievement during their elite university experiences. While not directly exploring the university admissions process, I add to this debate by exploring the forms of capital that my participants identified having or lacking that influenced or challenged their academic achievement and outcomes.

4.7 Cultural and Social Reproduction in Educational Institutions

Within educational systems certain styles and behaviours of those from a dominant class background are valorised or rewarded as being more important than non-dominant attributes or conduct. Bourdieu outlines a theory of cultural reproduction in his studies of elite French universities in society, (Bourdieu [1989] 1996). He theorises that an individual's class position is associated with unequal access to forms of cultural capital, which in fact working class and many BME students do not possess. Furthermore within educational institutions, cultural capital is perceived as a point of individual ability or merit. While presenting the appearance of rewarding students for their skill and merit, rather than their class backgrounds or other ascribed characteristics, educational institutions are able to privilege certain styles and dispositions that convey a close affinity to the culture of the dominant class that is most suitably

aligned with the institutions habitus. Thus non dominant or working class students are at a disadvantage in these educational environments:

> The culture of the elite is so near to that of the school that children from the [working classes] can only acquire with great effort something which is given to the children of the cultivated classes – style, taste, wit – in short, those attitudes and aptitudes which seem natural in members of the cultivated classes and naturally expected of them precisely because (in an ethnological sense) they are the culture of that class. (Bourdieu 1974: 39)

Bourdieu evidences that dominant class students have more opportunities to acquire esteemed forms of capital at 'home, during childhood, and through active participation in elite cultural activities' (Bourdieu 1971: 99). Educational institutions are able to disguise this function because the distribution of cultural capital does not correspond perfectly to the distribution of economic capital (Bourdieu [1971] 1973: 86-94).

The dubious premise that education is meritocratic enables educational systems to purport to treat all students fairly as if they all have equal access to the same resources and experiences. Due to an imperfect relationship between the distribution of economic and cultural capital, educational institutions are able to disguise their bias. By falsely presenting the appearance of encouraging social mobility they are able to hide any aspects of implicit class bias. Consequently Bourdieu asserts that the expansion of higher education has not necessarily led to a broadening social opportunity for working class students, but rather the promotion of increased school-mediated cultural and social reproduction strategies that primarily benefit the dominant or middle class student (Bourdieu [1971] 1973).

4.8 Class and 'Race' in Academic Achievement

For Lupton (2005), class is considered to be a key reason why children underachieve in schools. Therefore, African-Caribbean boys may underachieve because of their social class background rather than because of their ethnicity/ 'race'. It is asserted that socio-economic status affects life chances regardless

of 'race' or ethnic background (Gillborn and Mirza 2000, DfEs 2005, Haynes et al. 2006). Gillborn and Mirza (2000) view ethnicity and class as important measures for academic outcomes. They argue that the gender gap is substantially smaller than the inequalities of attainment gap associated with ethnic origin and social class background. On average, African and Caribbean minorities are more likely to live in low-income households than white people in the UK (The Poverty Site 2015; Hirsch 2007). The approach adopted by these researchers is that children's social class backgrounds are a major contributor to their ability to achieve in education. Gillborn and Mirza (2000) found the attainment gap between the highest and lowest social classes has widened since the 1980s. Furthermore they contend that 'there is a strong direct association between social class background and success in education' (Gillborn and Mirza 2000: 18). Children with higher class backgrounds tended to have higher attainment outcomes. The higher a child's class, the greater their attainment on average. ONS research on Education indicates that working class pupils are less likely to achieve 5+A*-C passes at GCSE than their middle class peers and are less likely to go on to higher education (Babb 2005).

Although black boys are more likely to live in areas of high deprivation and poor housing with high crime rates (Spencer and Scott 2013; Johnston 2002; Peach 1996), there are some black boys[15] who perform academically well even though they too grow up in socially disadvantaged backgrounds (Barnard and Turner 2011). Therefore, social class background does not fully explain the underachievement of African-Caribbean boys. However, black girls achieve better examination results despite coming from the same neighbourhoods (Rothon 2007). Researchers assert that BAC boys are essentially living in a different environment from their BAC girls, even though they grow up in the same household with the same parents (Sewell 1997). Many BAC boys have to cope with the neighbourhood pressures of gangs, police and teachers in school, who misrecognise their performativity of their culture as troublemakers who are not smart (Spencer and Scott 2013: 10).

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[15] Black African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils tend to perform better than black Caribbean and white students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Barnard and Turner 2011: 5).

According to Modood (2004), for most British sociologists, class is the best explanation for educational outcomes for ethnic minority pupils. However, he also asserts that class is not the whole story. Other factors that he suggests are influential determinants of academic success or failure, include BMEs proximity to good schools or aspects of individual biographies (Modood 2004). Additionally Modood (2004) suggests that that in the case of minorities, there will be factors which are distinctive to particular minority groups in Britain that may lead to racial exclusion. He asserts that these distinctive factors work to reinforce class effects, rather than reduce them. Most African-Caribbean boys in the UK live in areas in central London or other large urban areas such as Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol, and Cardiff in Britain which experience high levels of deprivation and unemployment for their ethnic groups. It is important to acknowledge that in addition to social class, the ethnic background of these boys is an identifiable factor in their underachievement. Gender is also an important factor as research highlights that BME girls from these same environments tend to perform better academically in comparison to these boys (Gillborn and Mirza 2000).

4.9 Meritocracy, Rational Action Theory and School Habitus

Goldthorpe's theory of meritocracy suggests that the HE system can offset the role of social class in determining economic outcomes. He sees HE as a necessary filter that keeps parents' economic position from simply passing straight from them to their children. Goldthorpe believes that an individual's innate abilities and hard work are what determine whether they will ascend academically. Thus meritocracy simultaneously promotes economic efficiency, social justice, and social mobility (Goldthorpe 2002; Breen and Goldthorpe 1997; Glaesser and Cooper 2012).

Rational Action Theory assumes that decision-making involves a cost-benefit analysis, while habitus theory regards educational careers and outcomes as shaped by the fact that behaviours and dispositions reflecting familial class of origin match the demands of the school to varying degrees. As Bourdieu and Passeron point out in relation to access to higher education, choices are

governed by what it is 'reasonable to accept' (Bourdieu and Passeron 1979: 226). These theories are often seen as being in conflict, but, Glaesser and Cooper (2012) contend that they can also fruitfully be used together.

Bottero (2004) discusses the problematic nature of how some researchers in their reworking of class theory have dispensed with acknowledging class identities. For example, Goldthorpe's use of rational action theory (RAT) enabled him to argue that the same attitudes and beliefs have largely different results for those in differing class locations (Goldthorpe 1996) which influence their behaviour and decisions they make (Bottero 2004). She asserts that it is the opportunities (and risks) presented by the different class locations of rationally acting individuals which constrict their behaviour, rather than changes in class cultures or beliefs (Bottero 2004). The result of this interpretation has led to an abandonment of 'economic relations in their attempt to explain social identity' which has led to the disregard of 'social identity as a key component of class analysis' (Bottero 2004: 989).

Boudon (1974) draws on RAT to develop his model of social inequality in education. He asserts that secondary effects resulting from differences in destination goals, perceived costs and benefits between children from different social class origins, lead students to choose different educational pathways and different levels of possible qualifications. RAT is consistent with Bourdieu's explanation of why working class children often struggle in schools because their habitus does not fit with the school's habitus (i.e. the schools systematic culture, assumptions and requirements). Thus working class students are less likely to succeed in this school's *habitus*. Glaesser and Cooper (2012) provide an example where the aim of gaining post-16 qualifications for someone from a working class family, where the dominant experience is leaving school at 14 or 15 years of age and entering an unskilled job is an ambitious consideration, whereas for a student from a middle-class family going into unskilled work would most likely represent downward social mobility (Glaesser and Cooper 2012).

4.10 Cultural Reproduction, Transferability and Extra-credentialling

I find the Bourdieusian concepts of field, habitus and cultural capital particularly helpful for understanding individual and structural influences in the educational outcomes of my participants. Additionally, Reay (1998b) contends that while Bourdieu frames much of his theoretical analysis around social class inequalities (Bourdieu 1986), his concepts can also be usefully adapted for analyses of gender and ethnicity.

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction seeks to explain the link between social class of origin and social class of destination in terms of the impact of cultural capital on educational attainment. For Bourdieu, cultural capital consists of familiarity with the dominant culture in a society. He contends that the possession of cultural capital varies with social class, yet the education system assumes the possession of cultural capital. This makes it very difficult for lower class pupils to succeed in the education system. (Zimdars et al. 2009). In *Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction,* Bourdieu discusses the link between cultural capital and academic success as being demonstrated by:

> the fact that, among the pupils of the grandes écoles, a very pronounced correlation may be observed between academic success and the family's cultural capital measured by the academic level of the forbears over two generations on both sides of the family. (Bourdieu 1977a: 497)

Furthermore the use of parental educational credentials as a measure of cultural capital raises questions as to whether educational credentials simply constitute '... embodied cultural capital that has received school sanctioning' (Bourdieu and Boltanski 1981: 145).

My research will explore BACM participants' HE and early career destination experiences using Bourdieu's three forms of capital: economic, cultural and social capital. Bourdieu (1987) states that different forms of capital are 'capable of conferring strength, power and consequently profit on their holder' (Bourdieu 1987: 4). Depending on the circumstances, all three forms of these capitals can

be interpreted as symbolic capital as well, which I discuss in this section and explore in my participant's accounts in chapter nine.

Economic capital is a tool that can quickly and directly be converted into money and may be transformed into forms of property rights (Bourdieu 1986: 243). Money, for example a 20 pound note, is also symbolic capital to the extent that people within society recognise the piece of paper as currency that has value. I will explore how economic capital might impact BACMs access to secondary and higher education.

Cultural capital is described as relating to 'forms of cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions' (Bourdieu 1993a: 7). It is important to understand that Bourdieu embraces a broad meaning of cultural capital based on human practice and way of being (Bourdieu 1986a). Cultural capital can exist in three forms: the embodied state 'in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and the body', which are things that 'decline and die with its bearer' (Bourdieu 1986: 245) such as accent, disposition, way of walking; objectified state in the form of cultural goods, such as pictures, books, music; and the institutionalised state which reflect qualifications and institutionally sanctioned forms of status (Bourdieu 1986; Grenfell and James 1998). Depending on certain conditions, cultural capital may be transformed into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications. Again, this capital is useful to explore my participants' cultural habitus to see how their resources may or may not have been transferred or converted into educational outcomes.

Social capital comprises of social obligations (e.g. personal and family 'connections'), which depending on the circumstances, may be transferable into economic capital. Social capital relates to the value associated with social networks, bonding similar people and amongst diverse people. Capital and ability are a combination of power and knowledge and the ability to do something; the quality of being able to perform; a quality that permits or facilitates achievement or accomplishment.

Symbolic capital refers to 'the degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration, or honour and is founded on a dialectic of knowledge (connaissance) and recognition (reconnaissance)' (Bourdieu 1993a: 7). Symbolic capital only has strength or symbolic power if agents have knowledge of and recognition of it as capital. For example, a status symbol such as a Bentley automobile or a gentry title, 'Lord', taken out of context fails to possess symbolic status and power if agents lack of knowledge of the symbol being a status symbol – or if agents fail to recognise a luxury car or title as a symbol of power or status (wealth/prestige).

Symbolic resources can be exploited for economic acquisition. When granted power, symbolic capital gains 'legitimacy, as when inequality is defined as a legitimate return to those who make greater contributions to society as a whole' (Bourdieu 1984: 246). In chapters seven, eight and ten my participants discussed their realisation of their lack of symbolic capital and ways this affected their educational journeys.

4.11 Institutional Habitus and Practices: The Poker Game of Capitals

> We can indeed, with caution, compare a field to a game … although, unlike the latter, a field (…) follows rules, or better, regularities, that are not explicit and codified ... We also have trump cards … whose force varies depending on the game: just as the hierarchy of different species of capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic) varies across the various fields. In other words, there are cards that are valid, efficacious in all fields … but their relative value as trump cards is determined by each field and even by the successive states of the same field… Two individuals endowed with an equivalent overall capital can differ, in their position as well as in their stances … in that one holds a lot of economic capital and little cultural capital while the other has little economic capital and large cultural assets. To be more precise, the strategies of a 'player' and everything that defines his 'game' are a function not only of the volume and structure of his capital … and of the game chances … they guarantee him, but also of … his social trajectory and of the dispositions (habitus) constituted in the prolonged relation to a definite distribution of objective chances. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 98–99)

For Bourdieu, capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic) involves all power and includes material and symbolic resources. In every field, capital is distributed unequally based on forces of competition over the exchange of resources from which inequalities arise. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) use the metaphor of a poker game to describe the relationship between social class and forms of capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Each poker player's endurance and success varies based on the supply of betting chips the individual possesses – as well as the players intuitive understanding of the game's invisible, yet implicit rules. For example, students from a dominant class will possess a larger supply of gambling chips (i.e. forms of capital) than those from subordinate or marginalised classes. Being embodied with an abundance of information at their disposal allows middle class students to speculate their poker chips (capitals) through a more effective and advancing 'game plan' or strategy that enhances their 'odds' or likelihood of winning or succeeding in academic institutions.

Additionally middle class students' cultural milieus and habitus enables them to facilitate successful interactions within elite institutions (Lareau and Horvat 1999). Thus middle class students are in a more privileged position in the academic game because they have more information that is recognised as being of value at their disposal which enhances their chances of succeeding (Bourdieu and Passeron 1979). Consequently working class or subordinate/marginalised students are less experienced game players who are in the poker game, but because it is new to them they are attentively focused on the primary rules of the game and miss out on the understated yet sophisticated nuances and implicit clues that more seasoned middle class students possess. Thus middle class students are two-fold advantaged by maintaining a larger amount of poker chips (i.e. diversified capitals cultural and social) from which they draw upon and benefit from which perpetuates a cycle of cumulative advantage (McClelland 1990) over working class students allowing them to routinely receive a greater return in educational institutions and careers thereafter[16].

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[16] However Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) also acknowledge that, *'two individuals endowed with equivalent overall capital can differ, in their position'* within the game as their capital may appear to be the same but may be valued

Willis' (1977), Skeggs' (1992) and Reay's (2002b) research on how white working class boys and girls actively compete and engage in the development of their own cultural capital is recognised as being oppositional to the habitus of secondary institutions (Sadovnik 1991; Bernstein 2004). I suggest that the same holds true for my working class BACM students' capital in terms of how it is perceived by the holders of power within predominantly white, elite institutions (Willis 1977; Skeggs 1992; Reay 2002). Many researchers assert that 'race' has been theoretically marginalised in the study of social inequality, and that its relevance for understanding differential educational outcomes has been theoretically overshadowed by the focus on class (Ladson-Billings 1998; Gillborn 2005; Gillborn 2008b; Gillborn 2010b; Gillborn et al. 2012). At the same time, in Britain throughout the 1970s and 1980s, social class issues were marginalised and side-lined from discussions about educational inequality (Reay, 2012; Perry and Francis 2010). For the past two decades education policy and discourse has focused on aspirations, social mobility and meritocracy as being the new panacea for concern. Governmental educational achievement policies have been fixated on ability and effort rather than socio-economic status (class) and wealth as key factors that need to change. Social mobility has been the sterilised answer to educational policy problems when in fact it remains extremely low in the UK. Class divisions and the gap between rich and poor in the UK have failed to narrow in the past 35 years and social mobility in the UK is still overwhelmingly tied to parents' income (Blanden and Machin 2007). As discussed in the Chapters three and five, CRT has been invoked in my research as an alternative way of theorising social and educational inequalities.

Institutional habitus is a power-force that intersects the past and present and is influenced by individuals as well as group surroundings. Bourdieu (1990) explains habitus as the functioning of daily practices that are often managed or operationalised by group practices. Habitus can produce individual actions but these are often restricted by group dynamics (e.g. culture or rules to which the individual often feels compelled to adhere to or follow). Therefore the actions

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differently. This could explain why a black student from a middle class background may still face challenges adjusting to the habitus of his predominantly white middle class university

that emerge from individuals are more often reproductive in disposition rather than individualised and transformative (Bourdieu 1990).

Secondary schools and Universities have distinguishable institutional habitus. They implement their habitus in ways to demonstrate the particular behaviours and cultural norms that are acceptable within their institutions in order to ensure will be routinely maintained and reproduced. This praxis is known by the term *institutional practice*. The institutional practices (habitus) within HEIs are particularly useful in helping individuals prepare for and adapt to the habitus they will most likely experience in their future career worlds (Reay et al. 2001a). It is important to note that within the Bourdieu school of theoretical thought there are researchers (Atkinson 2011; 2012) who oppose Reay and other researcher's (McDonough 1997; David et al. 2003; Reay et al. 2001a; Reay et al. 2005; Reay et al. 2010; Ingram, 2009) identification of habitus as institutionalised. Atkinson's (2011) declares that Bourdieu's theory of habitus is misinterpreted when researchers associated it with being aligned with places or institutions. Simply put, Atkinson is reluctant to apply habitus to anything other than people as he states, 'only individuals possess [corporeal] traits and capacities' (Atkinson 2011: 337). He does not subscribe to the belief that a school or a family unit can possess an institutionalised habitus and states that, 'rolling all members of the family, school or university in together as one monolithic unit (…) completely steamrolls any internal heterogeneity or dissension' (Atkinson 2011: 338). He alleges that blanketing educational institutions as institutionalised habitus, where students who embody a habitus incongruent with the school or university suggests that these students embody fixed spaces, where they will be unable to adapt or become 'mavericks' who can seamlessly fit like fish in water within the educationally institutionalised habitus of elite fields.

I do not dispute Atkinson's argument that there are occasions within institutionalised school and university habitus where students from incongruent backgrounds to that of the school are able to comfortably 'fit' within these institutions fields. However I suggest that these are the exception rather than the norm. In agreement with Reay and a host of other researchers (mentioned

above), it is my contention that there is more often a tendency for students from working class and black backgrounds to not 'fit' within the indoctrinated and institutionalised habitus of elite schools and universities.

4.12 Habitus

> Habitus is the active presence of past experiences … in the form of schemes of perception, thoughts and actions, [that] tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time. (Bourdieu, quoted in Harker 1992:16)

Bourdieu identifies habitus as a system of lasting dispositions acquired through past experiences (Bourdieu 1986). These cognitive and normative predispositions vary systematically between individuals from different social classes. Bourdieu sees habitus as being developed based on an individuals' "subjective rationality" which is shaped by their experience in their families. This points to family members' expectations and aspirations being places with some sort of upper and lower border of what can be achieved. Habitus produces action, but because it confines possibilities to those feasible for the social groups the individual belongs to, much of the time those actions tend to be reproductive rather than transformative (Bourdieu 1990). Habitus can be represented in an individual's 'way of being' which is acquired through a process of acculturation. Bourdieu demonstrates how norms of behaviour set the standards within education based on middle class values which place children from those backgrounds at a distinct advantage. He argues:

> When habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it finds itself 'as a fish in water', it does not feel the weight of the world and takes the world about it for granted. (Bourdieu 1989a: 43)

A working class habitus in a middle class education system increases the likelihood of alienation and conflict for students (hooks 1994). In developing this concept I would suggest that in some cases, BACM culture is removed from white, middle class behaviourally accepted norms within the education field.

4.13 Cultural Reproduction, Habitus and Capital in the Classroom

Research suggests that there exists an institutional social class structure known as cultural reproduction (Bourdieu 1977a). Bourdieu's frameworks suggests that parent's cultural capital can be inherited, children's cultural capital can be converted into educational credentials and educational credentials are a major mechanism of social reproduction in advanced capitalist societies. William Sewell (1992) believes:

> Structures shape people's practices, but it is also people's practices that constitute (and reproduce) structures... if enough people or even a few people who are powerful enough act in innovative ways, their action may have the consequence of transforming the very structures that gave them the capacity to act. (Sewell 1992: 4)

The function of education in society and the way it reproduces existing social class structures is explored from a range of perspectives in the sociology of education literature. Higher education consists of an institutional hierarchy of complexities from which continued reproduction of racialised and classed inequities persists (Reay et al. 2001b). Educational institutions were created and are legally authorised to convey knowledge, skill and values; they also play a significant role in determining an individual's position in society (Burgess and Parker 1999).

Archer and Francis (2007) in alignment with Bourdieu, note that historically, an individual's profession was a key component in the conceptualisation of class, which to a large extent remains true in present day society. However cultural analyses have become more central to contemporary understanding. Bourdieu's work on the interplay between habitus and capital is particularly influential among cultural theorists. Habitus is an individual's 'way of being', acquired through socialisation. Consequently capital signifies resources, both real and symbolic, that the individuals can apply as recognised tools. A middle class habitus aids and supports success in the educational system, instilling an orientation that promotes the achievement of educational capital. All individuals have access to resources of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital –

but the *value* of these resources differs according to whether the capitals are deemed legitimate by dominant power structures (Ball et al. 2011). Therefore middle class capital tends to carry more status, whereas working class capital tends to only possess community value and may be relatively insignificant outside its local neighbourhood. The higher the status of the capital, the more it is recognised as being culturally valuable and transferable into other forms of capital (i.e. economic). Thus the overall effect is that middle class habitus tends to garner more value than working class habitus. This results in a higher amount of privilege for people of a middle class habitus because its individual and/or group capital is recognised as being more valuable within the greater society.

4.14 Habitus: Working Class Versus Middle Class Students' Secondary Schooling and Choices

Research suggests that students begin at different positions in secondary education based on their institutional habitus which is influenced by their families, peer groups and socio-economic backgrounds. As discussed in section 4.10, Glaesser and Cooper (2012) justifiably explain that RAT is compatible with Bourdieu's account for why working class children often struggle in schools; their habitus does not seamlessly fit with the school's habitus. I would contend the same explanation could be a valid justification for outcomes in higher education. The habitus a prospective university student possesses may or may not be consistent with HE institutional habitus (e.g. universities dominant culture, assumptions and requirements) that staff within admissions at elite universities are seeking when selecting prospective candidates for university entrance.

Research suggests that the more status or privilege students possess (i.e. primarily in private schools), the more status they will amass during their secondary years which translates into them being able to more easily navigate and make choices about their education. Whereas some children from less privileged backgrounds find the choices that need to be made at a relatively early age in order to be considered in the applicant running pool for HE more challenging (Goldthorpe 2007a, 2007b; Breen and Goldthorpe 1997; Ball et al.

2002; Glaesser and Cooper 2012). Although this process is not always uniform (Reay 1998b), institutional habitus can often be influentially correlated to educational choices students make. Choices that seem routine for some students may seem unconscionable for other students (Bourdieu 1986).

Research indicates that many working class and State comprehensive students have expressed feelings that higher education is not the right place for them (Bourdieu 1990, Reay et al. 2001a; 2001b), whereas the majority of students from private schools seem to choose and then seamlessly make the transition from compulsory education to HE (Reay et al. 2001a). In agreement with the researchers Bourdieu and Waquant (1992), I contend that this *seamless* acclimation to HE can be accounted for as a result of capitals (also understood as support) for which the students and their families (usually from middle class backgrounds) appear to take for granted. In chapter 5 I discuss the middle class strategies that middle class black parents provide their children in order to ensure they have sufficient capital to attend and succeed in HE. As a result of considering this range of literature, two questions that I wish to explore with my participants are: 1) Do BACM in elite universities experience their education in ways that are similar to or different to the literature about BACM's secondary education experiences? 2) How do BACM navigate the educational and social challenges in order to achieve and maintain educational success within predominantly white elite institutions? In the next section I provide a contextual background for Critical Race Theory and then explain why it is an appropriate theory and mechanism to use with my research project.

Chapter Five: Critical Race Theory, Institutional Racism, Misrecognition and the Intersection of Capitals

5.1 Critical Race Theory Definition

> The 'gift' of CRT is that it unapologetically challenges the scholarship that would dehumanize and depersonalize us.
> (Ladson-Billings 2000: 272)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a lens by which hegemonic forces in society can be examined and challenged. Formerly associated with Critical Legal Studies (CLS), CRT was developed over four decades ago in the US by legal scholars of colour who believed that 'race' and racism were not being vigorously examined in the law (Crenshaw 2002; Matsuda 1991, Matsuda et al.1993). In their departure from CLS, critical 'race' scholars asserted that in order to better recognise racism, a close examination of how racial power is generated inside and outside liberal spaces was needed (Crenshaw 1995). During the 1970s Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman introduced Critical Race Theory in response to their discontent with the US court systems' diminished and unprogressive movement for racial reform which was necessary to improve social justice for people of colour (Bell 1987; Ladson-Billings 1998; Delgado and Stefancic 2012). It was an attempt to improve the understanding of how and why racism persists, despite the progress made by the civil rights movement. In the mid-1990s Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998) began to apply CRT to the education context (Dixson and Rousseau 2005). Today CRT provides ways to analyse and critique educational research and practice and make sense of the on-going racial inequality in educational experiences and outcomes (Ladson-Billings 2005).

5.2 CRT From a Post-Structuralist Perspective

> The time has passed when the so-called 'race' question, or Negro question, can be relegated to secondary or tertiary *theoretical*

significance in bourgeois or Marxist discourses. (West 1988: 18: italics in original).

Gillborn (2005; 2008b), believes 'race' should be a central focus in educational inequality. US 'race' scholar Cornel West and other CRT scholars (e.g. Parker and Stovall 2004) assert that people of colour usually have not been included in educational debates:

> The debates between feminist and male respondents, or poststructuralists and post-Marxists, etc., have been discussions among white people from which people of color have for the most part been excluded' … 'where is the black representation in the discussion of the future of critical pedagogy? (Parker and Stovall 2004: 169 - 170)

CRT is not a 'Grand Theory' like Marxism nor does it seek to explain past history or predict future outcomes. I acknowledge that class is a major factor – probably the 'the strongest educational predictor of student achievement' (Leonardo 2009: 48). However as a CRT researcher I also acknowledge that black people and people of colour disproportionately comprise of the working class and working poor groups when compared to their white counterparts in the UK (Barnard and Turner 2011; The Poverty Site 2015). In concert with Gillborn (2005; 2008a; 2010b) and CRT scholars I assert that 'race' and racism, like class, are factors that influence black educational inequality.

5.3 Key Principles of Critical Race Theory

5.3.1 Racism as Ordinary and 'Everyday'

Although CRT cannot be unequivocally and explicitly defined, there are eight CRT tenets of which three are particularly important for this research. First, CRT begins with the tenet that racism in society is typical and ordinary rather than abnormal or unusual occurrence in society (Howard-Hamilton 2012; Ladson-Billings 2000). CRT asserts that racism is a common, everyday experience for most people of colour that is embodied at individual and institutional levels due to racial power of which people of colour are deprived (Crenshaw 2002; Delgado and Stefanic 2012). Race is an omnipresent dominantly ingrained part of the conscious and unconscious aspect of peoples personal lives which

manifests itself in 'speech, dance, neighbours and friends' (Lopez and Ian 2004: 965). Race permeates and negotiates every aspect of white people's everyday attitudes towards people of colour (Litowitz 2009: 296). Because of its often subconscious nature, racism is often very difficult to pinpoint and uncover, which reaffirms the aforementioned discussion of the subtle snubs and slights, 'mircoaggressions' that people of colour often experience on a daily basis. The research of Nirmal Puwar (2004), Claire Alexander (1996), Gillborn and Youdell (2000), and Reay et al. (2005a, 2009a, 2009b) has demonstrated ethnic minorities experiences as 'others' whereby people of colour have effectively been constructed as being outside the 'normative' boundaries of society.

5.3.2 Race as a Social Construction

A second principle of CRT asserts that 'race' is an identity classification that is constructed by society (Delgado and Stefanic 2012). Increasingly, it is recognised that conceptualising 'race' solely as a social construction fails to properly confront questions about how 'race' is reproduced and experienced in the everyday. There are also concerns that the continued use of 'race' as an analytical category, even with the forewarning that it is a constructed classification, fails to de-essentialise 'race' (Delgado and Stefanic 2012). Conceptions of 'race' can, at the very least, be understood as 'products of their times and places' that provide responses to political and social change (Winant 2000). Shifts in the analytical status of 'race' are interrelated to shifts in political agendas (Solomos and Back 2000). To understand 'race' and how 'race' operates, it is therefore necessary to acknowledge and assess the political discourses in which it is ingrained.

Researchers (Winant 2000; Gillborn 2005; 2008a; Goldberg 2009; Leonardo 2009; Ahmed 2007) asserts that the failure to recognise 'race' acts to silence the legacy of colonialism, slavery and the marginalisation of cultures from the national consciousness. Goldberg (2009) states:

> Born again racism reappears whenever called upon to do the
> dirty work of racist politics but purged of its categorical stiffness.
> Indeed, shed of its stiff categoricality, race-less racism operates

in denial, anywhere and anytime. The concern over police profiling, for instance, has quickly shifted from denying its prevalence, if not its possibility, to affirming that there is nothing wrong with profiling for the sake of security and anti-terrorist vigilance. The concern over victims of state violence has shifted from claims of protecting the innocent to dismissive rationalizations of collateral damage. (Goldberg 2009: 25)

Ahmed (2007) and Lentin et al. (2011) contend that imagining that society can move beyond 'race' ignores persisting inequalities and the ingrained experiences of 'race' that occur to people of colour on a daily basis. It is a mistake to focus attention and essential responsibilities on dismantling categories to promote post-'race' ideas. Ahmed (2007) and Goldberg (2009) emphasise that the dismantling categories diverts attention from the weight of racism. They declare, from different perspectives, that it is 'the conditions for which those terms stand' (Goldberg 2009: 21), that 'race' should be prioritised as a means to expose 'how racism operates to shape the surfaces of bodies and worlds' (Ahmed 2004: 10). Furthermore, Winant (2000) points out Du Bois' (1933) caution against committing ''race' suicide', which associates the negation of 'race' and black identity with the idea of inclusion through the problematic practice of colour-blindness.

A third CRT tenet focuses on the project to dismantle multiculturalism that seeks to demolish racial categories. Linked to a neoliberal agenda, it constructs tolerance of multiculturalism as a British national treasure and asset (Chris Smith, MP cited in Back 2002: 2) However 'race' is efficaciously silenced within the rhetoric of accommodation and tolerance that purport that racism is an underdeveloped notion from a previous time in the country's history (Winant 2001). As a result, multiculturalism is criticised as being responsible for championing 'political correctness' (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010), which has progressively been exploited and improperly applied to any issue that highlights inequality, racism and discrimination. This is indicative of the way that social problems have come to be identified as 'problems of intolerance, not as problems of inequality, exploitation and injustice' (Žižek 2008: 660). Tolerance is presented as a generalised normative approach that gradually eliminates a commitment to multiculturalism, and instead replaces it with 'the unspoken

small print of assimilation by a drive for sameness' (Puwar 2004: 124). Consequently, racial hierarchies of power are permitted to operate unchecked and racism is designated 'a nearly invisible, taken-for-granted feature of everyday life' (Winant 2001: 308).

5.3.3 Eurocentric Perspectives; Whiteness, Whiteness as Property and White Supremacy and Meritocracy

Dominant Western culture is comprised of broad assumptions and beliefs that are deeply embedded in its construction of the nature of the world and how one experiences it (Foucault 1979, 1988). The Eurocentric perspective is centred on white privilege (Bernal 2002). However, those who believe that our society is truly meritocratic find it difficult to accept that men gain advantage from women's disadvantages, or that people of European descent have any meaningful advantage over people of colour. This way of understanding the world is partly based on white privilege, which is 'an invisible package of unearned assets' (McIntosh 1998: 207) or a system of opportunities and benefits that is bestowed on an individual simply for being white. Within education this privilege is often invisible and is legitimized and viewed as a normalised standard benchmark. Individuals who depart from this standardised criterion are often devalued and marginalised. The problematic nature of possessing an implicitly Eurocentric mind-set is that it allows its inhabitors of this perspective to subtly (and sometimes not so subtly) shape the beliefs and practices of educators and the school curriculum while continuing to detrimentally affect the educational experiences and outcomes of students of colour (Bernal 2002: 111).

5.3.4 Whiteness and Whiteness as Property

Envisioning 'race' as socially constructed, means that whiteness becomes an important point from which to examine and problematize white privilege. In the US CRT scholars understand whiteness to be a normative everyday attitude from which people of colour are measured (Delgado and Stefancic 2012; Leonardo 2009; Bell 1995). Similarly in the UK within educational research David Gillborn (2009) has defined whiteness as:

> A regime of beliefs and attitudes that embodies the interests and assumptions of white people [which] operates to privilege racist assumptions and silence minoritized voices. (Gillborn 2009: 535)

As a result of what Gillborn and other educational researchers describe as 'institutional racism' that persists in the US and UK, white people are privileged and enjoy particular advantages within these societies at the expense of bodies of colour (Gillborn 2005; 2008a; Harris 1993; Leonardo 2004; Preston 2007). Several scholars contend that whiteness is reinforced through racial hierarchy (Delgado and Stefancic 2012; Gillborn 2006b). Shome (1999) contends that whiteness is a 'power-laden discursive formation that privileges, secures, and normalizes the white body while oppressing bodies of colour' (Shome 1999: 108). Similarly, Cheryl Harris (1993) suggests that whiteness is best understood as a form of property which affords symbolic and material power and privilege to white people, and to a certain extent, those people who are able to pass and/or perform whiteness (Alexander 2004a; 2004b; Harris 1993). CRT scholars work to both identify and challenge whiteness and its systemic manifestations (Delgado and Stefancic 2012).

5.3.5 White Supremacy and Misrecognition

> White supremacy signifies a deeply rooted exercise of power that remains untouched by moves to address the more obvious forms of overt discrimination. (Gillborn 2005: 492)

Gillborn is aware that racism and white supremacy are controversial and contested terms in academia and society. However he acknowledges that in the UK it is common to have discussions about institutional or unintended racism (Gillborn 2006b). He is also aware that his use of words such as white supremacy may be seen as divisive by some class researchers (see Cole 2009a; 2009b). In acknowledgement that white supremacy usually refers to individuals and groups who participate in crass explicit acts of racism (i.e. extreme nationalists and neo-Nazis), Gillborn further clarifies his definition of white supremacy with regard to how it is used within CRT. CRT scholars look at white supremacy from political, economic and cultural perspectives that affect

all institutions in society. These institutions are usually managed, controlled and/or owned by white people who consciously and unconsciously consider themselves entitled to benefit (Ansley 1997). Gillborn acknowledges that white people are not all equally privileged in society based on their racial identification. However he contends that all white people are 'implicated in these relations' but 'they do not all draw similar benefits – but they do all benefit, whether they like it or not' (Gillborn 2008b: 34).

According to CRT scholars, racism is the norm, rather than unusual and is most harmful in subtle and institutionalised forms (Harper 2012, Munuz 2015). Gillborn contends:

> ...the most dangerous form of 'white supremacy' is not the obvious and extreme fascistic posturing of small neo-nazi groups, but the taken-for-granted routine privileging of white interests that goes unremarked in the political mainstream. (Gillborn 2005: 485)

Institutionalised racism appears normal because it is embedded within systems. Individuals are not born racist, but are socialised and educated to become so (Harper 2012). Within secondary educational institutions when poor outcomes or failures occur it is the students, families and communities who are deemed to have failed to achieve, and need to change and improve. Yosso (2005) argues that this meritocratic view causes many educators to be misguided in their belief that the schools are always good and right. Bourdieu has defined this behaviour as 'misrecognition' (Bourdieu 1998). Misrecognition is how a social practice may be made 'invisible' through a displacement of understanding and then reinterpreted as part of other aspects of habitus that 'go without saying' (Mahar et al. 1990 in James 2015: 100). It is about a transfer of understanding from one realm to another. In educational systems Bourdieu has said that this process causes 'the social determinants of the educational career to go unacknowledged' (James 2011: 2) because the process is not considered a common and accepted practice. In the next section I provide a contextual background for CRT and then explain why it is an appropriate theory and mechanism to use with my research project.

5.3.6 Whiteness within Gender and Social Positioning

Bev Skeggs discussed how the white women in her research were consciously aware of how they were socially positioned. Her participants' responses operated with 'a dialogic form of recognition' which Skeggs says enabled them to navigate class delineated systems and assess themselves accordingly (Skeggs 1997b: 4).

A white hegemonic discourse constructs people who are not read as white in such a way to suggest that they are over-determined by their 'race'. Within this example, whiteness is implicitly constructed as preserving a 'normative' position often portrayed as 'invisible' (Perry 2001). Whiteness operates from a place where dissimilarity is identified and where 'race', for the most part been seen as relevant only in the case of those who are perceived to be racial subjects, namely 'non-whites' (Carby, 1992). Yet it is important to be cautious to construct whiteness as invisible as Ahmed (2004) explains that doing so risks ignoring that whiteness is very much visible to those constructed as not white. Ahmed says, 'whiteness is only invisible to those who inhabit it' (Ahmed 2004: 4).

5.3.7 The Debunking of Colourblindness in Society Post Racial Argument

CRT criticises the colour-blind dominant ideology that suggests that we currently live in a post racial, meritocratic fair world, where 'race' is a neutral or invisible aspect of society (Cho 2008; Delgado and Stefancic 2012; Onwuachi-Willig 2009; Solórzano and Yosso 2002). CRT challenges education's claims of 'objectivity, meritocracy, color and gender blindness, 'race' and gender neutrality, and equal opportunity' (Solorzano 1998: 122). Neutrality is problematic because whites consider whiteness the norm. Consequently Bergeson (2003) states:

> Neutrality is perceived as equivalent to whiteness. Whiteness is a dominant, transparent norm that defines what attributes of 'race' should be counted, how to count them, and who (…) gets to do the counting. (Bergeson 2003: 654)

Proponents of colour-blindness argue that decisions should be made without taking 'race' into consideration. The problem is that some whites cannot practice true colourblindness. Some researchers (Bergeson 2003; Goldberg and Solomos 2002) contend that some whites cannot practice true colourblindness because they take for granted the unconscious privilege and power that whiteness provides them. Bergeson intimates that some white people actions are dichotomously in their attribution of negative stereotypes to people of colour while consequently advocating for the opposition to blatant racism (Bergerson 2003). For example, in a classroom, a teacher may say that s/he treats all of her pupils the same regardless of their 'race', while at the same time referring to students of colour as slow learners, more likely to cause trouble and be disruptive in class and must therefore be more educationally disadvantaged and relegated to the lower tiers. The idea of colour-blindness allows racism to persist in more subtle ways. The result is that the more 'white' a person of colour appears and acts, the less they are likely to find themselves disadvantaged (Bergerson 2003; Dixson and Rousseau 2005; Gillborn 2008b).

5.4 Intersectionality and CRT

Intersectionality recognises accounts of oppression as layered and acknowledges that racism intersects with other forms of domination, such as sexism, heterosexism, and classism (Pyke 2010). For example, if a person of colour who also identifies as gay experiences racism, a critical 'race' perspective would recognise how racism intersects with homophobia. CRT emphasises the point that bodies of colour do not have 'a single, easily stated, unitary identity' (Delgado and Stefancic 2012: 10). Therefore, when contemplating how bodies of colour are marginalised, it is important to be aware of the multiplicity of identity markers and intersections that can theorise how oppression might affect the marginalised. CRT also holds that an intersectional approach is useful in avoiding an oversimplification of human experiences (Crenshaw 1995; Delgado and Stefancic 2012).

5.5 The Silencing of Race and Racism: Differential Racialization dependent on the Times

Hall (1978a: 23 - 24) argued that there is a tendency to omit 'race' from the internal dynamics of British society and to repress its history. He says this is not only confined to the 'political Right' of the spectrum but is also found on the 'Liberal Left'. He asserts that immigration and 'race' have become problems within society and the government. I agree with the views of Hall (1978a) that discussions on 'race' are often muffled within many accounts of British society with the exception of when immigration issues are discussed. Within the realm of CRT, BMEs experiential knowledge is acknowledged as legitimate and essential to understanding how racism operates. CRT suggests that multi-disciplinary perspectives are relevant and necessary to understand 'race' and racism. It draws upon historic and contemporary contexts from multiple disciplines. Within the canonical academe of social sciences some researchers (Harvey 1990 and Hylton 2010) contend that amongst many white social scientists, there is an uneasiness and resistance to deviate from traditional approaches to social research in order to explore 'race' using CRT. Hylton (2010) states that traditional 'epistemologies are a result of social practices where power is being exercised that can reinforce colour blind, 'race' neutral, ahistorical, and apolitical points of view' (Hylton 2010: 2). Harvey (1990) views knowledge as dynamic, interpretative and dialectical –not fixed and objective. He sees mainstream social research as being formatted on a hierarchical, top-down approach in contrast to *critical* social research which is concerned with exposing oppressive structural mechanisms. Like CRT, Harvey's critical research framework is designed to challenge and cut through mainstream accepted epistemologies and ideological legitimisations to mount a political debate against oppressive social structures.

5.6 The Co-Mingling Of CRT And Bourdieu's Theory of Capitals

Yosso (2005) presents a view of social and cultural capital within in BME communities in the US that may pose some relevance to the UK educational perspectives on BME students. She says that in US education, Bourdieu's theory of capitals 'has often been interpreted as a way to explain why the academic and social outcomes of people of color are significantly lower than the

outcomes of Whites' (Yosso 2005: 70). Some US schools begin their interaction with BME students with the assumption that they are disadvantaged and pre-disposed to underperform in school because their race and class background places them in a position where they lack the essential knowledge, social skills, abilities and cultural capital that white students possess to do well in school (Yosso 2005; Valenzuela 1999). Yosso (2005) decentres the dominant white student experience which educational systems have institutionalised as the 'norm' and by which academic success is predominantly measured. She replaces the centre with the black experience. The result is a shift from a model of disadvantage which focused on particular social and cultural capital that black students in institutionalised middle class normative schools did not possess, to a model that recognises the skills, capabilities and cultural knowledge (social capital) that these black students do possess. Yosso's concept of 'community cultural wealth' identifies a range of capitals that intersect and are passed down generationally through BME families and communities and in brief, includes:

- ➢ Aspirational capital: a culture of possibility that enables BMEs to hold on to hopes and dreams beyond their current circumstances

- ➢ Linguistic capital: the ability to communicate in more than one language/dialect and in different social/class settings

- ➢ Familial capital: the understanding of family as extended family (rather than nuclear) and the inclusion of community as part of that extended family

- ➢ Social capital: social and community contacts that provide instrumental and emotional support (e.g. for applications for scholarships/ courses in HE)

- ➢ Navigational capital: the skills and ability to navigate structural barriers, such as hostile education institutions

> ➤ Resistant capital: the self-definition that enables BMEs to develop
> positive identities that are oppositional to popular, negative racial and
> gender stereotypes. (Yosso 2005: 77-81)

The concept of 'community cultural wealth' can help to transform one's understanding of how BME learners educationally achieve. This concept also promotes a theory of empowerment that identifies the mechanisms that BME people exercise to combat inequalities in an effort to attain social and racial justice.

Vincent et al.'s (2012, 2103) research evidences how the black middle class develop and employ strategies, mechanisms and worldviews to combat racial and social injustice often through avoidance of confrontations. These black middle class strategies enable black children to respond to challenging and/or combative situations in non, or less reactive manners. These strategies are often used to deny the acknowledgement of racist or discriminatory 'situations' or practices directed at black pupils. When such a situation arises, middle class black children have been taught to associate the 'situation' not as one of discrimination but rather pure ignorance not specifically directed at them Vincent et al. 2012, 2103). This enables middle class black children to behave/perform (i.e. stay calm and not challenge or rock the boat) in response to an offensive/egregious 'situation' in a manner that is acceptable to the predominantly white institutionally racist schools habitus. In other words, these strategies enable black students to get on with their learning without being perceived as displaying bad or inappropriate behaviour that some teachers perceive black students to be pre-disposed to possess.

Utilising these strategies also prevents middle class black students from being excluded or relegated to lower performing classes as they are not perceived to be like other bad behaving BAC students (Vincent et al. 2013). By performing in this manner, middle class BAC children tend to function in a neoliberal meritocratic mode where they believe that ignorance rather than racism is what exists at schools and it is not directed directly at them. Buying into this model, middle class black students are able to cultivate a belief world where they see

school as a fair and level learning ground. Consequently, their failure or success is based on their educational aptitude and ability rather than any teacher misconceptions or misrecognition of their behaviour or capability to succeed like white children. Although these black middle class strategies may be useful in secondary and HE, negative and derogatory psychological emotional consequences may arise in some of these children who perform these strategies (Schwalbe et al. 2000; Major et al. 2002; Major et al. 2007; Wilkins 2012). In chapter ten of findings, I discuss in detail the pros and cons of black middle class coping strategies and worldviews.

5.7 Difficulties Stigmatised Groups have Identifying Racism

Some psychological research argues that people are often inclined to avoid identifying the specific cause or perpetrator of a possible discriminatory act (Carvallo and Pelham 2006; Crosby 1982; Schmitt and Branscombe 2002). It is contended that acknowledging racism requires people to concede that they have been victims who do not have full control over their lives, which is a risky thing to accept (Ruggiero and Taylor 1997). Black people as recipients of discrimination can be classified as a stigmatised group. When they experience subtle and indirect forms of offense and/or racism, they may minimise or often fail to acknowledge the extent to which they are being unfairly treated (Carvallo and Pelham 2006). Stigmatised people are likely to perceive racism as reasonable, acceptable and expected (Sidanius and Pratto 2001). Examples of the racism and stigmatisation are discussed in several of my participants' accounts in findings, chapters eight and nine.

5.8 Bodily Hexis

Research indicates that white working class and British Caribbean boys are more likely to be excluded from classes often for a bodily hexis that does not 'fit' within the schools habitus (Gillborn 2005; 2008a; Mac an Ghaill 1988). In secondary schooling teachers may misread working class boys' bodily hexis (often perceived as a 'behavioural attitude') as challenging authority and disrupting the dominant middle class normative

habitus of the school (Ingram, 2014). This misreading or misrecognition may lead some teachers to perceive these boys as both unintelligent and aggressive violent threats to the maintenance of their schools habitus (Mac an Ghaill 1988; Crozier 2005; Gillborn 2005; 2008a, 2008b). Shilling (1992) argues that the dominant class determines which forms of bodily physical capital are valued as worthy within the field. The result is that teachers often pre-label these boys as troublemakers who should be singled out for punishment often before they have acted up in class. In chapters seven and eight, my participants provided accounts of how their bodily hexis and performativity caused them to be misrecognised and mistreated by faculty and students.

5.9 Moderate Blackness

Research suggests that black men face different assumptions and perceptions of their racial performances than black women, as well as different expectations of their gender performances than white men (Fanon 2008; Alexander 2004b; Kaiser and Major 2013; Leonardo 2011; Mcgee 2013; Wilkins 2012). These differences also differ by class (McGee 2013; Wilkins 2012). Using a feminist intersectional approach with 'race', class and gender with Critical Race Theory can help to make sense of some of the complexities black men encounter in their performativity (Berger and Guidroz 2010; Collins 2004). Wilkins says that when black middle-class men are confronted with possibilities of discrimination or racism, 'they are involved in strategies whereby they must navigate and manage racial expectations as well as gender and class expectations' (Wilkins 2012: 42). Part of this strategy is accomplished by producing positive, restrained emotions that require black university men to "not see" everyday racism (Wilkins 2012:45-46). This can be termed 'moderate blackness', and it is a theme to which I return to in the analysis presented in chapter nine. In the following chapter, (six) I provide an explanation of the methodology, methods and design that were implemented while researching my participants.

Chapter Six: Methodology, Methods and Design

Methodology:

> The systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied
> to a field of study (Irny and Rose, 2005)… [The place where]
> method, theory and epistemology come together in the
> process of directly investigating specific instances within the
> social world. In the process of grounding empirical enquiry,
> methodology thus reveals the presuppositions that inform the
> knowledge that is generated by the enquiry. (Harvey 1990:1)

This chapter describes the methodology and methods implemented in my research study. As noted in the introductory chapter the overarching aims of this research were to explore:

➤ What is the student experience like for black men studying at predominantly white elite Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK?

➤ How do 'race', ethnicity, gender, class and culture account for black males' constructions of their identity and their ability to achieve and succeed in leading HEIs and employment afterwards?

This chapter is split into four sections. The first section provides a brief autobiography to illustrate relevant ontological and epistemological underpinnings. Section two highlights the theoretical grounding of my research. Section three describes the 'nuts and bolts' of my research design where I discuss the research methods I used, why I chose to implement these techniques and how I analysed and coded my data. The final section of the chapter closes with a reflexive view of my research process.

The first three chapters of this study identified and presented some of the key issues underlying national debates and official policy responses about black boys' underachievement in secondary education in the UK. As previously discussed in the literature review, over the past four decades there has been substantial literature highlighting the fact that British African Caribbean boys are frequently expelled and are one of the most excluded ethnic groups in UK secondary education. Consequently this literature has often been identified to

help to explain their low levels of retention and success in further and higher education, which has generally remained uncontested. This section outlines: (A) how my research draws on qualitative feminist approach that incorporates Critical Race Theory within my research design and analysis of my participants counter-stories; and (B) the methods and tools I used within my study.

6.1 Ontology: Feminist Influences on My Approach and Perspective

> [A feminist approach contends that:] "researchers' understandings are necessarily temporally, intellectually, politically and emotionally grounded and are thus as contextually specific as those of the 'researched'…. a key problem of social science is how to understand the 'inter-subjectivity' – the fact that in spite of our ontological distinctness none the less we assume we can, and indeed we do, 'share experiences' such that we recognise ourselves in others and they in us and can speak of 'common experiences. (Stanley and Wise 1990: 23)

My participants' university experiences represent a part of their personal and cultural identities (McAdams 2003). Knowledge originated through participants' reflections and memories is by definition subjective and one sided (Goodson and Sikes 2001). Stanley and Wise (1990) suggest that one's personal background and shared experience can be a good source for developing understanding. As a graduate student researcher of African-American descent, I believe my 'insider'/'emic' status as a person from a somewhat similar background enhanced the interview communication process with my participants. hooks (1989) has emphasised the significance of race research being carried out from a black perspective and highlighted the benefit of research where the researcher shares a similar ethnic background to the researched. However it is important to acknowledge that in other ways I have an 'outsider'/etic status as I am not British. I have been matriculated though the British educational system and I attended public/'private' US secondary schools whereas most of my participants attended comprehensive or faith based schools. Additionally, I am considerably older than my participants.

My participants' memories provide a culturally sensitive resource to help me make sense of their lives. Additionally my biography and experience is an inter-subjective part of the interpretive process from which meaning is made of my participants' stories. I begin my research from the position that data is generated and constructed (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba 2011); that my participants' data of lived experiences are co-constructed and negotiated amongst complex, nuanced and multi-faceted interpretations of the research study. As a researcher who uses feminist theory underpinning my methodology, research design, and analysis and findings acknowledge:

> The researcher-researched relationship…The emotions experienced as part of the research experience…My intellectual biography as a researcher, and…How differing realities and understandings of researchers and researched must be managed; and thus…The complex question of power in research and writing. (Stanley and Wise 1990: 23)

As a black male who has been influenced by feminist approaches my perspectives are comprised of a mixture of sociological viewpoints which equip me with useful tools to explore and analyse my participants. For me, it is of critical importance that my research focus is on 'what is going on here' (Stanley and Wise 1983) within my participants' stories, while simultaneously being conscious of 'how I fit' within my research.

Exploring my participants' counter-stories with a feminist lens helps to dismantle some of the power relations inevitable in the research process, by enabling research relationships to be viewed as collaborations with a view towards achieving greater equality (Etherington 2007). Furthermore this perspective enables the relationship between the researched and the researcher to become more transparent through the use of reflexivity (Kvale 1995; McLeod 1995; 1997; 2001; Morrow 2005). Full transparency can never be achieved because the process of a researcher asking a question always has an effect on the answer given by a participant. Bourdieu reinforces my position as his approach 'renders visible the relationship between the researcher and the researched within educational research' (Grenfell and James 1998: 3). Bourdieu's work is particularly useful to my research because his was concerned with the

'constantly changing ways in which social agents (habitus) and societies play with institutions and with class classifications' (Grenfell and James 1998: 35).

Within research how, where and when questions are asked have an impact on a participant's response(s) (Fontana and Frey 2003). However, Etherington (2004) affirms that just the act of the researcher acknowledging that s/he is part of the co-construction of collected data is a positive approach toward a more realistic understanding of what occurs during the research process. Recognising that data is co-constructed is the first step towards an unravelling of qualitative data so that competing power discourses and cultural situations can be explored from an alternative or 'other' perspective rather than that of the more established mainstream 'cultural norms' (Denzin and Lincoln 2003).

6.2 Ontological and Epistemological Perspective

My ontological position is based on my personal, social, educational and political viewpoints. Who I am and what I bring to the research has had a substantial impact on how I developed my research design. Within research, ontology usually refers to how the researcher sees 'the researched' experiences and opinions, as well as how this is constructed and identified as important. Within sociological research, ontology is concerned with what one believes exists. Ontology often generates questions that it seeks to answer (i.e. What is reality? In reality what can be said to really exist? (Raddon 2010). Ontology is also about being human. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) state that one's ontology impacts their assumptions and 'will shape the kind of methodology [that] researchers will adopt' (cited in Hart 2004: 15).

Once a researcher's ontological position has been considered and understood, Mason (2002) maintains that the next thing that must be considered is one's epistemology. Grenfell and James (1998) see epistemology as 'different ways of knowing and understanding, and the means of expressing them' (Grenfell and James 1998: 152). It is a debate or a position on what is knowable and what is worth knowing. Epistemology is concerned with the attributes of how knowledge is identified and organised (i.e. How can I know reality?) Even

though I am aware something exists, how do I know and how can I show that I know something exists? (Raddon 2010). My epistemological position is driven by the need to know about individual experiences of British African Caribbean men in elite universities is like, as well as how these men were able to achieve success within these venerable institutions. I was motivated to explore experiences of BACM's success in HE. Mason (2002) affirms that the best way to acquire data is 'to ask them questions, to listen to them, to gain access to their accounts and articulations' (Mason 2002: 63-64). My ontological positioning suggested that I could gain an in-depth understanding of my participants' experiences through the use of the interview method.

My research attempts to build on a Bourdieusian perspective by including a consideration of an investigation of education in relation to the intersectionality of class, 'race'/ethnicity and gender of BACM in elite HEIs. Bourdieu contends that a genuinely reflexive sociologist must avoid 'participant objectivation' and 'ethnocentrism of the scientist' which consists in ignoring everything that the analyst injects in his perception of those he is researching (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Jenkins 2013). The researcher does not sit outside the research relationship as a transparent, rational subject, but acts as an engaged researcher within the researcher-researched data exploration process (Dreyer 1998). Wacquant (1989) affirms that Bourdieu believed that researchers should work hard to avoid falling into the belief trap that declares "I know better than my informant" (Wacquant 1989: 33). Thus there is an ongoing struggle over truth and what can be identified as the truth. Bourdieu says:

> One of the main causes of error in sociology lies in an unexamined relationship to the object – or, more precisely, in ignorance of all that the view of the object owes to the point of view that it, the viewer's *position* in the social space and the scientific field.
> (Bourdieu 1993b: 10)

Bourdieu is contending that the researcher's relationship to his social or life world plays a pertinent role in how the emergent data is analysed and understood. In other words, 'the type of social science that one can do depends on the relationship one has to the social world, and therefore on the position one occupies within that world.' (Bourdieu 1993b: 13). My ontological position is

that I am a member of a life world that is never fully known or understood, but must be critically reflected upon. As a researcher, I have a responsibility to my research participants to participate in an ongoing process of critical reflection where I take into account my social, cultural, economic (class), and political positions in relation to my research (Habermas 1971). I must also question myself with respect to what extent my research incorporates biases and/or prejudices as a result of my personal positioning (Reinharz 1988). Bourdieu refers to this process as the necessity of researcher to be self-critical in how s/he is situated within the social space of his/her research. In other words it is necessary to engage in a process of continual critical self-reflection on my academic research habitus (Bourdieu 1988).

6.3 My Story (Ontology)

As a researcher, my ontological position matters as I am socially embedded within the data collection and meaning-making process. I believe that the world is a subjective space where knowledge and meaning are socially co-constructed between the researcher and the researched. In order to attain a thorough understanding of my research participants, I must first engage in locating myself within my participants' counter-stories which can aid in minimising the distance between researcher and participant. My biography influences the data that I gather from my participants. My personal biography is therefore significant because it influences the data that I gather from my participants, and is an integral part of the knowledge that is generated and the meanings that are socially co-constructed between me and my participants (Bakhtin 1984; 1990).

I am an African-American male whose mother is from a southern Virginia family with Native American roots and ancestry that can be traced back to slavery on a Virginia plantation. My father is of African descent and emigrated from Mozambique to US in the 1960s in pursuit of educational advancement and a pursuit of the 'American dream'. My mother grew up attending segregated 'black only schools' and signage in public areas denoting 'whites only' and for 'negroes or coloureds only'. Both my parents were the first in their families to

attend higher education. My father is a retired professor and my mother a retired educator.

6.3.1 My Schooling and Becoming 'Other'

My parents made substantial financial sacrifices to ensure that my sister and I attended private schooling. Students at my primary and secondary schools were predominantly white pupils from middle and upper middle class backgrounds, whereas I was from a lower middle class background by American standards. My primary school teachers were strict yet friendly and supportive of each student's learning. I found my primary school years engaging and enjoyable.

When I entered secondary school I encountered my first experiences of racism/discrimination from students, parents, teachers and administrators. During the transition to high school, most of my primary school friends gravitated away from me. Invitations to social events with white school friends that I had previously enjoyed in primary school quickly dissipated. My academic/social world diminished and was replaced with black friends from public schools whom I met through my involvement in my church. The move from primary to high school seemed like an overnight regression from desegregated to segregated school life which was difficult for me to comprehend. My parents explained that some parents at my school did not want their white daughters to socialise with black or other ethnic minority youth during their adolescent years. I was saddened and frustrated but soon realised that I represented the place known as 'other'.

Irrespective of this feeling of isolation and 'otherness', I worked hard and performed well academically and in sport. Nevertheless, there were numerous occasions when I had to challenge teachers and the school's administration to ensure my rightly earned place in top tier courses (when the school tried to relegate me to lower tiered classes – even though I had attained the requisite grades for the highest tiered course of study). I will never forget the support my parents provided in order to ensure that I received the academic placement that

I had earned.

6.3.2 My Higher Education Experience

My undergraduate experience was relatively quiet and void of many academic challenges. However, when I went on to pursue a Doctorate in Law similar issues with respect to 'otherness' had returned. Many white students at my law school were of the opinion that most of the black and Hispanic-Latino students were of sub-par, inferior academic capabilities and that we had all been accepted into the law school due to Affirmative Action policies. In my second year of law school I was elected by my peers to the position of student voting member on the law school's admissions committee, where I was able to see first-hand and re-affirm my beliefs that the majority of white and ethnic minority students were not accepted into the laws school based on Affirmative Action policies, but based on merit and a multiplicity of other factors (including class).

6.3.3 My Experience with Minority Ethnic Youth and Racism

Upon completion of university and law school, I worked for close to a decade as a consultant in a variety of capacities for the US Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice and the Department of Education. A large portion of my work addressed issues of health and education inequalities in BME populations. I was fortunate to travel across 80 per cent of the United States listening to and supporting the needs of a variety of disadvantaged and / or ethnic minority populations. I listened to young peoples' stories of discrimination, mistreatment and unfair school expulsion practices and realised not as much as I thought had improved for many ethnic minority young people. I was able to foster some improvements for some distressed communities through the training and development work that my government position trained me to deliver to these communities. But I realised that progress in the area of equal opportunity for all was not as advanced as I had previously believed.

6.3.4 Coming to the UK

After spending close to half my life in Washington, D.C., I relocated to Cardiff for work. After a few years of living and working in Wales' capital city, something that struck me as peculiar was the lack of an educated successful, BME population in Cardiff. Through my work in the Third Sector (particularly in capacities related to equalities and development), I was able to gain access to the African-Caribbean and BME community of Cardiff who predominantly live in Riverside, Grangetown and Butetown (CODE 2013)[17]. Through my work and social interactions with many ethnic minority groups in Cardiff, I found it troubling that I observed minimal evidence of an upwardly mobile black working class in the capital of Wales – even though Cardiff has a rich history of ethnic immigration that dates back over a century. I developed an interest in the educational trajectories and hopes of aspirations of male youth of African and Caribbean descent, which led to my interest in examining the data on black male underachievement – not just in Wales – but across the whole UK.

Asher (2001) suggests that it is not easy to ignore professionally what you experience personally. For me and for my experience of research, I see personal, cultural and political experiences to be closely intersected. The direction of my research was influenced by the fact that I was tired of the multitude of research that focussed only on black boys' underachievement and educational failure, which is often promulgated by popular media in the UK. My epistemological position was motivated to explore experiences of BACM's success in HE, in an effort to explore and give voice to examples of experiences that were more similar to my own. It is hoped that this research will be beneficial and influential, promoting a dialogue that moves away from a negative / deficit model of the black male towards a more positive discussion. I do not deny the fact that much needs to be done to improve the condition of huge sectors of underachieving black boys. However it is also important for the research literature to address positive, successful achievement experiences. An agenda that develops an understanding of positive BACM's experiences and identifies BACM's successes (as well as failure) would be a huge positive step towards

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[17] ONS census data (2011) indicates that that the largest percentage of the BME populations in Cardiff reside in Riverside, Grangetown and Butetown (CODE 2013).

working to improve the image of them as always an underachieving 'other'. I hope that this could help future generations of BACM to be aware of success stories told by 'others' like them who succeeded in spite of a system that appears to only fail black boys.

6.4 Theoretical Grounding: 'Race', Ethnicity Critical Race Theory and Counter-stories

6.4.1 'Race' and Ethnicity

As discussed in chapter three, the terms ethnicity and to a larger extent 'race', have a long history of complex and ever changing meanings and interpretations (Essed and Goldberg 2002; Goldberg 1993; Goldberg and Solomos 2002; Barth 1969; Cornell and Hartmann 2007). In the context of racism, Stuart Hall's model of relative autonomy (Hall 1980) suggests that racism is a historical phenomenon that works separately from social relations, but at the same time affects them. In other words, the two are inseparable: 'Race is the modality in which class is lived' (Hall et al. 1978: 394), thus class and 'race' should be examined together along with gender. While I would agree that class and racial inequalities do impact each other in the context of British racism, from a personal and political point of view my experience of racism is not only 'relatively autonomous', but also overrides class inequalities in some situations. I am somewhat in accord with Hall (1980), who suggests that:

> Race is thus, also, the modality in which class is 'lived', the medium, through which class relations are experienced, the form in which it is appropriated and 'fought through'. (Hall 1980: 341)

While I agree with Hall's assertion that 'race' can affect the way class struggle is experienced, I also argue that the ideological power of racism as a non-economic factor can enable it to operate independently of class, and under some circumstances be more powerful than social class. Thus within the context of this study, I argue that black student experience is structured through the intersection of 'race' inequality as well as class and gender inequality. For the present study, this meant remaining sensitive to these multiple dimensions as I gathered my data.

As discussed in detail in the literature review, Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a set of methodological tenet and tools in the US to explore the stories of marginalised people of colour whose experiences are seldom heard. For my research CRT can be used as a way to understanding questions of race and racism by providing through 'efforts to analyse, and transform the structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant positions in and out of the classroom' (Solórzano, Ceja and Yosso 2000: 63). CRT influenced my research design as it enabled me to consider alternative methods of engaging with and exploring what my participants' counter-stories were revealing.

6.4.2 Counter-stories as a Primary Exposer of Racism and whiteness

CRT scholars acknowledge that the experiences of people of colour are important to understand their everyday experiences (Delgado and Stefancic 2012). Centring the lived accounts or counter-stories of people of colour helps to disrupt implicit dominant discourses about 'race' and racism (Gillborn 2006a). By placing value on experiential stories, researchers are able to unearth everyday accounts of racism (Delgado 1990, 2009). Consequently, Ladson-Billings (1998: 13) says that 'the use of voice of 'naming your reality' is a way that CRT links form and substance to scholarship'. By recognising the construction of knowledge through marginalised people's counter-narrativess, CRT resists orthodoxly sanctioned modes of knowledge production (Banks 1993).

Prioritising experiential knowledge in one's research can provide researchers and readers access to a "new and unfamiliar world" (Delgado and Stefancic 2012: 48) by imagining what life is like from people of colour's perspectives. This process creates the potential for engagement in dialogues that are frequently not addressed in sociological and educational research disciplines. Counter-stories can provide marginalised groups the space to 'challenge, displace, or mock' (Delgado and Stefancic 2012: 49) dominant narratives and

viewpoints (Delgado, 1993). Utilising CRT methods help expose 'deficit-informed' research that silences and distorts' people of colour's episteme (Solórzano and Yosso 2002: 26).

My research provided a setting for BACM voices, which have historically gone unheard in educational research, to be listened to and recognised as a significant contribution to understanding of their often silenced experiences. Using BACM participants' voices provides an alternate schema for analyzing black males' educational experiences Tillman (2002). Utilising a CRT framework enabled me to reflect on my participants' narratives through a critical black social science lens.

6.5 Research Project and Research Approach

The purpose of this research study was two-fold: (1) to explore the experiences and perceptions of British African Caribbean Male (BACM) 'home' students who attended venerated Oxbridge and Russell Group universities in England and Wales and (2) to identify the possible factors (i.e. strengths/tools/ 'capitals') that were influential in their entry to and successful completion of university[18]. I chose an interview method because it was determined to be most appropriate for my type of research. Sociology considers how people within society make situations meaningful. My research approach focused on the many ways that people interpreted 'the actions of others, how they make sense of events and how they build worlds of meaning' (Bouma 2000: 180). A good understanding of human behaviour occurs through interaction with research participants which helps researchers to acquire meaning from the researched 'consciousness' (Patton 2002). Consciousness cannot be directly conveyed, so part of a researcher's role is to interact with people to collect data about how they perceive, describe, feel, judge, remember and make sense of their experiences. Patton states that this can be best understood through the undertaking of in-depth interviews with people 'who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest; that is, they have 'lived experience' as opposed to second hand experience' (Patton 2002: 104).

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[18] A third aim of this research sought to explore these BACMs early employability experiences. Due to space restrictions this data analysis has not been included in this dissertation.

The information that is unearthed from interviews is a processed remembrance of an experience which may also represent a performance of the self. The veracity of the memory is not as important as what the person recollected and how they felt about it. As a researcher I am seeking to gain 'subjective' stories (May 2001) from these BACM point of views, in addition to acquiring meanings that my participants have attached to their stories.

For purposes of this qualitative research study, intercommunication between the researcher and the researched was determined to be more beneficial than using a pre-fabricated, close-ended questionnaire that would be sent to participants with a request for responses to questions. This approach enables the researcher to explore what is on the subject's mind which can assist in claims of reliability for the particular conversation. The advantage of using this method is that participants had the opportunity to explore the issues related to my research questions from their perspective, while benefiting from the availability of having an interaction with me as a researcher to clarify any misunderstandings. As the researcher, I listened to my participants talk about their experiences, their feelings, behaviour, attitudes and meanings, as they related to education. The conversations were guided in the sense that there was a topic but the responses were not to be controlled.

6.6 Research Design: 'Nuts and Bolts'

The structure of this section begins by (1) explaining the purpose and design of the study, which presents an overview of the entire process informing the research project. Next, (2) sampling is discussed and a breakdown of the research population is provided, along with a rationale for their selection. Charts of the data collection techniques (3) detailing the structure of the interview guide, are followed by (4) the process of analysing the data. Finally, (5) the ethical issues and problems arising from the research methods are highlighted.

This study sought to investigate the educational trajectories of a group of BACM in order to explore the impact of 'race', ethnicity, class and gender dynamics. I wanted to document black men's experiences that are frequently restricted to

the oral history tradition. Thus, rather than relying on statistical data that details qualifications of BACMs academic and career trajectories, I wanted to showcase real accounts of BACMs experiences in elite HEIs through their voices. International African Caribbean students' experiences are not included within this research as the data and research on their degree attainment is different from that of 'home' students and is not easy to access, explore or compare (Stevenson 2012a). One enduring rationale for the study is to provide insights for future generations of BACM and to others concerned with their educational trajectories.

6.7 Qualitative Methods – Purpose and Process

For Creswell, qualitative research 'is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem' (Creswell 2009: 4). I wanted to probe the established research questions and identify emerging themes from the lived experiences of BACM participants. Face-to-face interviews and follow up Skype interviews were conducted with 16 participants. The first interview transpired during my participants' final year of undergraduate study. These face-to-face interviews involved use of a topic guide, third objects (discussed in 6.16) and a video to assist participants in sharing their stories about their journeys to and through elite higher education institutions. A second interview which served as a follow-up interview was conducted via Skype within one to four months of the initial interview and was used to clarify any areas that I may have misunderstood in the initial interview. A third interview (Skype or in person) occurred four to six months after my participants' graduation to explore participants' employability/further education prospects and experiences. This interview also used a topic guide to assist me in addressing some core areas that I wanted to know about my participants' experiences post university. In some cases a fourth interview was conducted as a follow-up to clarify any misunderstandings that may have arisen in the third interview. First interviews averaged 45 minutes to two hours and 30 minutes. Second interviews were between 15 minutes and one hour 45 minutes in length. Final interviews were between 25 minutes and one hour and 20 minutes.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim. All data was anonymised and pseudonymised to ensure participant confidentiality**.**

6.8 Interview Transcript, Data Collection and Grounded Theory

An interview transcript encourages the researcher to focus on locating him or herself in the participant's narrative to reduce the researchers distance from the subject and the final written product (Charmaz and Mitchell 1996). Through narrative data collection, a researcher can develop thick descriptions (Geertz 1973) by listening to the interviewee, observing body language and reviewing the interviewee's transcript. Going through this process provided me with insight into my participants' diverse socio-cultural, political and psychological realities (Flick et al. 2004: 5) as I had to try to locate myself as the researcher within my interviewee's worlds. Although qualitative research relies heavily on a research participant's shared experience to gain understanding and insider's emic frame of the participants' life world (Charmaz and Henwood 2008; Headland et al. 1990), it was also critical that as researcher I had my own external dissociated 'etic' theoretical understanding of the accounts that were shared with me.

I decided that recognising some of the tenets of traditional grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990) coupled with contemporary grounded theory (Charmaz 2001; Charmaz and Mitchell 2001; Charmaz 2006) and juxtaposed with Critical Race Theory (Bell 1987; Crenshaw 1995; Ladson-Billings 1998; Delgado and Stefancic 2012) was the best way to analyse my participant's counter-narratives. I chose this assemblage of theories because they focus on problematizing and interpreting situations by examining the how, what and why in a holistic manner. According to Charmaz (2001), grounded theory acknowledges multiple standpoints and realities of the researcher and the researched. It adopts a reflexive position towards participants' actions in the research setting and co-constructions of their accounts in the analyses. It also implements line-by-line coding as a mechanism to opening up the data (Charmaz 2006). I felt the need to as much as feasibly possible immerse myself in my data in a way that embedded the narratives of my participants in the final research outcome. Using Charmaz's

constructivist grounded theory model, I immersed myself in my research through my use of coding language that was 'active in its intent' which helped me maintain my participant's accounts 'in the foreground' (Charmaz 2000: 526).

Unlike traditional grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss's 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990) constructivist grounded theory adjusts the interaction between researcher and participants during the process by challenging the concept of the researcher as author. By doing so, I have made a shift away from seeing myself as the researcher -author of my participants counter-narratives. Instead I identify myself as a co-constructor of my participant's accounts and meanings. I also acknowledge that the ways that I describe my participants experiences are subjective (Mills et al. 2006). This moves me away from the traditional grounded theorists' affirmation of the discovery of 'truth' in participant's counter-narratives as representative of a "real" reality (Glaser 1978). Participants have multiple realities co-constructed in a multiplicity of ways. Counter-narratives that I have written about represent my participant's reality of the truth at that particular point in time.

Any discussion of the use of grounded theory must also acknowledge that there have been many researchers (Layder 1993; Robrecht 1995; Haig 1995; Miller and Fredericks 1999 to name a few) who dispute the limitations of grounded theory as a being a useful method of enquiry and analysis. Thomas and James (2006) contend that grounded theory can oversimplify and constrain complex inter-relationships in qualitative data, by placing the importance of systematic procedure over analysis and interpretation in an effort to justify ones research as being scientifically valid in a manner akin to quantitative data analysis. One of the biggest issues that opponents have with grounded theory, is that it is called a 'theory' rather than a method or procedure. They assert that grounded theory focuses on providing explanations of data before the data is actually looked at and understood (Robrecht 1995). I can sympathise with grounded theorist oppositionists' last argument and I suggest that a way to avoid the danger of this 'theoretical' challenge would be to rebrand grounded theory as a set of grounded methodological tools.

As previously mentioned, I am not a strict interpreter of Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded theory. For instance, I do not consider myself to be a 'tabula rasa, or blank slate,' when exploring my participant's accounts of their experiences (Holloway and Biley: 971). Additionally I do not subscribe to Strauss and Corbin's (1990; 1998) notion of grounded theory whereby researchers are positioned as "distant experts" who silently author their researched participants. My ontological and epistemological positionings are central components of the research field. They influence the co-constructed meaning-making that I unearth in the field and influence how I compose and interpret my findings. Thus I used 'grounded theory' with Critical Race Theory tenets as methodological tools to assist me in discovering and understanding my participants' accounts. I discuss the pros and cons of utilising grounded theory in the theoretical framework section of this chapter.

6.9 Interviews

> narrative about the most 'personal' difficulties, the
> apparently most strictly subjective tensions and
> contradictions, frequently articulates the deepest
> structures of the social world and their contradictions.
> (Bourdieu 1999: 511, cited in Reay 2002: 221)

Semi-structured interviews formed the main data collection technique and a narrative approach was adopted to promote in-depth accounts. Central to this approach is the generation of counter-stories or biographies that are narrated from the researched subject's perspective (Ritchie and Lewis 2003). Furthermore utilising this method enabled me to explore, interrogate and analyse my participants' accounts in depth (Coffey and Atkinson 1996).

Given the low rates of BACM entry to elite HEIs, the central focus of this study was to explore the experiences of the few black 'home' students who had successfully attended elite universities. Therefore, participants had to be 'home' students; students who had either been born or had lived the majority of their lives in the UK and had completed the majority of their secondary and sixth form education in this country.

My criteria for selecting institutions from which to recruit was twofold: (a) all of the universities chosen were known for their academic and research excellence and were either Russell Group or Oxbridge institutions and, (b) all institutions were within six hours' travel time by public transport to enable me to have reasonable access participants for face-to-face interviews. This was achieved by reviewing University League tables for 2010 – 2012 as well as the Times, Guardian and the Independent's University Guides to top universities in the UK to assess the consistent standing of elite universities. All of the chosen universities fell within the top 50 on university league tables.

Russell Group institutions and the Oxbridge universities (Oxford and Cambridge), which are part of the Russell Group, represent a mere 15 per cent of the higher education sector, yet two-thirds of all of the university research grant and contract income in the UK is awarded to these 24 institutions and 53 per cent of all PhDs are conferred by them (Russell Group Profile 2015). Additionally these universities were chosen because of their prestige. They are the more desired schools, as attending these institutions can often lead to job opportunities with higher financial outcomes upon graduation (Sims 2008; de Vries 2014)[19].

In The State of Nobility (1998), Bourdieu illustrates his point through his discussion of the French elite higher education system that represents distinct delineations between grandes écoles (select graduate schools based on special preparatory classes, and national competitive entrance examinations, with direct pathways to high profile jobs) and the general mass university system which is open to all students who complete their secondary education courses. By providing separate pathways of transmission of privilege to HE, the field of elite schools protects and placates the various categories of inheritors of power and ensures they perpetuate their dominant hegemonic societal advantages. The grandes écoles serve as an elite system whereby there are clear linkages

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[19] Studying at a Russell Group university can boost a graduate's earnings by between 3 and 6 percent compared to studying at a 'new' university.

to the country's bourgeoisie and top businesses. Bourdieu argues that the deeper theoretical aims of this system are to maintain a continuum model of 'the social division of the labour of domination' and supremacy where various forms of power 'coexist and vie for supremacy' (Wacquant 1996: 156). Although the French higher education system is very different from the UK system, similarities exist between the dichotomy between the UK's 'new universities' / former polytechnic colleges and the elite Russell Group and Oxbridge Colleges. My Bourdiesian theoretical approach justifies focusing this research on the elite Russell Group universities, to explore whether classed 'raced' and gendered similarities abound in the experiences of BACM who attended these institutions as they do in the *grandes écoles*.

6.10 Sampling, Recruitment and Participant's Informed Consent

In order to select participants for my research, I used purposive and snowball sampling methods to identify a manageable portion of the population. For Noy, sampling methods 'can lead to dynamic moments where unique social knowledge of an interactional quality can be fruitfully generated' (Noy 2008: 328). Using a well selected population that is representative of the group researched group can also help to minimise the unavoidable margins of error.

Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling where the researcher hand picks the cases, because they are considered typical or particularly interesting in relation to the research topic (Blaxter and Tight 1996; 2006). It is often used in qualitative research where the number of cases is small and the population is selected on the basis that they can offer a depth of insight and a range of examples of the phenomena being researched (Silverman 2000). Patton (2002) suggests that this method may be appropriately employed to explore specific communities, cultures or critical incidents. Due to minimal numbers of BACM students attending elite universities in England and Wales, purposive and snowball sampling was deemed the most appropriate and effective means to recruit these participants.

It was first essential to gain access from 'gatekeepers' at these venerable institutions. As BME recruitment and retention at elite universities has been

somewhat of a problematic issue for the past decade, it was important to gain the universities' trust. I explained that my research was focussing on exploring examples of success and the tools BACM identify as being beneficial to their achievement at these schools. This premise was well accepted by administrative and faculty members, as usually research with BME populations tends to primarily focus on the negative issues which can be politically problematic for HEIs.

Contact via phone was made with specific administrative and faculty members at each university to establish institutional contacts and to provide an overview of the study. I also assured these contacts that confidentiality and anonymity of participants would be maintained in this research. Emailed letters accompanied by recruitment flyers were distributed through porters, secretaries and other 'gatekeepers' of heads of these institutions (i.e. Professors, Masters, Mistresses, Principals, Wardens, Deans, Presidents and Provosts). In all, 49 colleges within Oxbridge and an additional 17 institutions within the remaining Russell Group were canvassed for my research. The email and flyer briefly explained the purpose of the research study and asked willing participants to contact me via email or phone. These letters were followed up with hard copied letters on Cardiff University letterhead, with my supervisors details included to add legitimacy to my request for recruitment assistance. Similar letters were sent to all porters at the various colleges and universities requesting that my recruitment materials be posted in widely student accessible locations on campus. A sample of the recruitment letter and flyer are located in the appendices (see appendices A and B).

Recruitment was also facilitated on the social network website Facebook through an individual account I designed specifically for recruitment and correspondence with prospective participants. My recruitment drive also included contacting the African Caribbean Societies' on each campus and requested they distribute and discuss my recruitment information at their meetings and on their organisation's social webpages.

Initial contact with interested participants usually occurred over an informal telephone conversation, though in some cases email and Facebook correspondence were used. During the initial contact, respondents expressed their interest in participating; their eligibility based on the targeted research sample criteria and a time and location for the initial interview was arranged. In the course of the phone call or email, as well as at the conclusion of the initial interview, students were asked to recommend others who fit my research criteria. Because of the differing nature of students' schedules, several attempts were made to reach prospective participants at different dates and times. A brief voice message was left with the prospective participants along with my contact details. Fourteen prospective participants never responded to my efforts to contact them. Two individuals[20] who were identified as prospective participants did not meet the criteria.

As a black ethnic minority person who had worked on race equality issues in the UK prior to conducting this study – and as a post graduate (Masters) of a Russell Group institution – I was able to use my own contacts as the starting point for expanding access to an appropriate number of participants required for the research. However, I still experienced difficulty accessing participants due to the under-representation of BACM in elite HEIs, which resulted in me finding many more females in these universities who did not meet my gender criteria. UCAS 2012/2013 data indicates that women of all ethnicities are 30 per cent more likely to enter higher education than men (UCAS 2013: 91; HESA 2011). Mirza's (2009) and Connor's et al. (2004) research highlights the educational challenges of BAC boys and how it leads to more BAC women attending HEIs (particularly new universities) than BAC men. Mirza notes that women often enter HE as mature students through a variety of unconventional routes (Mirza 2009). She also discusses the important strategies that BAC women develop and hold on to, such as working together and supporting each other, which assists them in their desire to succeed by finding means to circumvent some of the persistent institutional educational blocks that they encounter. This is very

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[20] I originally had 17 participants in my study however, one of my participants misrepresented himself as a 'home' student when in fact he is an international student. Even though he has attended elite secondary schools, colleges and universities in this country his parents sent him to the UK to attain a venerated education with the intention of returning to his country, which he did upon graduation from university. Another participant did not meet the recruitment criteria as he is of South Asian descent but self-identifies as BAC and disappeared after the initial interview.

different from her findings with BACM, many of who tended to work alone (Mirza 2009).

As a researcher I was sensitively aware that my participants would be sharing their personal perceptions of their elite HEI experiences. In advance of all interviews, participants were contacted by phone as well as emailed and informed that the information that they shared with me would be anonymised and kept confidential. All participants were asked to select a pseudonym to protect their identity and to help ensure anonymity. Participants were also informed that they had the right to refuse to participate in the research study and could withdraw at any time if they wished. A participant information and consent form was provided to participants a few days ahead of their interview for them to read. An informed consent form was also taken to each interview and discussed with participants to ensure their understanding of the research study and how their experiences / stories would be used strictly for research purposes (see appendix C). The form was subsequently signed by the participant. Participants were provided with a copy of the agreement. Participants were provided the opportunity to ask questions and withdraw prior to beginning the interview process.

6.11 Research Setting and Interview Process

Participants were recruited from 12 Russell Group/Oxbridge institutions in England and Wales. Seventeen students from 10 of these universities agreed to participate in the research study. Four participants attended Oxbridge colleges and the remaining 13 students attended Russell Group institutions. The majority of my students self-identified as BACM – although two were of mixed origin with parents of British Caribbean and Irish origins and British African and Irish origins. My literature review has accounted for this 'mixed-race' nuance as it played a factor on how these participants identified themes ethnically and culturally. The universities included in the research are: University of Birmingham, University of Bristol, Cambridge University, Cardiff University, Durham University, Exeter University, London School of Economics and Politics, Manchester University, Oxford University and the University College London.

My initial intent was to interview BACM 'home' students during their third/final year[21] of study at venerated HEIs. My definition of 'elite' was any university that was a Russell Group institution, including Oxbridge in England and Wales. However, I found the process of accessing BACM at elite institutions quite challenging due to the small number of BACM actually studying at some elite universities. For example, at one College within Oxbridge I was successful in interviewing the first black British male student to be accepted into that College in 10 years. So in many cases there really were not many (or any) black male 'home' students at some of the universities that I was researching. Given the scarcity of BACM and the difficulty of making contact, I augmented my sample to include some black men who had graduated from elite universities within the last 10 years.

In situations where my participants had previously graduated from university the face-to-face interview process was adapted by incorporating the topic guides used in my first and third interviews in my other participants into one topic guide used to conduct one longer interview session, which averaged one hour and 45 minutes, to two hours and 50 minutes. With previously graduated participants, a second interview was conducted within three months of their initial interview. This interview served as a follow up interview to clarify any misunderstandings that may have emerged in the first interview. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. In some cases a fourth interview was conducted as a follow-up to clarify any misunderstandings that may have arisen. All data was anonymised and pseudonymised to ensure participant confidentiality. The majority of my participants graduated from an elite university within the past five years. Table 7, entitled: Participants' Background Information is provided below.

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[21] Final year of study indicates that one of my participants was studying medicine and was interviewed during his fifth year of medical school.

Table 7 Participants' Background Information

Participant Pseudonym	Ethnicity	Class (as defined by participants)	University	Area of Study	Graduation	Type of work/Further Study
1. Kevin	British African	Working Class	Russell Group	Econ/Maths	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Social Community Change Worker
2. Peter	Mixed race: British African and Irish	Lower Middle Class	Russell Group	Econ/Maths	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Financial Services And Part time Self Employed Business Owner
3. Damien	British Caribbean and Mixed race Irish	Working Class	Russell Group	Econ/Maths	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Self Employed Business Owner
4. Franco	British African	Working Class	Russell Group	Econ/Maths /Business	Graduated w/in the past 10 years	Pursuing a Graduate Degree at Russell Group Institution
5. Duncan	British Caribbean	Working Class	Oxbridge	Econ/Maths	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Social Community Change Worker
6. Allen	British African	Middle Class (downgraded to Working Class)	Oxbridge	Arts and Humanities	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Unemployed
7. Jason	British African	Middle Class	Russell Group	Medicine	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Attending Medical School, Russell Group Institution
8. Alex	British African	Middle Class	Russell Group	Law	Graduated w/in the past 10 years	Marketing and Promotion Business Field
9. Bob	British African	Poor 'Underclass'	Russell Group	Arts and Humanities	Graduated w/in the past 10 years	Pursuing Graduate degree at a Post-1992 Institution
10. John	British African	Middle Class	Russell Group	Law	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Contract working towards becoming a Barrister
11. Jay	British African	Middle Class	Russell Group	Law	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Contract, Int'l and Commercial Law
12. Wales**	British African	Middle Class	Russell Group	Law	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Practising Law, returned to home country
13. Ryan*	Asian Indian	Middle Class	Russell Group	Politics and Philosophy	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Not Known
14. Edmund	British African	Working Class	Russell Group	Law	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Pursuing a Masters at Oxbridge Institution
15. Dwayne	British Caribbean	Working Class	Oxbridge	Econ/Maths	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Social Community Change Worker
16. Ted	British Caribbean	Middle Class	Oxbridge	Arts and Humanities	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Pursuing a Graduate degree at Russell Group Institution
17. James	British African	Working Class	Russell Group	Law	Recent graduate within past 5 years	Working for Law firm under contract

* Participant failed to meet research criteria. He is of South Asian yet identifies as BAC.
** Participant failed to meet UK domicile status research requirement. He is an international student.

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6.12 Summary of Interview Process

In total, I conducted 41 interviews with 15 participants. In all cases, the initial interviews were conducted face-to-face with the participants. Fifteen to 40 minute follow up interviews were conducted via Skype or occasionally in person where feasible. A minimum of two and a maximum of four interviews were conducted with each participant with the exception of three participants (one who could not be contacted after the first interview, and two other participants who did not meet the selection criteria). The majority of my participants (14 of the 17 BACMs) graduated from an elite university within the past five years. Eight of the participants were recent 2012 or 2013 university graduates. The three remaining participants completed their undergraduate education within the past ten years.

Asher (2001) commends the benefits of storytelling in research: she explains that counter-stories are particularly useful for giving voice to the experiences of those that are seldom heard (i.e. people of African and Asian descent). Asher suggests that by documenting these voices, researchers can create counter discourses that challenge the dominant 'knowledge'. In parallel to Asher's work of hooks (1989) and West and hooks (1991), emphasised the political role and responsibility of the few black academics to using their agency to create new knowledge, to serve as role models in order to support and foster change for black students. With these aims in mind I chose to engage my participants in discussions about their lived**.**

Initial interviews were arranged at participants' convenience on their university campuses in an effort to facilitate maximum comfort. In cases where participants had previously graduated from university, interviews were conducted in locations conducive to the participants' needs. Each participant was extremely generous with the time they afforded for their initial and follow-up interviews. Semi-structured interviews are more likely to be successful when there is a good rapport between the researcher and the researched (Emmel et al. 2007) and the importance of trust is heightened when participants are revealing personal details about their lives. Thus, every effort was made to

enhance communication and put interviewees at their ease before, during and after the interviews. For example, prior to meeting research participants, I made an effort to email and (when possible) chat on the phone with them: the idea was to provide them with a bit of my own personal background and where I was from, in the hope of relaxing and minimising any anxiety or concerns they may have about participating in the research study. Establishing a rapport with my participants by sharing a bit of my personal background allowed participants to not only be more curious about me, but also appeared to help them feel more comfortable talking to me as in most cases we shared educational, parental and in some cases similar class background commonalities. Throughout my interviews, I made a point of reiterating to interviewees that it was their opinions and counter-stories that mattered to me, and that there were no right or wrong answers. On a few occasions where participants seemed reluctant to provide their opinions on an issue (often because they felt as the researcher I was more knowledgeable about a particular subject), I would encourage further dialogue by emphasising the importance of their stories from their voices and their perspectives. This usually stimulated further storytelling from participants. At the close of interviews I always asked my participants if they had any concerns about the stories they had shared and reassured them of the confidentiality measures that had been put in place. Participants were reminded that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

Gillham's research (2000) observed that in order for interviewers to gain valid answers and ensure that their participants were more open, interviewers should start by asking questions like 'Can I begin by asking you…?' This 'openness' encourages the participants to be correspondingly open in their response. Having a good, yet not too structured or detailed interview guide may help to ensure that participants' responses are richer and more helpful when analysing the data in the future (Gillham 2000: 40). One of the open-ended questions that was facilitated by my interview guide asked my participants: Can you share with me the image that you think people have in their minds when they identify what a young black man is? This type of question enabled my participants to be more open and elicited personal responses informed by their own personal experiences. Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003) argue that the benefit of 'using

open questioning techniques in interviews, demonstrated interest and actively encouraged the interviewee to talk; by opening up and talking as opposed to giving simple answers', unlike questionnaires and other more structured interview approaches (Legard, Keegan and Ward, cited in Ritchie and Lewis 2003: 147). Open-ended questions allowed the respondents to talk in a natural way about the topic and provided opportunities for the interviewees to bring in details that they felt were important. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows for discussions to take a number of different directions. The challenge to this approach is that the data can be more difficult to organise afterwards.

Additionally, throughout my interviews with participants, I made a conscious effort to try to maintain neutral body language. I made a concerted effort to present open non-judgemental responsiveness to my participants' stories, though I found this challenging at times. However my neutrality paid off as it encouraged my participants to continue sharing their stories with me, when they might have been stifled had my body language been different. In order to ensure that I did not direct or guide any of the responses of my participants, I was careful not to lead them by putting answers in their mouths.

6.13 Recording of Interviews

Prior to the interviews, participants granted me permission to record the session. Interviews were digitally recorded using two Olympus dictaphones. My intention was to facilitate a clear and 'naturally occurring interaction' of the researcher-researched (Silverman 2001: 13). Recording the interviews enabled me to observe, enquire, pay attention and take notes on my respondent's verbal and non-verbal body language as well as possible significant issues, themes and feelings of my participants. Mostly, however I listened to and observed my participants as they told their stories. All digital recordings were transferred to MP3 files on my computer and onto an external hard drive for back up protection purposes. Files were password protected and maintained in secure locked file cabinets for an additional layer of security.

Follow-up interviews were conducted with the majority of participants to clarify any misunderstanding/misconceptions of the initial shared narrative. Brief notes

were taken during and after each interview to capture and summarise key points, provide back-up notes to the interview, and to assist in the future data analysis process (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Initially the interviews were also video-recorded to provide an additional element of analysis but this process was soon discarded. Early on in the interviews I realised that there would be insufficient time for me to analyse this data in addition to all of the NVivo coding frame work due to the time constraints of the research study.

Lastly, I was conscious and careful not to allow my views to colour the responses of my respondents and this was effected by me focusing my attention on listening during discussions, without suggesting 'suitable' responses, recording interviews and then repeatedly listening and cross checking the contents against interviewees' own responses from other interviews. Ongoing secondary data was obtained via a review of the literature on race, class, gender and education. Research on black and Minority Ethnic (BME) graduate career destinations was also used to establish the theoretical framework. In addition, I was also mindful to 'Use the literature, don't let it use you' (Becker 1986: 149) as Becker has warned that this can be a continuous challenge throughout the research. As participants' stories unfolded, constant reflection on the literature, as a possible illumination of emerging themes, was a fundamental focus.

Some interviews lasted much longer than others. Occasionally, I felt like I was walking a tightrope trying to manage a level of control over the interview without suppressing my participants' stories. All of the participants consented to having their stories audio-recorded, which enabled me to focus my attention on their dialogue whilst taking occasional field notes about body language, intonation, my perception of their attitude and comfort level.

6.14 Interview Questions and Piloting the Interview Guide

An interview topic guide was developed to assist me in addressing some core areas (research questions that are discussed in chapter one) that I wanted to know about my participants' experiences leading up to and during their university years. Interview questions focused on the BACM students' perception of their self-identified tools / 'capitals' that aided them in their ascendance to and completion of university; how their experiences related to a sense of belonging within elite higher education; and their early career experiences upon completion of university. The interview guide contained a handful of semi-structured and open-ended questions for discussion with participants. Under each of these key questions were additional sub-questions or prompts, which were more specific and served to help clarify any misunderstandings. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) refer to this type of tool as a topic guide, which guides and prompts the interviewer throughout the discussion. They suggest that the interviewer is likely to revise this tool as they become more familiar with the topic and things such as the sequence of questions or the language used can alter in response to any problems that may be encountered.

I found that as I progressed through the interviews, I systematically reviewed and edited questions in order to make them clearer. Although questions were never completely changed, they were refined. As I became more familiar with the topics that arose in participants' stories I became more skilled in using appropriate language to convey the meaning of my questions. In many circumstances there was no need to ask many questions as participants shared their experiences after being prompted with only a few questions. Examples of some of the types of interview questions I asked are included below in Table 8 Process of Building an Interview Guide.

Blaxter et al. (2006) recommend conducting a pilot stage in social research because when this is not incorporated into the research design, often the early stages of the data collection process end up resulting in a pilot after all, because of unanticipated outcomes. Prior to conducting interview with participants, I implemented a pilot study (1) to test the validity of the design, (2) to practice the art of asking open ended questions and (3) to fine-tune any other

research issues. Piloting was conducted with two BACM who had participated in my Masters research which focused on their remembrances of their secondary educational experiences. Both men were ineligible for the current research study as they had not attended Russell Group institutions, however as they were BACMs it was thought that their feedback and responses would be highly beneficial to helping me test and design an appropriate semi-structured interview guide.

Table 8 Process of Building an interview guide
Moving from Research Questions to an Interview Guide

Research aims	Research questions	Interview guide questions
To explore how British African Caribbean men experience elite universities.	How did BACM secondary school experiences affect their trajectories?	Can you tell me about your secondary school experiences? What kind of student were you? How did you act in the classroom and school grounds? … In your neighbourhood?
		Were there any teachers or people at school or in your community who influenced or had an impact on you?
	Are there familial or socio-economic factors that affected BACM success?	Can you tell me a bit about your family? What was it like growing up with your parent(s)? What was it like growing up in your neighbourhood?
	Did BACM participants experience racism at University?	What are the other students like at your university? Have you experienced any situation like the ones depicted in the *'Shit white Girls say to black Girls'* video?
		What was your first week like at uni? What was your freshers week experience like?

6.15 Transcription

Transcription of all of the interviews was done verbatim. The process was challenging and time consuming, yet it proved to be a highly valuable means of familiarising myself with my participants' storied data. I transcribed the majority of my interviews, but nine of the 41 interviews were outsourced to external transcribers. Confidentiality agreements were put in place in advance of contracting recording to be transcribed. A sample of the confidentiality transcriber agreement is located in Appendix D.

6.16 Third Objects

In an effort to gain information about my participants' experiences in a more relaxed manner, I employed third objects as a mechanism to encourage them to talk. 'Third things' (Winnicott 1968a: 70-71) or third objects are usually tools that are used in some form of therapeutic work with children (Stanczak 2007). Third objects provide something else for a child to focus on, which can help facilitate a more comfortable environment and may stimulate better communication between a child and social worker or therapeutic worker, by relieving some of the stress and anxiety associated with talking about personal or sensitive issues (Winnicott 1977; 1968a, 1978). Although used primarily with children, I thought that employing this strategy might be useful with my young adult participants by helping them to feel more comfortable sharing their personal experiences with someone who up until recently was a complete stranger to them.

Third objects are usually tools such as games, drawings, pictures, stories or short films (Pink 2001a, 2001b). The participant is the first object, the researcher (social worker/therapeutic worker) is the second object and the tool is the third object (Winnicott 1968a; 1968b, 1978). The communication between all three objects can create a dynamic space for enhanced communication and understanding in a research setting. I adjusted the strategy to use with my young adult participants by using objects that I thought would be of relevant interest to them. Experience tells me that third objects are particularly helpful when talking about abstract concepts, to encourage reflection. It is easier to reflect on a question when you have something to look at. This participatory

approach can potentially enable participants to be more comfortable shaping what they talk about. I used pictures of university students in various settings related to social life (from collegiate clubs to partying situations), campus diversity and inclusion and I asked participants to share with me their thoughts on the pictures and whether any of the pictures resonated with their own student experience (see examples of some of the pictures used in interviews below).

Pictures used during interviews

Another third object that I used in interviews was cufflinks (see cufflink exercise example below). I started all of my phase one interviews with an ice breaker exercise using cufflinks to try and relax my participants. I would begin by saying the following:

Can I ask you to begin this session by playing a little game for me? I would really appreciate it if you would humour me for a few minutes by going along and play this one corny exercise. It's the cufflink game. In front of you is a box filled with a diverse selection of cufflinks. I would like you to look through them and select three different cufflinks:

➢ One that reminds you of your mother/significant caregiver
➢ One that reminds you of your father/significant caregiver
➢ One that reminds you of someone special

   … who has had an impact on your life?

Now I know it seems silly to be playing with cufflinks but I hope you'll humour me for a few minutes and try out this game. You have 3 to 5 minutes to complete this task – and you can have more time if you need it. After you have completed this task I would like you to hold each cufflink up for me and tell me why you chose it and what it means to you in relation to you mother, father, care giver or significant person in your life.

This method was very useful in breaking the ice because it made participants laugh. However after a few seconds all of the participants began to take the task very seriously. Having piloted this method in advance, I found that the use of cufflinks enabled me to gain more information than I gained having directly asked participants: 'Can you tell me a bit about your parents or someone in your life who may have had a significant impact on your life?'

Picture of Cufflinks used during Icebreaker

Half way through my first interview with all of my participants I showed them a two minute satirical video called '*Shit White Girls Say to Black Girls*' (see Appendix E for DVD). The video was chosen to help engage participants in talking about possible experiences with racism and discrimination that they may have been likely to discuss if I directly asked: 'Can you tell me about any experiences you may have had growing up or during your HE years with 'racism or discrimination?'. The video was also chosen to observe my participants' opinions on the topic and to explore whether any of the experiences on the video resonated with their on or off campus university experiences. Furthermore, because the video was gender focused on black and white women's interactions around issues of discrimination, it was felt that it would allow the participants to not associate themselves with the actors and thus be more likely to discuss their own gender related experiences. In all cases participants were able to laugh, but also identify circumstances where they had had similar experiences or discrimination (which are discussed in further detail in chapter 5).

Participants were compensated for their interviews; £10 for their initial interview and £25 for their second interview. Participants who had graduated within the past year were compensated £20 for the initial interview as it covered both their remembrances of university as well as their early career experiences in one interview.

6.17 Rationale for Qualitative Approach: Pros and Cons

This qualitative interview process was facilitated to "gain essence of the students' experiences as described by the participants" (McMillan 2008: 291). My study emphasised the phenomenological approach to qualitative research, which studies "the lived experiences of the research population" (McMillan 2008: 271). The primary purpose of this study was to identify the key factors, elements, and support systems that BACM students identified as being influential to their success. The primary purpose was to explore the experiences of BACMs getting into and completing study within elite HEIs – and to identify the key factors, elements, and support systems that these students identified as

being influential to their academic success. Creswell (1998) suggested that qualitative designs allow researchers to gain a detailed understanding of the issue that is being examined. Through in-depth interviews, I was able to captured my participants' counter-stories provide thick, rich and descriptive data of original perspectives on their experiences within UK elite universities. (Patton 2002: 104).

Every research method has advantages and disadvantages. Numerous authors have written about the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative approaches to research (e.g. Bryman and Cramer 1990; Coulon 1995). Generally, quantitative methods are more suitable for (large scale) research where generalisations can be made, while qualitative data methods are ideally suited to (small scale) projects that seek to provide in-depth findings. My research adopted a narrative approach that focused on listening "to others rather than making assumptions about their existence" (Skeggs 1997b: 33). This type of data collection is ideally suited to "understanding" and "description", rather than "measurements" and "prediction" (McKernan 1991). A significant benefit of semi-structured interviews was the ability become familiar with my participants' "feelings and thoughts" and to gain an in-depth understanding of their views and perceptions (Patton 2002). My purpose was to explore my participants' beliefs, concerns and aspirations, participants' positive and negative thoughts, and feelings on the issues I was exploring.

Another strength of this method is in the use of face-to-face interviews. This allows a more exploratory analysis: an ideal tool for exploring under-represented groups. This methodological approach was appealing to me because of its close relationship to black oral history traditions, where knowledge is created through dialogue that gives voice to those who are frequently unheard (Collins 2000). The use of the term dialogue suggests a two way conversation where power relations are more balanced (hooks, 1989), and more closely linked to 'ways of knowing that are also more likely to be used by people of colour' (Collins 2000), hence these BACMs' stories are called counter-stories.

Counter-stories-storytelling can be defined as a method of listening to voices of people whose experiences are not often told – or whose stories have previously gone unheard in order to gain a better understanding of the realities of their world. It "invites the reader into a new and unfamiliar world" (Delgado and Stefancic 2012; Ladson-Billings 1998). The narratives depicting the participants' "lived experiences" may be beneficial in shedding light on overt and covert racism, ignorance as well as racial microaggressions which may come in the form of subtle insults within the educational system and daily life. Personal stories or narratives recount an individual's experiences with various forms discrimination, racism and/or ignorance. Counter-storytelling can be also be used as a dynamic means to help deconstruct the perception of equity in educational policies and practices. In Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) affirm that a critical race methodology provides a framework to "counter" deficit storytelling. Specifically, a critical race methodology offers space to conduct and present research grounded in the experiences and knowledge of people of colour. For purposes of my research my interviews with BACM participants' counter-stories represent personal biographical reflections of their experiences with the UK educational process, particularly along their journey to and through elite higher education institutions.

Nevertheless, there are disadvantages and challenges to using interview methods. I was mindful that some participants becoming emotionally distressed from sharing their stories. I was always prepared with counselling contact information should an emotionally charged situation arise, which fortunately did not happen. Additionally, I was conscious that some participants might become concerned about their privacy and confidentiality. Even though I provided major assurances of anonymity prior to and during the interview processes, I repeatedly offered participants the right to decline to participate and the right to withdraw from the research project at any time.

Another challenge to semi-structured and open-ended interview methods is that participants may go off on a tangent and discuss experiences completely unrelated to what I was seeking to explore. Although this occurred in my

interviews on numerous occasions, it is also important to note that this research study was about exploring the stories and experiences of BACM from their own voices. Thus what my participants elicited were relevant and meaningful experiences from their perspectives at the time of their interviews. As a researcher, when stories went off focus I was conscious not to express frustration in any of my facial manners (e.g. no bulging eyes or fixed smile or frown, or shrugs).

Lastly, a strength and limitation of the study is the 'emic' – 'etic' 'race'/ethnicity relationship that was shared between me and my participants. Sometimes I was the insider with whom my participants were very comfortable sharing their stories. I also benefitted from having insights about some of the nuances of language and cultural experiences that a non-black 'outsider' might not understand. However I was simultaneously an 'outsider' in other ways as a black American who was unfamiliar with some of the British/cultural/localised slang language and terminology that my participants used, which they willingly explained to me. In addition, my race may have assisted me in building rapport with my participants by helping to put them at ease about sharing information about their experiences. My status as an 'insider' provided me with the useful perspective of a "situated knower" (Collins 2000) or an "outsider within" (Collins 1986). It is true that a researcher from a different background may have drawn different conclusions from the data, but as my research aimed to give voice to the perspectives of the research subjects, I consider my proximity to interviewees to have been a valuable resource in the research process. At the same time however, I am also an 'outsider' as I am not British African Caribbean and my cultural background as an African American is different from that of my researched participants. At times my race may have acted as a limitation in that I have my own cultural experiences that may be quite different from my participants'.

There were times when it was challenging for me to understand my participants' perspectives, particularly on issues of racism where on several occasions my participants initially denied ever having experiences with discrimination yet provided quite detailed examples of what I understood to be discriminatory

experiences within their stories. These differences may affect my interpretations of meanings and understandings unique to the participants' cultural experiences, as is explored in chapter ten of the data analysis findings. Validity and reliability in qualitative studies are determined by trustworthiness. Ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba 1985), Dependability and credibility were established in this study through my establishment of an investigative audit trail that included an interview guide, transcription and MP3 files, follow-up interviews and field notes of occurrences within the interviews (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Silverman 2000; 2001; Shenton 2004).

6.18 Theoretical Framework used for Analysis: Grounded Theory

Tinto argues that "Theory must be grounded in the everyday reality of the lives of students and must make sense of their experiences in the various realms of college life" (Tinto 1986: 379). Qualitative methods through the use of an assemblage of grounded theory and critical race theory tools were my primary tools for research discovery. Grounded theory was used as an approach for the coding (discussed below) and analysis which was helpful in terms of being used as a constant comparison. However I do not accept the central premise of grounded theory which is that it produces explanations and predictions. As discussed below in the pros and cons section on grounded theory, qualitative methods do not allow researchers to do hypothesis testing – nor is that the point of qualitative research. The purpose of this study was to understand more fully the experiences of BACM in elite education and to unearth information that might offer insight on the tools / 'capitals' that these students describe as being beneficial to their academic success. However, the point was not to use my participants' accounts as a litmus test example for all BACM in elite universities. John Solomos (1988) identified an extremely relevant point to my research when he noted that:

> [Black men]...are not simply the objects of state actions.
> They are also collective social actors, and their everyday
> actions often have the effect of questioning the legitimacy
> of the role of specific state agencies. (Solomos 1988: 186)

Part of my research study was to use my participants' grounded realities to help unearth overt and covert institutional practices as experienced by BACM students. I wanted to explore whether my participants questioned the educational places where they studied in relation to their lived experiences. Additionally, it was hoped that these students' counter-stories will uncover some of the challenges that they experienced which may assist in transforming some of these institutional barriers.

6.18.1 Analytical Process Followed

I transcribed the interviews verbatim and read through each interview many times to become familiar with the text. The next stage involved listening to the MP3 file interview recordings alongside the transcriptions. I also read through each interview many times to become familiar with the text and I compared interview transcripts with my field note observations. The Blaxter et al. (1996) process of analysis (described in 6.14) that I followed was cyclical in nature. The first stage involved an initial analysis of the first series of interviews and was carried out immediately after the completion of the first phase of interviews. I immediately transcribed the recording and searched for early themes while the data was fresh in my mind. As I transcribed the stories I reflected on the whole interviews with the participant and I became aware of simple things such as pregnant pauses and 'uhmms' within in the dialogue and included these in the transcripts. The next stage involved listening to the MP3 file recordings alongside the transcriptions of participant stories to glean a more intimate understanding for the stories. Pauses and 'uhmms' conveyed valuable insight into the participant storytellers' level of comfort or discomfort with the subject. I also referred to any field notes I had taken during the interview which were then used in conjunction with the transcripts and MP3 files.

6.19 Coding

> With textual data, indexing involves reading each phrase,
> sentence and paragraph in fine detail and deciding 'what

is this about?'… the index is usually applied systematically
to the whole data set. (Ritchie and Lewis 2003: 224)

The next stage of analysis involved coding or indexing in order to identify and then more closely analyse key issues, recurrent events, activities and categories that emerged from the data. NVivo qualitative analysis software was used to explore and manipulate the data. Nvivo enabled me to organise and code the data into broad and then narrower categories and so I could explore the inter relatedness of some of the themes. I found the coding phase to be extremely time intensive and consuming. Often participants' comments encompassed multiple themes which made the task of deciding on a meaning difficult to determine. Upon completion of coding I continued exploring the interview data within the context of each 'node' or theme. This process was made easier thanks to the NVivo software. Next I printed out and read through the data as based on the grouping I had made within various themes which provided me with a clearer picture. I then engaged in theoretical coding which involved a constant review and comparison of the emerging codes which enabled me to 'conceptualise how my substantive codes might related to each other' (Glaser 1978: 72) . I looked for dominant themes (discussed below) to be used to bring summary to their experiences. These themes were compared and contrasted with current literature to further our understanding of the experiences of BACM participants. This process enabled me to capture the essence of the students' experiences which aided me in developing a rich theoretical framework (discussed above) that helped make the data analysis and conclusions more meaningful.

6.20 Pros and Cons of Grounded Theory Analysis

I used grounded theory to analyse my data in order to search for behavioural patterns and social processes that represented my research participants' experiences. Due to the limited research base, the method chosen had to be one of exploration rather than theory verification. Grounded theory does not test a hypothesis but rather allows the theory to emerge from the data. Thus in order to begin to understand people's perceptions of reality, adoption of a sociological method that is sympathetic to the voice and language that the researched

experience was needed. For me, this involved trying to understand the dynamics of BACM elite HEI experience within a 'grounded' qualitative framework. Grounded theory is regarded by many as the most comprehensible and suitable method for conducting research on sociological and educational spaces (Turner 1981, Strauss and Corbin 1997; Dick 2000; Harry et al. 2005; Charmaz 2006). This is the process by which theory is extracted from data and then illustrated with examples of that data (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1994), which is discussed below in the theoretical framework section. The strength of this classic method is that it enables the ability to implement accessible, pragmatic methodological guidelines through a set of processes that give rise to the spawning of theory.

Within my educational research study I use grounded theory in a theoretically triangulated way that links it with Feminist Theory and Critical Race Theory. It is important to note that there is also criticism and resistance within the field of sociology and education to the use of grounded theory. Researchers (Thomas and James 2006) question and suggest that grounded theory's claims that it 'can produce better predictive and explanatory outcomes than other methods' are overstated (Thomas and James 2006: 768). They argue that it is dishonest to call this method 'grounded theory' as they see the method as less of an interpretative discovery process and more of an invention process (Thomas and James 2006). In accord with Thomas and James, other researchers have argued that grounded theory implies the concept of waiting to be discovered empirical world which appears to deny the researcher's part in identifying and making meaning of, significant insights and features of that world (Quine 1951). In fact, the concept of 'grounded theory' may appear to fit poorly with the required need for 'theoretical sensitivity' (Glaser 1978) as depending on how it is implemented, this method may force rather than allow the emergence of empirical data (Kelle 2005). Despite these warranted criticisms, I decided that my adaptation/variation of grounded theory was the best suited approach for me to conduct and analyse my emerging research.

6.21 Assignment of Participants' Class: Appendix F - Table 9

In ascertaining my participants' socio-economic class, I used a host of variables which I gained accessed to during their interviews. To assist in ascertaining my participants' class I asked the following questions:

> ➢ Housing: How did the participant describe the neighbourhood[22] he grew up? Was his residence a Council house, an apartment/flat rental or a family owned home?
> ➢ Schooling: What type of secondary school did the participant attend? (State, Faith or Public/Private).How did he describe his school's academic performance? Good? Struggling? or a failing schooling[23]
> ➢ Parental background: Did the participant grow up in single or dual parented household? Did my participants' parents have any higher education or vocational qualifications that were achieved in the UK or in their home country?

It is important to note that although many of my participants' parents attended university, if their parents gained their degrees in their countries of birth, the result did not always translate into upwardly mobile capital when seeking jobs in the UK. For example, both of James' parents studied and gained university qualifications from their countries in Africa, but when they relocated to the UK their qualifications were not recognised as capital. As a consequence both of James' parents started their careers as entry level cleaning staff within the health profession and Duncan informed me that his parents also had experienced challenges becoming upwardly mobile career wise. Ultimately I asked my participants how they self-identified their class, which is indicated in the fourth column of table 9 and is the class variable that I have used for my research.

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[22] Nate described himself as growing up as the 'underclass' in a revolving Council flats.
[23] Two of my participants, Duncan and James, informed me that their school failed Ofsted and were closed down.

6.22 Key Themes that Emerged from the Coding and Analysis

Due to the structure and flexibility of the discussions, I found it was sometimes difficult to standardise themes on each course as the interaction between me and the researched was never the same. The discussion points listed below are some of the key themes that emerged from this research process: (a) schooling experiences (b) participant's accounts of teachers perceptions of their performativity at school, (c) parental hopes, aspirations, expectations of the effects of class (d) capitals and resources known and unknown in BACM's pathways to elite HE (e) social and academic experiences of being black at elite HEIs; (f) black culture: ways it is performed, managed and perceived on elite university campuses; (g) black students worldviews: their effect on how racism and discrimination are/are not recognised at elite HEIs. These themes will be discussed in detail in chapters seven through ten: the data analysis and findings sections.

6.23 Reflexivity

> Reflexivity is a term used: (a) to describe the ways in which a theory may be turned back upon itself and its practices; and (b) to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, act upon and informs such research. (Nightingale and Cromby 1999: 228).

I incorporated a reflexive approach in my research design and method (Ritchie and Lewis 2003), that locates me as a researcher within the research process and acknowledges that my experiences, and the processes and activities I partake, have an impact on the research analysis. Reflexivity concerns the way researchers examine their actions and experiences and how their values affect and impact on the research process (Guillemin and Gilliam 2004). Reflexivity is tool that helps researchers to engaging in the analytical vacillation between the researcher and participant (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Self-reflexivity can assist in raising one's consciousness to issues and hidden gems that may be buried in our analysis and research findings (Richardson 2000a). My on-going reflection enabled me to consider the similarities and differences in my participants' lived experiences compared to my personal experiences with elite higher education.

6.24 Ethical Issues: Informed Consent's Challenges and Responses to Participant Emotions Generated from the Research

Coming from a feminist perspective/standpoint, ethical considerations were at the heart of my research. Consideration was given to the ethical requirements of the Social Research Association (SRA), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) revised ethical guidelines for educational research (2011), the British Sociological Association's (BSA) Statement of Ethical Practice (2002, Appendix updated May 2004) and Cardiff University's School of Social Sciences (SOCSI) Research Ethics Committee Reviews (2015). Throughout the research process serious consideration to ethics with respect to the UK Data Protection Act which asserts that, "personal information concerning research participants should be kept confidential" (Bryman 2008: 124). Every attempt was made to achieve this during and after the interview. During the interview some questions were edited and refined for clarity purposes. After completion of transcription where questions arose about what was said or meant, I contacted participants for clarification.

6.24.1 Informed Consent

Confidentiality was paramount for all the participants in my research. Asking participants to share stories about their pasts and presents and how other people have impacted their lives can evoke a lot of emotion. This meant my participants were taking a risk both of becoming distressed in the interview if they revealed unhappy memories and that they, or the people they spoke about, might be identified at a later date. Ensuring that participants were informed, understood and consented to participate in the project was critical to my ability to collect data. The Social Research Association (2003) defines informed consent as '... a procedure for ensuring that research participants understand what is being done to them, the limits to their participation and awareness of any potential risks they incur'(Social Research Association, 2003: 28).

Ethical issues must be given due consideration throughout any research project. As Simpson and Tuson (1995) assert, researchers should guarantee confidentiality, sound intentions and integrity. I recognise Bouma's perspective which states:

> …All our dealings with other people raise ethical issues. Thus the key to identifying ethical issues in research is to take the position of a participant in the research you propose and ask yourself: How would you feel if you were asked these questions, observed doing things, or if your records and papers were examined for research purposes? How would you want researcher's to handle and report on the information they have about you? (Bouma, 2000, pp190-191).

Every attempt was made to achieve this during the research. Prior to beginning each interview I would introduce myself, explain a little about my research interests and then ask each participant to fill in a second copy of a consent form that I had previously emailed to them. I would ensure that each participant had read and understood the information sheet and that they understood that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could end the interview at any point and opt out of participating in my research at any time without providing me a reason. Prior to interviews, permission was sought from interviewees to record our discussions. All participants' chose their own pseudonym for their forenames so as to guarantee confidentiality in the transcripts and the analysis. I also ensured that quotations were not used out of context to alter their meaning. Bulmer (1982) suggests consideration should be given to the impact of the research upon subjects and with this in mind, names of their institutions and locations that were referred to were altered that could potentially be traced back to participants. Since my research addressed a minority group and involved sensitive issues, I made a concerted effort to keep my participants consistently well informed about the purpose of my research and the ways their stories would be used (i.e. thesis, journals and other research publications). I was also cautious to avoid assuming that I understood what my participants meant. In addition to taking field notes I was vigilant in seeking clarification by double checking my understandings and where possible asking them to provide examples and descriptions for a more in-depth understanding. I think that my candidness about my research purposes helped to foster a voice to the

educational concerns of my participants which is perhaps one of the reasons that they were willing to participate in this research. This was reflected in their eagerness to share their narratives which often were in excess of two hours

6.24.2 The Challenges of Informed Consent

Although I acknowledge that the consent process is a bureaucratic ethical requirement put in place is for protection of my participants to which I robustly adhered, I am also conscious of the power dynamics that this consent process can imply to my participants (Boden, Epstein and Latimer, 2009). These researchers argue that ethics and informed consent:

> *… reduce and codify ethics into sets of highly scripted rules, procedures and behaviours ... [yet we argue that these] invariably mask the hidden operation of subjective power* (Boden, Epstein and Latimer 2009: 734)

The informed consent process can suggest that the researcher has complete knowledge of what data will be generated and how it will be used. However, the stories that emerged from my participants could not be presumed. What is revealed can be (and is) both interesting and unexpected. As the researcher I am never in full control of how and in what context data generated will be used once it is written up and placed in the public domain, no matter how much effort has been made to anonymise participants and locations (Hammersley, 2006). I can only try to ensure their anonymity to the best of my ability. Furthermore, while I realise that consent is a necessary requirement, the primary issue of importance to my research are the relationships that I establish with my participants. Regardless of any measures that I may have put in place to reduce power relations/stratifications I am acutely aware that circumstances between researcher and participant can arise where the participant may feel compelled to respond to questions in a particular way.

Respectful of my ethical obligations and the need to ensure my participants were comfortable with the discussion we had, I ceded complete autonomy to my participants to choose where and when they wanted to be interviewed. However, given the scope and time limitations of my research, this occasionally

posed logistical and geographically challenges for me as I had to travel to my participants locations across the UK, in locations where I had never been before in some instances meeting places were over 5 hours away from my locality (Cardiff) by train and many of which I had never ever previously visited. Thankfully, most of my participants were mindful of this and provided detail directions so that I could find them.

Most of my participant interviews were conducted in private offices, cafes, or restaurant on or near their campuses. Office discussions were the easiest to manage and follow as there were no outside distractions. In instances where interviews occurred in cafes and restaurants occasionally there would be the additional challenge of background noise. I always ensured that I arrived at interview locations in advance of my participants to try and secure a quiet location, but due to the times of day that some of these interviews occurred (lunchtime) this was not always feasible as there was occasionally background noise from other tables. Additionally there were occasions where participants would be sharing issues of a sensitive nature related to discrimination and their voices occasionally trailed off or become silent when fellow students passed by our tables and they appeared to be apprehensive or less comfortable sharing their stories. When excessive noise or low voices occurred on my dictaphones and I had difficulty understanding what my participants had shared, I always supplemented the discussions with follow-up face to face interviews, phone calls and Skype calls to clarify their narratives.

6.24.3 Responding to Emotions Generated During Interviews

An additional issue that has arisen as a result of the methods that I implemented is the degree of vulnerability that appeared to exist within collected data. At times the stories that participants shared appeared to be somewhat understated. Participants' appeared to have merged and or minimised recollections of victimisation which I suggest could have been due to the emotional nature of remembering negative experiences of the past and preferring to recall them in less painful manners. For example, five of my working class participants who discussed some of the challenges they experienced growing up in single family and or an economically challenged

communities. In our discussions there were times when my participants became physically emotional (i.e. tears). At such times I suggested we take a break and/or asked my participants if they were comfortable continuing with the current line of discussion. I always offered to move on to other subjects – but in most cases participants continued to share their emotional remembrances. Upon completion of the interviews, when my dictaphones were turned off, I confidentially offered my participants information on counselling opportunities[24] in case they wanted to explore some of their hurtful experiences further with a professional outside of their discussion with me. My observations of some of my participants' behaviour in their interviews suggest that discussing their narratives with me was an emotional yet cathartic experience for them. The following four chapters, seven to ten explore the findings and analysis that I gained from the implementation of these methods.

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[24] Organisations to which I referred my participants were all non-profit charity organisations and included: NHS Choices – Psychological therapies: http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-%28IAPT%29/LocationSearch/10008; Getconnected.org: http://www.getconnected.org.uk/ ; Free Counselling Services (FCS): http://free-counselling-services.co.uk/; YouthNet, The site.org: http://www.thesite.org/about-us

Chapter Seven: Black Men's Trajectories into Higher Education

As discussed in the literature review, research identifies a multitude of possible factors as reasons for the minimal numbers of black men who enter elite higher education each year. These include class (Ball et al. 2002; Reay et al. 2001b; Reay et al. 2009b; Reay et al. 2011), race and ethnicity (Boliver 2014a; 2014b; Coard 1971; Gillborn 2008b; Rhamie and Hallam 2002; Warikoo and Fuhr 2014), disproportionate sanctioning in secondary schooling of black youth due to their performativity (Gillborn 1998; Mac an Ghaill 1988; 1994; Youdell 2004; OFSTED 2006) and black boys as non-academically performing, behaviourally poor and disengaged students (Yosso 2005; Rollock 2007b). In recent and emerging analysis Boliver's (2014a; 2014b) research has suggested that amongst those in charge of admissions processes there may be a tendency for some of them to misrecognise that they recruit prospective students in their own image. She suggests that some admissions committees may be content with minimal numbers of ethnic minorities being accepted into their institutions, as they may see the acceptance numbers to be proportionately representative of these groups percentage of the actual ethnic population within the UK (Boliver 2014a; 2014b). However, this 'acceptance' fails to take into account the fact that larger numbers of these ethnic groups who apply to elite universities possess the same academic scores as white students to whom they offer places (Boliver 2015, 2014a; 2014b).

In this chapter I explore my participants' accounts of their academic experiences to gain an understanding of what factors, resources or capitals they identified as making them different or unique. In this chapter I cover different capitals, 'resources', or what I term 'deal breakers', which my participants have identified as being reasons for their successful routes into elite higher education. This chapter represents my participants' reflections of their secondary school environments, teachers and other resources and capitals that they describe as influencing their journeys to successfully apply to elite

universities. The chapter is broken into four sections: 1. B^4: Bravado and Bad Boy Behaviour; Being 'Smart' and 'Lucky' in School; 2. Parental Cleverness, Aspirations and Expectations for their Children and Class Implications; 3. Capital and Resource Acquisition in Preparation for Elite and, 4. Knowing Yet Not Always Really Knowing much about HE.

There were an abundance of factors that my participants identified, not all of which can be included in the analysis for reasons of space. As a supplement and guide I have provided a table detailing my participants' biographical pen portrait information (see Appendix F – Table 9) which provides an overview of their 'race'/ethnicity, parental back ground and type of secondary school that they described attending. An additional table is provided in Appendix G that highlights my participants' accounts of capitals, resources and threats that discussed which may have contributed to, or detracted from, their trajectories into elite HEIs (see Appendix G – Table 10), which I discuss in detail in chapter 11, conclusions, implications and recommendations. In this chapter, chapter seven, I will be using Bourdieu as a theoretical tool to interrogate my data. In an effort to make it easier to follow the analysis of my participants' counter-narratives, in each analytical chapter I have numbered their accounts with brackets (e.g. [X]) as I occasionally revisit their experiences in subsequent chapters.

7.1 B^4: Bravado and Bad Boy Behaviour; Being 'Smart' and 'Lucky' in School

Six of my 15 participants described themselves as 'bad boys' who misbehaved in or outside of secondary and sixth form school. With the exception of one (Jay), they were from working class backgrounds. It is possible that some of my participants, though academically smart, this attribute may not necessarily have been considered a respected trait in their working class environments. Performativity, in the form of what I have termed B^4, 'Bravado and Bad Boy Behaviour', is recognised as a form of dominant capital in some cultural working class environments which is respected (Willis 1977; Bourdieu 1986; Bourdieu et al. 1990). In the following account, Jason described the neighbourhood where he initially attended secondary school in terms of class. He said, the *'area is not*

the most kind of affluent area. It's quite a rough and poor area. Essentially it was quite a rough school'. Jason described himself performing in a certain way in order to fit in and not be harassed within his school. He said:

> *Jason: The school was rough. So, mum wanted me to move out of [name of school]. But during that time I was quite good at school so I'd come in the top sets and everything at school. Although I had this challenging behaviour the teachers kind of realised I wasn't stupid.*
> *Constantino: Can you go back to this challenging behaviour? I mean was this what teachers said or what was it?*
> *Jason: As in like I would go to the principal multiple times to the point I was almost expelled from school just because of fighting. Because if you didn't fight you would have got walked over. I was kind of a bully. Well, I mean it was a kind of culture in which essentially, whoever was the oldest, kind of ran the school so sometimes you had to fight your way to [earn] respect. So I got in quite a lot of trouble. Got into fights. There was kind of a culture there. The school itself failed its Ofsted report so it was kind of on review and it wasn't the greatest of schools.*
> **(Jason, Working Class British African Russell Group Graduate) [1]**

Jason's story of classroom performativity is grounded in surviving the tough cultural environment of his school. Although he says that he performed well academically, he also felt it was necessary to perform in a certain way through fighting to prevent himself being bullied by other students. Jason may have also been behaving in this way because he was smart, and this may not have been something that his fellow students respected (Mac an Ghaill 1994; Gillborn 1990). Jason's account intimates that even though he had 'challenging behaviour' he was not excluded because he was smart. He says he was routinely placed "in the top sets and everything at school" [and the teachers] "kind of realised I wasn't stupid". It could also be suggested that because the school was under review and needed to have good performing students, that it turned a blind eye to Jason's bad behaviour because it needed him statistically and academically to improve its rating status with Ofsted.

Jason describes the cultural environment at his initial school as being the impetus for his bad behaviour. He says that upon receipt of a scholarship which enabled him to matriculate at a private school his behaviour quickly changed:

> *Jason: [My new school] was different. I immediately kind of had to behave because there was no tolerance to any of that kind of stuff and I didn't feel the pressure that I needed to act like that anymore because all the kids there were from quite middle class backgrounds…*
> Constantino: So the new school wasn't rough. So in your former school would you say you were acting out or performing a sort of way in order to be top dog or…?
> *Jason: Oh yeah. It was playground rules. It was just to save myself from getting beaten up basically. … it was a really bad school. …within like my first year [at his new school] I kind of changed to a different person in terms of the fact that I haven't been in a fight since I was 10. I had a whole different outlook to life. So gradually I kind of used their resources and they helped me out loads and I got good grades for my GCSEs.* **(Jason, Working Class British African Russell Group Graduate) [2]**

Damien's situation was similar to Jason's, performing his cultural masculinity and dominance within the school environment. Damien also attended an underperforming school[25] which he says was almost closed by Ofsted. Despite his bad behaviour, Damien asserts that he was not sanctioned as harshly as other students because he was one of the brightest in his classes. In the following excerpt he described his view of a hierarchical system of how sanctions were administered in his school:

> Constantino: With respect to disciplining students who misbehaved, do you think your school treated all students the same way?
> *Damien: I guess the sanctions more varied relative to your position within the set. So say my friend [Damien's friends name] who was also in L1, he was in the top set along with me in the same class. He disrupted I would say like significantly less than me. However he had a lot less mathematical ability than me and he would get lower scores. In the instances when he had serious arguments, he would get sent out of class without a second thought. If he persisted arguing, he'd get sent up to the senior management team. Whereas I would get sent out of the classroom quite easily,*

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[25] Like 4 of my participants, Damian attending an underperforming school that was under special measures.

but I would rarely get sent to senior management. But the exclusions mostly occurred in the lower sets and certainly the black and mixed-race kids, more of them were in the lower sets so they got, they were, you know what I'm saying? They were more harshly sanctioned. **(Damien, Working Class British Caribbean Russell Group Graduate)** [3]

Damien's account suggests that teachers clearly recognised that he was a bright student. He did well in classes and tests and was clearly university material. As a result Damien says that teachers cut him a bit of slack and were often less harsh in how they disciplined him. Whereas according to Damien's reflections, teachers saw his friend in a more ambiguous way. His friend was possibly perceived as being on the borderline as to whether he was university material. Consequently, being a borderline student coupled with performative bad behaviour, may have led to his friend being sanctioned more harshly and often.

Damien's account reaffirms the literature that suggests that black and working class children in secondary education are more routinely and harshly sanctioned than their peers for similar incidents based on teachers assessment of their ability. Research indicates that poorer academically achieving students who misbehave in school settings are more likely to be disciplined than well achieving misbehaving students (Gillborn 1990; 2008a; Gillborn and Youdell 2000; Youdell 2011). Teachers have a tendency to label black boys as underperforming which is often associated with their performativity of their masculinity and/or misbehaviour in classrooms (Gillborn 1998; Mac an Ghaill 1988). In consequence, they are excluded in higher numbers than other minority and majority groups in secondary schools (Gillborn and Youdell 2000; Gillborn 2008b; Reay et al. 2001b). Furthermore, from a young age, black boys are often stereotypically perceived by other White students and teachers as being hard, masculine, aggressive, good at sport and quintessentially representative of "all that it means to be male" (Connolly 1995: 84). This often leads to black boys having a reputation of being predicted to be 'bad', more disruptive and more likely to be involved in verbal and physical confrontations than other children (Connolly 1995; Gillborn and Youdell 1999). Damien went

on to elaborate on how he believed teachers saw black and mixed-race students' relative value within his school:

> *Damien: Because they've got double disadvantage. They've got the disadvantages being in the lower set which is also already signalling them [to the teachers as] less able (…) less embracing of the school experience. And then mixed with their actual cultural aspects they don't like being disrespected, you know what I'm saying? They may have a very forceful way of talking. When you mix all of these aspects together then they are just seen as people who the school would rather just pass them on as opposed to dealing with the issues. I'll be honest, it could be very well be the 'gaming of the system' [his emphasis]. They're trying to reflect well on their exam results by excluding kids so they are no longer driving down the exam results of the actual school. A lot of my friends were put on these silly college courses which had no educational benefit whatsoever and then a lot of my friends were expelled for various reasons, but not necessarily reasons you would deem expellable reasons (…) now equally, we had some white kids who had severe behavioural problems. The type of kids that would lash out and hit a teacher. But, it was accepted as okay, these kids have these behavioural problems. It's not necessarily that this kid is being naughty and all of that. And these kids were not expelled! [His emphasis] **(Damien, Working Class British Caribbean, Russell Group Graduate)** [4]*

Damien suggests that teachers turned a blind eye to some of his and other "bright" students' bad behaviour because they were in good academic standing. Students with lower ability received harsher sanctions for their bad behaviour. When teachers are not sure if black and working class students are academically capable and they misbehave in school, they tend to assume that the students belong in the lower sets. Teachers do not want to spend the time to assess whether students who cause trouble are bright.

Damien described discrimination that was not only based on race and class, but also on the assumed brightness of its students. He describes a double standard where White students who had 'severe behavioural problems' were managed and not sanctioned as severely as black and mixed race students. Damien was not pleased by what he described as a bias that favoured White students over black and working class students who were just performing their culture (Yosso 2005; Gillborn et al. 2012). Damien's account suggests that some of the

teachers at his school may have misrecognised students' actual talent or academic capability because of the students' "forceful way of talking" as well as other performative representations of their culture. Similarly Damien's suggestion is supported by Willis' (1977) contention that teachers often failed to account for the various ways that working class students actively participated in the development of their own culture. Some black students may act in opposition to social reproduction of their school environments as they may see them as incongruent with the way they perform their culture. Like White working class "lads" in a British industrial centre (Willis 1977), Damien and his friends often displayed strong oppositional performativity to teachers and other authority figures.

Jason and Damien's accounts of their own, as well as other black and mixed-race students' expressions of their culture in school environments represent forms of cultural capital that are appreciated by some and rejected or disdained by others (Bourdieu 1986; Sewell 1997). Jason and Damien's performativity of their aggressive, bullish hardness and misbehaviour in school settings benefits them with other students because it provides them with respect in the form or school and local neighbourhood street credibility. This capital is a valuable asset that prevents them from being beaten up or considered weak and vulnerable target within their peer circles and tough local communities. However this capital that is valued by their peers and within their neighbourhoods is recognised as a liability by teachers (Yosso 2005). Students who misbehave are recognised as difficult delinquent troublemakers within their schools and sanctioned for their actions. Often the behaviour of students from black and working class backgrounds is misrecognised as them being inept or academically incapable (Mac an Ghaill 1988; Ingram 2009; Wright et al. 1998). Teachers may fail to look deeper to ascertain whether in addition to the bad behaviour there are other potential capabilities these students possess. Consequently bad behaviour is often punished with relegation to lower sets unless teachers identify the students as being 'bright' and possible assets to their schools.

In the following account, Jay, a middle class British African student, reflects on how he behaved during his secondary school years.

> *Jay: Throughout my school life my group of friends and I (…) used to get in a lot of trouble (…) well they'd all get in trouble but I would get excused from detention from so many teachers. I didn't realise what it really was, but now I realise it was because they saw the potential in me that they [the other students] didn't have. Because all of those friends, none of them went to university. (…) I could have easily gone the same route as them and been someone that causes a lot of trouble than someone that is still in academia today really. And so I really do thank my teachers for not being as harsh to me as I guess as they were to others because it made me work a bit harder and now I'm here today.* **(Jay, Middle Class, British African Russell Group Graduate)** [5]

Jay says that he and his friends used to misbehave quite a bit in school. However he was not sanctioned as harshly as his friends for being involved in their antics. He says he received preferential treatment from teachers which he credits to them seeing "potential" in him that they did not in his group of friends. Jay suggests that that were it not for his teachers' benevolence towards him, he might not have pursued university. It is possible that Jay did not necessarily have more "potential" than his friends, but that he embodied more middle class habitus than his friends which teachers saw as more aligned with the schools' habitus and future academic success (Bourdieu 1989a, 1989b, 1993c; Oliver and Kettley 2010; Reay 2008). Jay's account is an example of cultural capital that is appreciated by the school. Schools embody a habitus that often reproduces a particular kind of culture (Pugsley 2003). Jay may have embodied a performativity that teachers interpreted as being more reflective of the dominant culture of the school than his boisterous friends' representations. It is quite possible that this is what occurred, as teachers are often prejudiced in favour of pupils who display 'cultured' traits, and therefore provide them with preferential treatment (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Sullivan 2002)

As discussed earlier in this chapter in excerpt [2], Jason, a working class British African participant described his poor academically performing school as "rough". He also said his behaviour changed once he was able to relocate to private middle class school upon receipt of a scholarship.

Three of my participants described how a change in their school environment resulted in a change in their behaviour.

In extract [1] and [2], Jason described how he behaved in a brash bullying manner at his initial secondary school as a matter of maintaining his street credibility. Once he switched schools, Jason said his misbehaviour changed. Jason's account of how he performed in two different secondary schools is representative of him acting in a 'double consciousness' manner (Du Bois 1903; Bruce 1992; Fanon 2008; Alexander 1996). Jason is a bright pupil who said that he felt he needed to perform in a particular bullish manner in order to prevent himself from "getting beaten up" and to maintain his credibility in his school and working class community.

Unlike Jay's experience [5], Jason's teachers did not turn a blind eye to his behaviour and performativity for which he was often sanctioned. As discussed in the literature review, many schools espouse a White middle class conception of the normative expected environmental rules of behaviour (Martino and Mayenn 2001), which directly contrasts with the masculinities that many black and working class boys perform. This often leads to black youth being sanctioned and expelled more regularly and harshly than middle class conforming students. Jason said that once he relocated to a private school, he no longer felt the pressure to perform in this way 'because all the kids there were from quite middle class backgrounds' – and being smart was not associated with stigma.

In a separate excerpt not included here, Jason discussed how his new school was filled with high achieving students and had a good record of getting students into Oxbridge. Jason's private schools habitus represents a middle class embodiment that is focussed on elite education (Bourdieu 1998). I would suggest that he not been relocated to another school, Jason could have become one of the many statistics that identifies black boys as underperforming in secondary education. Consequently his opportunities to pursue any type of post-secondary education (let alone an elite higher education institution) would have been greatly reduced.

7.2 Being Lucky and Talented in the Right Places

Not all of my working class participants attended 'tough' schools or felt the need to be 'bad boys' at school. Four of my participants discussed being 'lucky', 'fortunate' or 'smart' in ways that enabled them to advance academically. Kevin attended an academically good[26] faith based secondary school comprised predominantly of BAC and South Asian pupils. The school was in a 'rough' and financially disadvantaged area. The majority of students who attended his school were from working class and underprivileged backgrounds. Yet his school remained successful in getting many of its students into sixth forms and then elite universities.

> Constantino: How was school for you? Because I'm curious, I'm sure you're aware of black boy exclusion and expulsion issues, the laddish-ness and that things of that nature have occurred at your school. How did you fit into all of that?
> *Kevin: Hmmm, yeah I was aware of it. I think for me at school, I was lucky. I was lucky in that I was smart. I was very very intelligent. And then I also had the ethic of working hard. So I got on with the teachers at that type of school.*
> Constantino: But what about the kids, did they give you a hard time because you were smart?
> *Kevin: And then with the kids I got on with them. I was talented. I was lucky. I was talented in the right places. So you know I was good at sports. You know I enjoyed the choir – and actually that's not one of the most popular talents for a boy to have – but in my school it really was. You could sing, and you could dance. And the boys respected you. So I was, I was very very lucky. When I think about it now and I work with students now, I realise I was lucky. I've never once had to struggle like other boys at school.*
> ***(Kevin, Working Class British African Russell Group Graduate)* [6]**

Kevin's traits or capitals enabled him to be accepted and respected by most people at his school. Even though Kevin's school was situated in a marginalised neighbourhood and comprised an intake of predominantly working class students, he and other students from his background were able to flourish. Kevin's school represents an example of a faith based school with a 'failure to fail' ethos – regardless of the socio-economic background of its students (Woods et al. 2013). However, in the majority of cases where my participants

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[26] (based GCSE performance and Ofsted reviews)

did not act up in school, they came from middle class backgrounds or were from working class backgrounds but attended schools in middle class school settings.

7.3 Parental Cleverness, Aspirations and Expectations for their Children and Class

Jason discussed his mother's concern about his school and her impetus to find an academically high achieving school located in a safe neighbourhood. Jason's mother's actions represent an example of her 'playing the game' in an attempt to try to access social and cultural capitals (Bourdieu 1986; 1998; Tzanakis 2011) through better schooling that would provide her son with educational advantage and hoped for social mobility (Bathmaker et al. 2013; Ball et al 1998; Basit 2013). Vincent et al. (2012, 2013) discuss the tools that many middle class parents (white and black) provide their children in order to help them succeed in school. A primary focus of these parents is on something I have termed 'school catchment surfing' where parents work to ensure that their children are in the most academically advanced schools possible. Like Jason's mother, Franco's mother, (who raised him in a working class single parent household) was involved in a 'school catchment surfing' strategy for her son. Franco said:

> *Franco: I really disliked my secondary school because one, it was out of [his local community]. Two, it's very middle-class (…) Let me let me step a bit back or primary school. I automatically could get into my local secondary school catchment area school which was called [X]. I wanted to go there because some of my friends were going there. It wasn't considered to be a good school. My mom didn't want to me to go there so that wasn't an option. She wanted me to go to this school in [another locality]. So the best analogy is think of the Fresh Prince of Bel Air, yeah, being taken to a decent area. A decent school. Supposed to have a very good reputation. Once again I don't know how she knew because we didn't have the Internet and everything. This school was far away (…) so what happened was we had an interview for the school (…) and I got a letter saying that I didn't get in. Now my mom got angry and she wrote back to the school (…) my mom's view was they've always got secret places that they can fit someone in. So she pushed and pushed. So then I got in.*
> Constantino: You don't look like you're happy about it at all.

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Franco: To be honest I hated every minute at that school. I hated that I was so isolated. It was out of my comfort zone. I lived in a different area to everybody. One, it takes me like an hour to get to school every day. Two, I now realize that I'm coming from a different class from everyone. I learned about class without understanding the word. What I knew is that I could afford less. I was poorer than everybody else. But it was probably the best thing for me in hindsight. **(Franco, Working Class British African Russell Group Graduate)** [7]

Franco describes how his mother's aspirations were the impetus for him travelling an hour each way to a school outside of his catchment. Her intentions were also to provide him with the best start and resources to equip him to do well career wise upon completion of school. In an extract not shared here, Franco explained that his mother wanted her son to aspire to attend an elite university, as she worked for a company where the majority of her co-workers children had attended top ranking universities. Franco's mother is focused on acquiring social and cultural capitals that have access to better schooling that will provide her son with the best opportunities to become educationally and socially mobile. There were some negative effects that Franco attributed to his relocation. He described his experience as being similar to the television series 'Fresh Prince of Bel Air' (the protagonist was relocated from an urban underperforming school district in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to an elite private school in Bel Air, California by his mother). Franco learns the meaning of class for the first time. He is quickly aware that he is from a different class from the other students. He is working class and they are middle class. Nevertheless, even though he said he "hated" his new school, upon reflection he acknowledged that it was probably the best thing his mother could have done for him.

Three of my participants described tactics that their parents used to make them concentrate on their studies rather than sport and extracurricular activities. In the following account, Allen described his mother's aspiration for him to attend Oxbridge, when all he wanted to do was play football.

Allen: My mother said very early on 'you're going to go to university'. I knew this from when I was in primary school. Before I even knew what University was. The only clear ambition I ever had

was to be a professional footballer. I was really good at football. I was scouted and had opportunities to go and potentially do more football. And two things happened. My mom humoured me – and she kept saying, 'after you go to university'. I didn't realise the significance of that (laughs) at all. She was saying, 'no you're going to go to university and do something else.' Not, 'you're going to be a footballer.' I remember reading in the prospectus about school years 'cause you don't know when you're eleven years old how long you're going to be in school. And I remember adding up the years including sixth form. And it would mean that by the time I was leaving school I could be 18 years old. And then it just dawned on me that this path that my parents have put me on [is] not going to lead to me being a professional footballer. And I remember thinking at the time, Michael Owen played for Liverpool at 18 which means he's like on the reserve team at sixteen or seventeen. I did the maths and I was just like 'oh my God I'm not going to able to be a footballer (…) I was really deflated (…) about it for a while but I just went to school and did really well. The irony was that I really enjoyed school. I enjoyed a lot of things. Sports and school. (Allen, Middle Class British African Oxbridge Graduate) **[8]**

Allen may have had an opportunity to have become a successful football player, but this was not considered a viable career option by his mother and she used clever reasoning to dissuade him from this pursuit until he would be too old.

Alex, a middle class Russell Group graduate, provided an account of the early expectations that he and his brothers would all pursue courses that would lead to them having a 'profession' in life.

My mother raised us alone and is a force of nature (…) my mother wanted us to go abroad to be educated. From an early age she would ask us what we wanted to be when we grew up. My cousin wanted to be a fireman and she laughed him out of the room. It was very much a civil engineer or a doctor. A lawyer they were all 'professions' and for a long time I said I wanted to be a civil engineer and my mother had friends who were civil engineers and they were always around the house but it wasn't for me. One day I said I wanted to be a lawyer and it stuck. I liked the idea of people listening when I spoke and I got seduced by that. My father's side of the family are all lawyers and barristers in [African country] and it made my mum happy. It seemed like a good fit. (Alex, Middle Class, British African Russell Group Graduate). [9]

A common theme among 14 of my 15 participants was a parental expectation that they would pursue higher education. Only Bob, a British African participant who described himself as coming from a single parented 'underclass background', did not identify familial support or any expectation that he would attend university. Eleven participants shared stories of parents emphasising the importance of specific subjects particularly law, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) that they should pursue. Only three of my 15 participants studied outside of these areas in social science fields.

7.4 Resources, Capital and Teacher support with 'extras' and Preparation for the Journey into Elite Higher Education

A recurring theme that many of my participants discussed focussed on the acquisition or possession of certain forms of capital and 'resources' (Bradley *et al* 2013) – primarily cultural and social that would help them progress to higher education. As previously discussed in chapter two, Bourdieu frames much of his theoretical analysis around social class inequalities (see Bourdieu 1986), on the links between social class of origin and social class of destination in relation to cultural capital on educational attainment. Bourdieu argues that the possession of cultural capital varies with social class, yet the education system with its middle class focus and mōrēs assumes that all possess certain types of cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 1977a). Bourdieu (1986), Bradley et al. (2013) and Pugsley (2003) suggest that social capital provides the middle classes with a distinct advantage in the educational arena when selecting the 'best' universities to attend. In this section I explore my participants' accounts of various forms of Bourdieusian social and cultural capitals: academic, work experience, financial, and knowing the system. Some of these capitals are attained through formal means, while others are informal through information shared by teachers, friends or family members.

It was evident from my participants' discussions that they were aware of the significance that possessing certain types of 'resources' or capitals could have on their current and future opportunities. My participants shared experiences related to their lack of capitals, as well as their pursuit to acquire particular 'resources' that they hope would help them to become socially, academically

and economically mobile. A recurring theme in nine of my participants' counter-stories was the need for proper knowledge about elite HE institutions. Edmund shared his experience of wanting to attend a Russell Group university. He said that his older sister (who was a Russell Group graduate and the first in his family to attend university) helped him make decisions about which universities to consider. This type of knowledge was the first step in being aware of the elite universities, which many black working class students are not privy to if they are the first in their families to consider higher education.

Edmund described a special after school academic advancement programme that he was enrolled in during sixth form that a teacher informed him of and recommended he attend. He said the programme provided him with beneficial knowledge that enhanced his chances of getting accepted and that he would not have been aware of without his teacher's information:

> Constantino: Can you tell me a bit about your journey to getting into a Russell Group university?
> *Edmund: From like year 10 I'd been looking at what unis I wanted to go to and what I wanted to study. My aim was to get into Oxford from like day one. So I was working towards just getting straight A's. Then the year after I applied to different programs that were linked to getting into good unis. There's something called LSE choice that they run for people from low social economic backgrounds who have been successful in secondary school. Once you get into A-levels they then give you Saturday classes every other Saturday where you're paid 12 pounds an hour (…) and it's only for two hours. But in a month that's like 96 pounds. So it's a very good incentive.*
> Constantino: How did you find out about this program?
> *Edmund: Basically my politics teacher told me to apply because she realized that I was on track to getting an A in politics. I did and then I was on this program where I was being taught further things from what was being taught in the classroom. So we would have politics teachers come in, teach us things about A-levels and then things a bit further. So for instance what A-levels you shouldn't do to get into certain unis and what are Russell group universities. And so you were in and around those types of people who were focused on getting into good schools. (**Edmund, Working Class British African Russell Group Graduate**) [10]*

As discussed in the literature review, access to social and cultural capital resources can substantially improve a student's chances of gaining the required

grades and other credentials needed to successfully apply to elite HEIs (Basit 2013; Lehmann 2012a, 2012b; Bathmaker et al. 2013). Whilst Edmund was in sixth form, his politics teacher saw potential in him and provided him with the capital or knowledge of the LSE choice programme. Enrolling on this programme gave Edmund additional knowledge and helped better prepare him to apply to HE. The financial compensation that the LSE programme provided also served as an incentive to routinely attend classes. For working class students like Edmund, financial incentives[27]can enable working class student to concentrate on their studies, rather than having to balance studies and full or part time employment to meet financial ends. Edmund's account is an example of gaining and enhancing ones' capital knowledge and resources. For many middle class students, much of the information that Edmund gained is common place – either in their sixth forms or through parents or other social contacts (Modood 2004; Bathmaker et al. 2013; Basit 2013). For Edmund this knowledge not only informed him about what was meant by a Russell Group institution, but also equipped him to make informed choices on what subjects to study. His account suggests that this enhanced his chances of getting accepted to study Philosophy, Politics and Economics at an elite university.

It is clear that the capital/knowledge that Edmund gained about 'things that your school would otherwise not introduce you to' as well as being in an environment where he was 'around those type of people who were focused on getting into good schools' had a positive impact on his confidence, motivation and mind set. This enabled him to apply to elite universities. Five of my working class participants (Kevin, Duncan, Edmund, Dwayne and James)[28] told me about educational support programmes similar to the LSE choice programme for socio-economically disadvantaged students as well as after school faith based community programmes that they had been informed of through teachers, their churches or occasionally the grapevine.

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[27] Financial incentives such as the now defunct in England education maintenance [EMA] grant which is still available to students in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland),
[28] Allen a middle class students who said he was downgraded to working class whilst growning up also mention the value he gained from attending an after school programme).

Often black students are not aware of the existence of these programmes. One of my participants elaborated on this point.

> *James: If your college isn't as equipped to help you get these opportunities or tell you when to apply for various things then it could be very difficult.*
> Constantino: It kind of gave you the leg up?
> *James: Yeah. Well you still have the basics like your grades have to be stellar and you have to be intellectually bright etc. But I think just the information is key and not just for Cambridge I think for any top university I think information plays a vital part.*
> Constantino: Do you think that there are a lot of opportunities for British Afro Caribbean students to get into these types of programmes and to get internships to enable them to get to a place like where you are?
> *James: There are a lot of opportunities but it's all about information and if you are not privileged to know about it then it can be very, very difficult. I worked with an organisation called [Urban Synergy] which creates a sort of mentoring support network with professionals from various careers, lawyers, chefs, dancers, doctors and engineers.* **(James, Working Class British African Russell Group Graduate)** [11]

Several of my participants told me that in London there are many resources and programmes to support socio-economically disadvantaged students to get into university. Five of my participants mentioned organisations that provided them with advice on how to gain experience through internships during summer breaks. However, students are not always made aware of these organisations. As James reflected, some sixth forms are not aware of these opportunities, which can put students at a disadvantage. Had Edmund's politics teacher not informed him about the LSE programme, his lack of awareness and access to these resources may have prevented him from gaining useful skills, knowledge and 'capital' which enabled him to submit a successful application to university.

Coming from a working class background, James acquired additional capitals and resources in the form of a law internship. Prior to attending university, he gained access to an internship due to information provided by his form tutor.

> *James: Yeah I had a very good form tutor called Ms. [name] and she also taught me English literature and she was very influential in my application process. She always told me whenever she was*

able that she would make sure to write as good of a reference as she possibly could write to give me the best chance. And she always found out about opportunities and would say 'apply for this, it will give you more exposure to this university' or even law. And my college was very good in getting me work experience.
Constantino: Okay do you think that helped your chances?
James: Yeah it did it definitely did because it was the first time that I had worked in a solicitors firm and (…) I think that it's common practice now that if you want to study law you should have some work experience to give you the best chance (…) I think I've demonstrated my hard work and interest and it makes them consider you more. Especially for places like [Russell Group University he attended] where they are only going on the basis of your grades and your personal statement. So your personal statement has to be very good. **(James, Working Class British African Russell Group Graduate)** [12]

This is an example of what Lehmann (2012a) describes as extra-credentialing. His form tutor provided him with information about programmes and opportunities which gave him access to a form of capital to which he was unaware. Consequently James was able to acquire a formal and credible resource to put on his university application forms.

7.5 Knowing yet not Really Knowing about HE: Teachers, Schools and Student knowledge - or Lack thereof

Nine of my participants discussed the lack of knowledge about the Oxbridge process which placed them in less informed positions when applying to these elite institutions. In fact, four of my Russell Group graduates described specifically choosing not to apply to Oxbridge because of their unfamiliarity with, and fear of, the Oxbridge interview process. In James' account, as a working class student who attended a top tier Russell Group institution for law, he discussed how black and working class students may be disadvantaged from the outset.

James: I had an interview with Cambridge that didn't go well (…) Cambridge has a very esoteric system. (…) you have a first interview where you talk about why you're interested in law. And then you have a second interview that's very practical. So they may give you a statute. And say try and interpret it. Or they may

ask you some technical questions that you're not meant to know the answers to, you are just meant to be able to reason properly (…) and then you have to sit a test at the end. So I think what let me down was I was nervous and I had a stutter (…) I think it was more a thing of confidence and not really being used to talking to people in that kind of formal tone. I visited Oxford and Cambridge (…) and I was actually privileged to stay a few days in Cambridge.
Constantino: Was this part of something through school?
James: Yeah this was something through college and this is another thing that I mean about you may have your own motivations, but if your college isn't equipped to help you get these opportunities, or tell you when to apply for various things then it could be very difficult. And I think because I went to [Name of his college] and I applied to [Name of his college at Cambridge], I think that's why I got the interview. But I think just the information is key. Not just for Cambridge. I think for any top university. I think information plays a vital part. **(James, Working Class British African Russell Group Graduate)** [13]

In James' account he mentioned his lack of confidence as a possible contributory factor for his rejection from Cambridge. He appears to suggest that if he had been able to practice preparing for the interview, he might have felt more comfortable with the formal tone of the Oxbridge interview. James lacked the pre-preparation interview 'resources' or capitals that most middle class students interviewing at Oxbridge possess. Six of my participants (all from working class backgrounds) discussed their schools' lack of familiarity with the Oxbridge process. One of my participants John, said that he chose not to apply to Oxbridge specifically because of his fear and lack of knowledge of the interview process. Franco's and Dwayne's accounts provided the best summation of similar stories about the lack of application guidance that my participants shared with me.

Constantino: Did your school provide you with any support or guidance during the university application process?
Franco: No. There were general talks and the idea was look, if you can go to university we think you should go. So there's a big book and they said, sometime during the next month go and have a look at this book and see what courses you want to do. And if there was something of interest they'd encourage you to apply to university. So I went through the book. Now I don't know anything. Considering my experience at this school I didn't want to go to Oxford or Cambridge. My mom would have loved it. She talked about 'You should go to Oxford. You should go to Cambridge. You should give it a go'. She believed that I was smart enough (…) But

once again with hindsight I could've gone. I'm doing a graduate degree right now. Obviously I'm smart enough that I could've done it. But it wasn't something that I thought I could do at the time.
(Franco, Working Class British African Russell Group Graduate) [14]

Like others amongst my participants, Franco's account appears to suggest that his school did not take a sufficiently proactive approach to higher education. He reflected that his mother was more of a driving force than his school. In hindsight he said he 'could've gone' to Oxbridge but it was not something that he thought he was capable of achieving at the time.

Similarly, Dwayne suggested that his school was not equipped to support him through the Oxbridge interview process:

I think many of the teachers didn't have an experience of doing an [Oxbridge] application because it's slightly different from applying to another university in the country. You've got to do like a separate application form and a separate process to go through. So a lot of the teachers didn't have any experience of going through that [Oxbridge] application process. So I think the practical help that I received perhaps wasn't as great as it could have been.
(Dwayne, Working Class British Caribbean Oxbridge [15]

Five of my participants' narratives suggested that the locality of their schools' catchment coupled with a lack of economic resources prevented teachers from having knowledge about the Oxbridge process. Dwayne attended a working class college that did not focus on getting its participants into Oxbridge or the Russell Group institutions. The college was satisfied when its graduates were successful in being accepted at any college in general. His college did not have the necessary resources to inform and prepare Dwayne, or to assess whether he was even academically capable of applying to an elite university.

However, the shortcomings that Dwayne described were counterbalanced when a school visit exposed to him Oxbridge:

It came about because we had a teacher who had a son who was studying at [Oxbridge]. So I think he organized like a kind of school trip. So they had this school initiative called gifted and talented to kind of identify kind of bright students from state schools and basically try to get them interested. So my school basically

organized a trip to kind of come down to [Oxbridge] for the day. Yeah that was my first time coming to [Oxbridge] and I really then thought of kind of applying to it after that. (Dwayne, Working Class British Caribbean Oxbridge Graduate **[16]**

Six out of my eight participants who applied to Oxbridge visited the institutions on open days prior to applying. Of the eight participants who applied to Oxbridge, six were working class and two were middle class. Five of eight applicants were accepted to Oxbridge. Four went on to matriculate at Oxbridge (the fifth accepted applicant chose not to accept Oxbridge's offer and matriculated at a Russell Group university). Both middle class students were accepted and three working class students were rejected from Oxbridge during the interview process. Several of my participants' accounts reflected upon their experiences visiting Oxbridge. Below are three of my working class participants' discussions about the open day experiences at these institutions. In each case they found the experience rewarding, as they said the experience provided them with a better perspective on how they might feel attending an elite university. Class has been identified as a factor that has influenced many working class students to self-exclude themselves from applying to elite universities that embody a middle class habitus (Bathmaker et al. 2013; Bourdieu 1998; Bradley et al. 2013; Reay et al. 2009a, 2009b; Ridley et al. 2005; Warikoo and Fuhr 2014). Open day visits can often help students to assess how they would feel as working class students studying at a middle class elite institution. In a follow up interview with Dwayne he discussed the significance of his Oxbridge visit to his decision to apply.

I mean to me like [Oxbridge] (…) had this kind of aura about being like the best University, but beyond that I had no idea of what to expect. So yeah I mean that first trip, the first time kind of coming to [Oxbridge] was just amazing to actually see that this [Oxbridge] is actually a real place (…) because I think before I visited it was just a place that I heard about once or twice and thought that it wasn't possible really for somebody from my background to kind of get in to a place like [Oxbridge]. I just assumed that it was for other people who weren't really like me. But now it was something that was real and something that I'd seen, and something that I kind of aspired towards. (Dwayne, Working Class British Caribbean Oxbridge Graduate **[17]**

Prior to his trip to Oxbridge, Dwayne was unaware of the university and what it had to offer. He had thought of Oxbridge as a place that was not for people like him. As was the case with four of my other working class participants[29], visiting Oxbridge made Dwayne and others aspirational and ambitious about wanting to work hard to achieve good grades in order apply. It is worth noting that further on in our interview, Dwayne said that the Oxbridge bus trip was a 'one off' coach trip that was organised because one of the teachers at his school's children had attended Oxbridge and thought it might be beneficial to some of the students at his school. Dwayne who is an active alumni of his school, told me that his school has not organised a repeat Oxbridge coach trip since he graduated. He seemed to find this disappointing. He believed it was a good opportunity that students should experience a few years earlier in their schooling to enable them to focus academically on what is required and expected of Oxbridge applicants. Dwayne intimated that the experience could provide students 'an opportunity to really like focus on their work and knuckle down and try to do well in year 10 and year 11' so that they can aspire to attain the necessary grades to apply to the university. This reaffirms Reay, Crozier and Clayton's (2009) argument of the importance of university knowledge and capitals as an important outreach resource. Research suggests that university visits by black and working class students can be beneficial in helping them to broaden their perspectives on the education choices available to them. However, the cost of participating in such visits could prohibit many working class students from participating in these experiences (Oliver and Kettley 2010).

There are different types of 'resources' or capital that my participants identified as being beneficial to being prepared for Oxbridge. Most of my participants' accounts were concerned with having the necessary academic and interview capabilities to be successful in the interview. I am now going to move into a discussion of a different type of capital that is assessed based on one's performativity and language use (Bourdieu 1991). Duncan talked about having to play a game of catch up in order to be considered a credible candidate for an Oxbridge College:

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[29] In addition to Dwayne, four of my working class participants, Kevin, Duncan, Edmund and James visited Oxbridge and mentioned that their visits made gave them an insider view and awareness of these elite institutions and influenced their decisions to apply.

Duncan: I had so much ground to catch up on just in terms of like how I carry myself, how I articulate myself, you know.
Constantino: What do you mean? Do you think you had to change?
Duncan: Yeah, yeah I did because I saw myself as a diamond in the rough. Like I had the grades you know, there was clearly the potential. But then there's the matter of you know articulating that message and that initiative and that kind of ambition to the interviewers. And just generally like not coming across as too you know "ghetto", you know what I mean? You've got to clean all of that up just in terms of the way that you speak and what topic matters you speak of, yeah.
(Duncan*, Working Class British Caribbean Oxbridge Graduate)* [18]

Even though Duncan was equipped with the necessary grades to get into Oxbridge, he was concerned that he was still a 'diamond in the rough' – someone with a lot of potential yet in order to attain his dreams he was aware that he had a lot of 'ground to catch up on' in terms of learning how to articulate and present himself at Oxbridge. Duncan has expressed his need to possess symbolic capital through language, appearance and presentation/performance (Bourdieu 1991). In his excerpt [18] Duncan is concerned that he is not embodied with the appropriate dispositions to fit in at Oxbridge. There appears to be an awareness of 'double consciousness' (Du Bois 1903; Fanon 2008) occurring, whereby Duncan felt that initially he was too 'ghetto' in his performativity and presentation. His account suggests that prior to his arrival at university he needed to learn and adopt a different cultural performance or bodily hexis in order to be suitably and recognisably credible as an Oxbridge student. In Chapter nine I explore how some of my participants' bodily hexis was carried and performed while attending elite institutions.

Research suggests that due to the lack of necessary guidance and tuition and fears of not fitting in, many working-class students consciously choose not to apply to elite institutions (Pugsley 2003; Bradley et al. 2013; Reay et al. 2005; Boliver 2013). Seven of my participants accounts of their experiences attending elite universities appear to suggest that they experienced the environment as foreign fields, where their culture and class was not compatible with that of the institutions' predominantly white middle class habitus. This feeling of being

'second class' reaffirms Reay *et al*'s (2009a: 121) contention that black and working class students may feel unwelcome or feel like misfits at elite universities. Consequently, even when they have the requisite grades to be considered highly probable candidates for acceptance, they choose not to apply to some elite institutions. For example, it is suggested that black students attending the University of Birmingham, the University of Manchester and Queen Mary University of London may experience less self-exclusion syndrome as they have significantly higher proportions of BME representation on their campuses than other Russell Group institutions (Birmingham 2014; QMUL 2012; Race for Opportunity 2010). This process has been defined as a 'psychological self-exclusion' on the part of some students to consider even applying to universities where they feel they will not fit in (Ball et al. 2002).

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined a thematic selection of my participants' occurrences with the behaviour they exhibited in different schooling environments in order to be included, respected and/or safe. Participants discussed the challenges involved with being academically smart yet feeling the necessity to perform what I have referred to as challenging B[4], 'bravado and bad boy behaviour' at school in order to gain respect and prevent being bullied by peers. All but one of the participants (Jay), who manifested this type of behaviour were attended low attaining schools located in economically disadvantaged communities. Students who attended schools in middle class environments or were transferred from low performing schools to schools in middle class environments described performing differently often because the schools habitus and culture did not expect nor accept such behaviour. Furthermore my participants discussed not needing to misbehave to gain 'respect' to protect themselves from being bullied by other students in middle class school environments. Another recurring theme that was discussed involved teachers and administrators being more restrained in sanctioning student behaviour depending on how academically astute or 'clever' they were in low performing or special measures schools. Damien recounted that sanctions '*varied relative to your position within the set'.* Jay was the one

middle class participant who discussed performing B[4] at school. He reflected that he was not sanctioned as often as he should have been because teachers *'saw the potential in me that they [the other students] didn't have.*

It is suggested that even though Jay misbehaved, teachers perceived him as embodying traits of a type of middle class cultural capital that was more in line with school's dominant culture. This may have enabled him to receive preferential treatment (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990) – or a blind eye when he performed B[4], as teachers may not have seen this trait some of the other students who were sanctioned for their boisterous behaviour. Other working class participants who attended schools in rough financially challenged communities equated their ability to thrive in school to 'being naturally 'very intelligent' and lucky and 'talented in the right places' (e.g. sports and music) which enabled them to get on with both teachers and be respected by his peers.

Factors associated with participants succession being accepted at elite universities were also discussed in chapter seven. Cleverness, aspirations and expectations that middle class BAC parents have for their children was explored through the tools/resources that parents try to entrust in their children. Participants discussed their parents' efforts to 'catchment surf' for the best schools for their children and employed clever techniques to keep their children focused on academics over distractions such as sports. With the exception of Bob, the remaining 14 participants in my study maintained that their parent's expectations and assumptions were that they would attend university. I argue that the parents of my working class parents were middle class aspirant and like my middle class black participants parents sought to ensure their children had as many resources and advantages as possible to help them aspire to attend the best universities they could.

Despite all of resources and capitals that middle class and middle class aspirant parents tried to shore up for their children, nine of my participants discussed the lack of knowledge they had about higher education, six mentioned their lack of understanding of the Oxbridge application process. Four of my participants discussed self-excluding themselves from applying to Oxbridge due to lack of application knowledge, guidance and fear of the application and interview

process. A recurring theme amongst the majority of my participants was the lack of economic and preparatory resources their schools had to inform them about Russell Groups an Oxbridge institutions. In some narratives participants discussed teachers' inability to help them to apply to Russell Groups because they themselves were unfamiliar with the process. Open day visits at Oxbridge universities were referenced by eight participants as memorable introduction to these institutions and a key factor in their interest in wanting to apply to them. Just being in these environments made the institutions seem more 'real; than they had in a brochure.

Franco's and Dwayne's accounts discussed their schools non proactive approach to elite higher education being in part due to a lack of knowledge and resources available inform and prepare them for these institutions. Lastly, for some of my participants who were successful in being accepted at Oxbridge there was still a fear of not knowing about common things that students from middle class backgrounds were inherently aware of. For Dwayne, a working class Oxbridge graduate, there was s fear of fitting in with the middle class habitus of his elite university, even though he had achieved the required academic grades to attend. He says, *'I had so much ground to catch up on just in terms of like how I carry … And just generally like not coming across as too you know "ghetto"…You've got to clean all of that up just in terms of the way that you speak and what topic matters you speak of'*. Separate from academic capital Dwayne expressed a need to acquire performative resources to help him to try to seemingly fit like a 'fish in water' within his university's middle class habitus (Bourdieu 1989a: 43).

My participants' narratives identified several factors that impacted their ability to get accepted at an elite university. Five of my working class participants discussed after school and faith-based programmes that provided them additional educational support/resources that helped them to be better prepared for applying to Russell Group Institutions. Unlike most middle class students who are ingrained with cultural capital knowledge (Bourdieu 1986), about elite universities or are implicitly aware of elite university requirements at an early age (Reay et al. 2005), most of my participants were informed of the

requirements of the Russell Group process and provided with opportunities to improve their chances of getting accepted through the grapevine or by the incidental relative who attended a Russell group. Many participants mentioned teachers or their churches as being influential in directing them towards after school preparatory programmes which helped to enhance their chances of getting into an elite universities. Open days were another resource that three of my working class participants discussed. In each account they found the experience rewarding, as it afforded them with a first-hand perspective of how they might feel attending an elite university with a middle class habitus. Chapter eight explores my participant's accounts once they have been accepted and are attending elite universities.

Chapter Eight: Trajectories In Elite Higher Education: Being A Black Man On Campus

This analytical chapter represents common themes that emerged from my participants' university experiences. Recurring themes have centred on the intersectionality of class, race, racisms and gender (masculinities and performativity). This chapter begins by examining my participants' accounts of their experiences on elite universities campuses in relation to how they recognise, respond to, dis-identify, or silence perceived discriminatory occurrences. It then considers how they are perceived as 'others' in a variety of circumstances, when their bodies are juxtaposed amongst the predominantly white student body and staff at their elite institutions.

Elite universities play an influential role in social reproduction through their transmission of cultural capital across classed and ethnic generations which promotes social mobility (Li et al. 2005; Savage et al. 2013; Modood 2012; Modood 2004; Le Roux et al. 2008; Reay et al. 2005). Bourdieu (1986) maintained that a person's class position could be associated with the individual's ability or inability to access forms of cultural capital. Educational institutions accomplish far-reaching roles by acknowledging and rewarding the cultural capital associated with students who embody the dominant class background of the field (in the case of elite universities, white middle class students are identified as the predominant group). As discussed in the literature review, there is a dearth of research that applies tools of capital and habitus to ethnic minorities experiences in UK elite higher education (Shiner and Noden 2014; Boliver 2013). This is surprising, considering most of Bourdieu's research focussed on the elite higher education system in France as a result of his own experience of not feeling like he fit in within the elite French universities as he was from a working class background (Goodman 2009; Grenfell and James 2004). Additionally his early research on the plight of Algerians who were mistreated during the French colonial regime, reaffirms Bourdieu's acknowledgement that race and ethnicity are factors that influence 'otherness'. This all goes to suggest that Bourdieu's writings and theories are useful for

examining black and working class students' experiences of feeling 'other' in elite universities. The following accounts provide glimpses into my participants' experiences of 'Being 'other'/black on Campus'.

8.1 Blackness and Otherness on Campus

Eleven of my 15 participants talked about being 'other' during their transition to elite universities within predominantly white environments. Bob was a working class British Caribbean student who attended an elite university in the North of the UK where he studied humanities. He said that there were very few black students attending his college. He said: 'I think I was one of three blacks over three years that I saw'. Bob described his experience at university as not one of comfort but more of cynicism, isolation and exclusion:

> *Bob: I think the whole experience of [Russell Group University] has probably made me more cynical [laughs]. Um just that sort of sense of expectation um there was quite a strong sense of expectation before going there of having high hopes of imagining a place where I'd fit in and, get on with everyone. The power of our minds would bond us or some rubbish like that [laughs].*
> *Constantino: So did you feel unwelcome or?*
> *Bob: I just felt, I want to say excluded but I don't mean that someone was standing there excluding me. I just didn't fit in and I didn't really know or understand myself in a way that I would have been able to create something where I would, where I would have been able to fit in [Russell Group University].*
> ***(Bob, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate)***
> ***[19]***

There is substantial research that chronicles 'otherness' and 'fish out of water' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 127) syndrome that many working class students feel when they experience what Bourdieu referred to as hysteresis, where their habitus is not an appropriate fit for the field: the middle class habitus of elite universities (Stahl 2013; Lynch and O'Neill 1994; Bradley et al. 2013; Bathmaker et al. 2013). Bob's account represents what Bourdieu (1990) has defined as departure from 'ontological complicity'. This 'relationism' (Emirbayer 1997) recognises that owing to their class, race, ethnicity, gender or sexuality, people may find themselves in spaces where they feel they do not belong and feel like 'others' or 'fish out of water'. Bob said he 'just didn't fit in' and he felt

that he did not 'understand' himself in a 'way that I would have been able to create something where I would…have been able to fit in'. Bob described how his habitus as a black working class student is different to that of his predominantly white and middle class counterparts and is in tension with the institutional setting. Bob's habitus does not align smoothly with the university's frame. Thus he is unable to swim seamlessly through the educational system and instead feels like a 'fish out of water'.

In contrast to Bob's working class university experience at his Russell Group university, Ted's middle class counter-narrative Oxbridge account is somewhat different. Based on Ted's middle class background and his attendance at a public secondary school, it would appear that his habitus could be similar to that of the white students at his Oxbridge college. However, even though he describes his otherness as being inconsequential to his experience at university, he intimates that he is aware that white students perceive him in a different way than he sees himself.

> *I think it could be argued quite plausibly that Oxbridge is a little bit more socially conservative than other universities. Someone like myself might be viewed as a little bit more of a novelty (…) I mean just to be explicit a black male from London in Oxbridge is less common than somewhere like Manchester. And with that there are perhaps slightly different perceptions to you. Obviously these things are very hard to judge especially from a subjective perspective because you can never really say, 'Oh are these people treating me like this because I look like this?' Or 'Are there very subtle shifts in the way in which they behave or the presumptions they bring to interactions with me?' But I would definitely say that I am treated slightly differently in an environment at Oxbridge than say London or Manchester which are bigger cities. I always try not to be made uncomfortable by it because you can never put your finger on it. You can never really know it exists. Even if say someone did have a prejudice against me, it would be very difficult for me to identify. So I shy away from too much analysis of whether there is discrimination or people have prejudice against black people at Oxbridge. Because I would never really be able to reach any conclusive or impartial judgement, I don't think. It's something yes that I try to rise above it. I always say that I would like to transcend an environment like Oxbridge. I (pause) would not really be phased by what is happening around me and just focus on doing everything to the best of my abilities and stuff like that as opposed to being affected too much by what others in Oxbridge think – or my perception of what they think. Because in*

the grand scheme of things it is a tiny place and it's only one aspect of my life. (…) I've just come to peace with the fact that Oxbridge doesn't have to be somewhere where I necessarily feel that I fit in. **(Ted, Middle Class, British Caribbean, Oxbridge Graduate) [20]**

Ted described being seen as 'other' in the small town where his Oxbridge College is located. He believes his experience would be different if he were studying in London or Manchester. Ted is keenly aware that many people on campus are not accustomed to seeing a black male body in their environment and that he is something of a novelty to some of the middle class white students. Even though Ted has a middle class habitus, it appears that he does not possess the appropriate capital to seamlessly align himself with the prevailing student and institutional habitus of the academic field because of his race/ethnicity.

Ted's account is also interesting because he seems reluctant to acknowledge that he is seen as different due to racism or discrimination. Even though he broached the subject of racism he appeared to not want to mention the word as he initially refers to prejudice as 'it'. He went on to emphasise how discrimination and prejudice are subjective and are very difficult to assess or make a 'conclusive or impartial judgement'. Ted is describing attributional ambiguity (Crocker et al. 1991), whereby he is experiencing difficulty in trying to ascertain if how he feels he is being treated is real or whether it is possibly based on his presentation, performativity or him being a member of a black (and therefore more likely to be stigmatised) group.

Ted's account suggested that this was more problematic at his institution than it would be at universities in London or Manchester because there are more black men present on those campuses and white students are more accustomed to seeing and interacting with people of colour. Ted intimates that he is not concerned by being 'other' because university 'doesn't have to be somewhere where I necessarily feel that I fit in'. In affirmation of Bourdieu's discussion on the habitus of elite institutions, even though Ted has a middle class habitus like

the majority of the students at his elite university, it appears that he does not possess the appropriate capital to seamlessly align himself with the prevailing student and institutional habituses of his academic field because of his race/ethnicity. Ted says his inability to blend in is inconsequential because 'it is a tiny place and it's only one aspect of my life' and he will not be there forever. In a separate part of Ted's counter-narrative, he expressed his ambition to live and work in London which he sees as characterised by greater social and cultural diversity than his university city. This suggests that Ted believes his habitus may fit or adapt more easily outside of the 'field' of Oxbridge. It is suggested that another strategy that Ted used to cope with being 'other' at his university is disengagement with uncomfortable situations through the use of moderate blackness which I discuss in chapter nine.

As discussed in chapter four, capital (economic, cultural and social) involves all power and includes material and symbolic resources. Bourdieu uses a poker game analogy which maintains that middle class students are in a more privileged position in the academic game because they have more information that is recognised as being of value at their disposal which enhances their chances of succeeding (Bourdieu and Passeron 1979). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) also acknowledge that ... 'two individuals endowed with equivalent overall capital can differ, in their position' within the game as their capital may appear to be the same but may be valued differently. This confirms Bourdieu and Passeron's point and helps to explains why Ted still experienced challenges adjusting to his elite university.

Willis (1977), Skeggs (1992) and Reay (2002b) have conducted research on how white working children actively compete and engage in the development of their own cultural capital that is recognised as being oppositional to the habitus of secondary institutions (Sadovnik 1991; Bernstein 2004). As an alternative to the aforementioned cited authors and discussed in the literature review, Critical Race Theory (CRT) has been invoked in my research as a different way of theorising social and educational inequalities in relation to black men from working class and middle class backgrounds in higher education. Both Bob's account of not fitting in his institution's field and Ted's discussion questioning

why he felt he was being treated differently to white students, affirms the centrality of culture and race as components that influence black students' adjustment to life within elite HEIs. 'Otherness' was a common theme amongst the nine of my participants. Research suggests that some black students at elite universities experience feelings of isolation, loneliness, lack of belonging and insecurity when attending elite universities (Gunaratnam 2014), which can make fitting in on these campuses challenging. Several of my participants expressed being the only one, or one of only a few black British students on their programme and/or in their university department or college. The following accounts represent some of their reflections on this aspect of their experiences.

*Like if I see a black person in [Russell Group University] it's as if I almost know them because like you know you're not used to seeing black people here. And like I sing in the choir so it's a very like white choir. I'm a tenor. But yeah uhm so even in a society – well a club like a choir, very quickly people judge you like by the fact that you're black. Like the way they look at you. Like how did you learn how to read music? How did you learn how to sing? You're black. You can see it in their faces. Like the way they interact with you is almost as if it's a new thing like to interact with someone black **(Edmund, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [21]***

*Yeah a lot of people thought that I was international just because it's not common for you to be in the UK and to go to school in the UK and then come to a good university. It tends to be the people from international places because they were paying ridiculous amounts of money and so it was sort of like "oh are you an international student?" I got that a lot, I was like "no I live in [Name of hometown where he grew up] and I've been here for over 10 years". And so that happened quite a lot **(James, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [22]***

I was clearly aware given that in the maths class I was the only black male or mixed race person. So we had one black female, she was African. There were not many black people at all. And when you actually spoke to the majority of the black people, you actually find that they were coming over from Africa or their dad was a diplomat of some sort of country. There were lots of international students. I was certainly aware of that. On a class basis, I was nothing like the kids around me. And on a cultural basis there was just no comparison whatsoever. Because there were some working class white kids there, you know – but they weren't in abundance I

would say (…). It was not diverse. And it was very very middle-class. You get to hear stuff along the lines of 'we spent Christmas on our family's boat'. You know, great stories when you're going home and you're talking with your friends about the type of stuff you hear in uni. **(Damien, Working Class, British Caribbean, Russell Group Grad) [23]**

Edmund's account discussed being shocked by the realisation that he was the only black British male out of over 300 students in his year who were studying law at his university. Additionally many discussed how many white students were either inquisitive or had pre-conceived notions of how a black man would act and present himself. Several participants expressed a sadness and frustration with white students who were surprised by their capability to have skills outside what white students would consider to be mainstream. My notes on my discussion with Edmund indicate he expressed sadness and frustration about the reality that white students were amazed at his ability to read music and to sing classically. Edmund and five of my other participants, shared accounts about isolation and coming up against preconceived ideas of their capabilities/lack thereof. It appears that some of my participants may have experienced forms of racial microaggressions as a result of aversive racist incidents. These everyday exchanges can be intentional or unintentional yet create the same result which is to communicate denigrating, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to people of colour (Sue et al. 2007).

Over two thirds of my participants, like Damien's counter-story expressed their awareness of being the only black male in their lectures or on their course. One of my other working class British African respondents, Jason, described his experience at his elite university thus: 'It's the most obvious thing to me (…) I feel like I'm the coco pop lost in a bowl of rice krispies'. In addition to being one of the only black men on his course, Damien was aware of the differences in his and the majority of other students at his university's social and cultural location. In addition to there being very few black students on campus, white working class students were also under-represented to a large extent.
Several of my participants, like James' account, spoke of having met the assumption that because they were black, they must be international students. This account points to a further potential way that feelings of isolation and

'otherness' may be generated and sustained when black males fail to encounter similar 'people like us [them]' in terms of class and race at their elite universities (Reay et al. 2001b; 865). Additionally some white middle class students may assume that non-white students attending elite universities are most likely to be from international backgrounds which further obscures the category of 'black' British from being recognised as being on these campuses (Gunaratnam 2014). This acts as a further denial – and suggests that there may be a collective general assumption amongst white middle class students that British black students are unable to attend elite universities because they do not have the necessary grades, skill capabilities and or financial means which adds additional insult to injury.

8.2 Class Exclusivity

In some parts of the accounts, class differences came to the fore. Below in Peter's account, as a lower middle class British Caribbean student, he expressed some of the class observations that surprised him at his institution. He was quite familiar with the locality of his university as he had friends and family who lived in the same city where the university was located with whom he had socialised for many years. However Peter was unfamiliar with the institutional habitus (as previously discussed in chapter four) of his university's campus. The social and capital milieu that the majority of students embodied was new to him and not something to which he was interested in trying to adjust/adapt or conform. He said:

> *I guess the main thing that kind of struck me and I was a bit surprised that was how posh most of the pupils were. Just that you know they'd all almost exclusively been to private schools. And just you know very posh very moneyed and mainly white middle class aspiring to be upper class kind of thing. Not really my sort of people on the whole (…) I'd say it was more of a class thing. I guess you know most of the people there like I said came from private schools you know, lived out in the country. [Their] mummies and daddies had lots of money you know horse riding, shooting on the weekend that sort of thing and came from like real kind of big money you know. Whereas most of my friends were from (…) inner city working class or kind of you know lower middle class backgrounds and just you know weren't really I guess we were*

more into our own music and uhm you know just I guess having fun going out and partying.
***(Peter, Lower Middle Class, British African Russell Group Graduate)* [24]**

It is clear from Peter's account that similarly to working class students, some middle class black students also experience being 'other'. Peter described himself as lower middle class. It could be that he is in fact middle class aspirant, which would suggest that he has some of the capitals required to fit with middle class students as well as fit in the middle class habitus of his university. However he appears to lack the additional nuanced middle classed capital milieus necessary to ensure his habitus is fully aligned with that of many of the white middle class students at his institution. Furthermore it does not appear that Peter is interested in trying to aspire to fully fit within the university's middle class field. He is content to socialise with his group of friends, which he informed me in a follow up interview come from working class and lower middle class backgrounds. Damien and Peter's experiences confirm research conducted by Warikoo and Fuhr (2014) with interviews with 46 Oxbridge undergraduates that found that 'along with the paucity of black students on campus (…) there is this view of Oxbridge as being very unattainable unless you're 'white, posh, and went to private school' (Warikoo and Fuhr 2014: 9). This reaffirms Bourdieu's contention of the disjuncture between the habitus of many working class and middle class students at elite universities.

8.2.1 Being Made Aware of One's blackness

Bob, a working class British African student provides an account that disturbed him when he was made aware of his blackness by one of his white friends in a social environment:

> *Um I feel I definitely stood out more. I had this moment actually in my second year where I became really self-conscious of being black. I feel like saying I became black in a certain way. I used to go for drinks with one of my friends. So we're in the pub and she just out of the blue says to me 'Bob isn't weird, do you ever feel weird like being the only black person in this place or in this pub?' Which is something that, even though I'd obviously been in [Russell Group University] for about a year and a bit and I'd noticed you know that that was true in a very sort of limited way, but when*

she said that I kind of looked up and thought 'is this actually true first?', I looked around was like 'hold on a second, yeah you're right' and I noticed like a handful of people actually staring at me. That realisation and noticing eyes actually looking at me, something in that moment just changed. Suddenly I'm sort of like looking around everywhere. When I'm walking down the road at night I'm looking 100 paces ahead of me. Looking behind me 'Oh God what does she think? Does she think I'm going to mug her or did she think I was going to burst into this sort of violent stranger rapist person? Like you just wonder what people are thinking, like how are they're perceiving me? I dunno. I just became very very paranoid in the sphere of visibility. **(Bob, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [25]**

Bob's account of how his friend made him self-consciously aware of his blackness in an all-white pub environment appears to have hurt his feelings. It also caused him to be more cautious in public, particularly in the evening when he walked around campus because he was now conscious that his black body may have been perceived as a 'rapist' or someone dangerous to white people, which until his discussion with his 'friend' he had never considered himself to be. Bob's description of the event suggests that he has experienced paranoia, stress and hurt in the form of a microaggression (Solórzano et al. 2000) as a result of his friends comments. Additionally he now has a new reality about how some people may perceive him and his body as threatening to them.

Several participants discussed how the 'otherness' they experienced at their universities was isolating and a place where it was difficult to form friendships.

Duncan: To too many of the students in your classes [and to] many of your colleagues you represent that otherness. You're the person who's different and in turn many of your colleagues may be less receptive or may not warm to you as much
Constantino: So did you feel a sense of isolation?
Duncan: Yeah I can relate to that because I felt at times that I was in that position whereby because you're that black student because you're the person who is different, you're left in a situation where it's difficult to form a friendship.
(Duncan, Working Class, British Caribbean Oxbridge Graduate) [26]

My participants provided common accounts about how the dearth of diversity on their elite campuses made it challenging to form friendships with white students.

Many participants expressed experiences where white students feared them or were apprehensive about engaging with black students, which many participants explained led to many of them feeling 'excluded' and isolated on campus (Puwar 2004). Seven of my participants' accounts suggested that it was their responsibility as black students to initiate conversations with white students or else no communication would occur.

8.3 'Have you ever Killed Anyone?' Black Students' Struggles with White Stereotypes

Within experiences of being 'other' and black on campus are the preconceived 'stereotyped' notions of what black men's tastes, attitudes, aggressions and how they socialise. In this section many of my participants shared their stories of surprise, shock, amazement and disappointment about white people's perceptions of who they possibly were and how they should act or were expected to act. Below I set out four examples of this strong theme of white stereotypes that emerged from my data.

> *Kevin: Jack was fascinated with me, He was fascinated for so many different reasons, stereotypes. He was fascinated because I met some of his stereotypes in that I was athletic. I was good at sports and stuff like that. He was openly envious. He would say stuff like 'you're too muscly'. He'd say stop showing off. And you'd know exactly why he was saying it. He would say that 'all you black guys are so hench'.*
> Constantino: *Hench?*
> *Kevin: Yeah sorry that's British slang for muscly. He would want to know everything about me. You can tell when people are just asking questions because they want to laugh at you later. But he would literally ask me things because he was fascinated by black people. He was really curious.*
> Constantino: Did you find it offensive?
> *Kevin: Yeah. He would say offensive things. But he wouldn't know it was offensive.*
> Constantino: Did you ever call him out on any of the things he said?
> *Kevin: Sometimes I would. But I'm, I'm more easy-going. I'm a good judge of character.*
> **(Kevin, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [27]**

Constantino: When you came here and people first saw you do you think they have a certain idea of who or what you were before you they ever got to talk to you?

Dwayne: Yeah I think it's natural that most people will kind of make snap judgments. (Laughs) I recall one thing. One of my friends, this was like whilst we were becoming friends: he said that the first time he met me he thought I was going to stab him.

Constantino: can I ask what your friend's ethnicity was?

Dwayne: He's from [name of town], it's down south. I think there's very few black people there

Constantino: Very interesting. And yet you're friends now?

Dwayne: Yeah I mean I think that's one thing I've learned. Just in terms of the ignorance that people can have. And I think I'm somebody who would never kind of blame people for that position. If anything I would try to teach them and show them or help them to kind of see how ridiculous they are (laughs)

Constantino: So would you say that's more ignorance than racism? And have you experienced racism as well, I'm just curious?

Dwayne: I think it's very unlikely that anyone would be the victim of kind of what's the word I'm looking for (pause) kind of just overt direct racism, like in today's day and age.

Constantino: What do you equate is being direct racism can you give me an example? What does it mean to you?

*Dwayne: For someone to call you nigger or something. **(Dwayne, Working Class, British Caribbean, Oxbridge Graduate) [28]***

Franco: I never felt that there was any real race things. The real issue was class. And I'd never engaged in it at my secondary school. But when I went to [Russell Group University], it was incredible. You know this one girl I went out with her very briefly and it ended. And I felt really weird about it actually. I did not fit into her world. This was a beautiful girl. Like she was Jewish, right. And she looked like a model. She was incredibly good-looking. She was also incredibly shallow. Do you know what she asked me once? I'll say this loud for the tape. When we were going out with each other she actually asked me if I had killed anyone. She asked me that and then I realised she was serious.

Constantino: Do you think this is just because she didn't know black people?

Franco: I don't know. She had been hanging out with a black dude. But he was very different from me. He was very middle-class. He'd gone to [elite public sixth form] in North London. He was very different. So I might have been a bit of novelty factor for her.

Constantino: So how did that make you feel?

Franco: I thought oh my God, I couldn't believe it. And I remember saying to my friends: you know what this is the one girl that everybody wants to go out with? But she is so so so boring. And I'd never come across anyone that boring before. No literally even the people who I didn't necessarily like in my secondary of school, I could sit with them for 20 minutes and talk. But what I found was

when I was at [Russell Group University], that this girl, she had a house on Fifth Avenue. Things like that. She was just, it was incredible. And so I really struggled with the class issue, to be honest. **(Franco, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [29]**

Ted: Uh one of my friends at [Oxbridge] once made a comment about, uhm when were in London. There was a black guy driving a BMW and he made a comment about being like something like oh definitely, like where did he get that car from. He must have got it from dodgy means. And I just thought it was funny and ridiculous because he's one of my good friends and also my mom drives a nicer car than that now. So I was just like oh God maybe she's a criminal as well. I mean she says she's a lawyer – but maybe she not [expressed with sarcasm]. And so I was annoyed because that was one a good friend and also I think it just demonstrates how people you know, his level of ignorance.
Constantino: Did you confront him about this?
Ted: No. But I won't forget it. So I'll always bear it in mind, yeah. I see it as something like (pause) it's a footnote. It's not significant. It doesn't affect our relationship. But I just remember it. So that I won't be surprised in the future and if I want to talk about race or those kinds of issues I might not go to him for that discussion.
(Ted, Middle Class, British Caribbean Oxbridge Graduate) [30]

The aforementioned accounts are a small representation of the many accounts my participants shared with me about misperceptions and fears that white students on campus had of them. Dwayne and Franco's account reaffirm many stereotypically racist assumptions that the majority (eight) of my participants shared with me about what white students presumed all black men were like. However, in all of these accounts my participants do not identify the occurrences as being racist or discriminatory. Research (Sue 2010) suggests that racist accounts are often denied when the recipient of the experience has a friendship or regular interaction with the perpetrator (Burdsey 2011: 276). The recipient may not want to accept what the action could construe: that a mate actually harbours racist perspectives of him. The slights are considered insignificant 'just a footnote' which are attributed to someone being 'shallow'.

It was common for my participants to suggest that their friends' or classmates' comments were ignorant. Participants might infer that their remarks in violation of good taste or actions could not possibly be racist because the perpetrator

was their friend and my participants were 'good judge[s] of character'. Even in Ted's account where he appeared upset about his conversation with his friend about black people only being able to possess nice things by dodgy means, he did not confront or challenge his friend's comments. Ted may be moderating his blackness (Wilkins 2012) in order to avoid a combative situation with his friend. This is a theme to which I return in chapter nine where bodily hexis and moderate blackness are explored. By denying or silencing racism (Harries 2014), Ted has kept the peace and allowed himself to maintain his friendships with the dominant white middle class habitus of his university, which has prevented him from being excluded from the group for not being able to handle the innocuous banter of his 'friends' discriminatory remark. It is clear that there are major risks of isolation, exclusion and being perceived as a complainer or troublemaker when challenging a possible racist action (Burdsey 2011; Sue 2010). However not naming racism and allowing it to go unchecked and unmentioned is also dangerous, because it shifts racism from the foreground 'to less formal domains ... [where it is] embedded in structures, without being explicitly named' (Goldberg 2010: 90). The process of silencing and shifting racism makes it more difficult to detect. Consequently, racism is able to inconspicuously and ambiguously flourish and permeate without resistance or recognition throughout the general public's landscape (Harries 2014; Goldberg 2010).

8.3.1 Food and Social Etiquette Code Assumptions

Another common misperception apparent through participants' accounts focused on stereotypes regarding food, styles and social mores presumed by white peers:

> *I remember once, this groups of girls at uni came up to me [and his two black university mates] and they were just talking generally. They were just interacting to find out you know how do black men or black guys treat women. For example, where do they take them out on a date? And their perception from what I could gather was that what all a black man could afford to do was take a girl to KFC or one of those stereotypical chicken places. I was obviously quite surprised but you know, we've heard this stuff before and it's not the first time I've heard this thrown at us before - but from the*

university itself? I was like wow. You should at least know better that. We're all different in that sense. I just thought you're at university. You're someone who should be learned. Knowledgeable. Going out into the world of work very soon. So at least you should have some common sense to know that we're all different despite our background. But they seemed to have this very common simplistic perception that you know black men don't treat their women very well or take them to nice places. So to me that particular experience stood out for me in terms of their at times misguided perception of blacks and especially black males – so that was quite interesting for me to find out. **(John, Middle Class, British African, Oxbridge Graduate)** **[31]**

John expects university to be different, to be 'above' the stereotypical mainstream,   and is disturbed when he finds out that it is not. He appeared shocked by white students' presumptions of what he and his black friends ate, as well as how they treat women. It appears that a primary reason for this amazement is that John may aspire to maintain a meritocratic worldview. Part of the story that John shared with me suggests that he sees his academic and future career opportunities for advancement as being on a fair and level playing field. Furthermore he attends an elite university which is the bastion for educated minds and should be free from ignorance. Thus when presumptions are made by white students about his race's/ethnicity's consumption and dating habits, he is dumbfounded and disillusioned about how such uneducated views could exist in elite academia.

In my conversation with Jay, a working class British African Russell Group graduate, I asked him whether he thought any of the white students at his university had preconceived ideas of what a black male was like. His response follows:

Jay: For me it was always the cultural things like maybe food, music, clothes. Like uhm, I don't know I'm thinking of my flat mates in first year. Uhm they've become two of my closest friends. But even though they're very learned people and they have black friends and everything, they still had an opinion of me before I spoke to them like they thought I loved chicken. I only listened to rap music. I would dress a certain way.
Constantino: Loved chicken? How did they approach you on this?
Jay: Yeah, I was just supposed to love chicken. Eating chicken. (We laugh). So it wasn't in a way like odd, like do you like (pause)

it was more when I would do something. It was like 'Oh you're not one of the black guys that do this'. Or uhm, 'I thought you would do that because that's the kind of thing that black people would do.' If you understand what I mean? You know what I'm saying. It was more an observation on the way that I would act.
Constantino:: How did that make you feel?
Jay: Uhm it depends because it was never in uh, a kind of harmful way. I guess it was in an intuitive way. It was just the way that they would come across. I know that they never meant anything harmful because they've become some of my closest friends, but (pause) it was more that they hadn't had interaction enough with black people to really know any better, I guess. **(Jay, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate)** [32]

Jay appears to be unbothered by some white students' presumptions about the type of food, music and clothing he will like and wear. His measured response to his 'friends' observation of him is a form of moderate blackness (Wilkins 2012) whereby Jay has neutralised white students' possible racist perceptions and turned them into harmless ignorance that he rationalises as being due to their lack of engaging with many black people. Moderating and managing any possible angry emotions Jay might have about these comments enables him to keep his head down and not challenge an experience that he might perceive to be racist. Furthermore because the students perpetrating presumptions about him are from 'two of his closest friends' his way of managing uncomfortable encounters with them was to chose to ignore or not categorise the experiences as offensive or racist. This was a common management tactic that I observed in several of my participants accounts. In chapter ten I explore some of the coping strategies that my participants implemented in order to respond to, manage and get through difficult discriminatory circumstances.

8.4 Staff and Peer Support - Inequities in Support for Study

Similar to the stories of different treatment in the lecture environment, six of my participants' accounts discussed feeling excluded from peer-to-peer revision and tutorial support. The following four counter-stories provide insight into some of my participants' tutorial, supervisor and peer-to-peer experiences at their institutions.

*At Oxbridge I didn't really have any personal relationships with tutors and I didn't really understand them as human beings for whatever reason (…) I think, you know we always kind of go back to race on these things – and one can't say it conclusively, but I think that race has some dealing in that. For example I had a nice friend who is now doing her finals for [his arts and sciences course of study]. The same course as me. We shared a lot of tutors… And she would always tell me about this one-to-one that both of us had separately. How [the tutor] would tell her all this stuff about his life, and how they would talk a lot about stuff beyond the subject itself. Beyond the subject matter of English. And I never had that relationship with him. He never opened up in that way to me. Or spoke to me about much apart from the degree. (**Ted, Middle Class, British Caribbean Oxbridge Graduate**) [33]*

Even though Ted is from a middle class background attending Oxbridge which I would argue represents a predominantly white middle class habitus, Ted's middle class capitals do not enable him to establish similar types of relationships other students established with tutors. Though resistant to emphatically conclude, Ted suggests that he may have experienced a different type of relationship during tutorials because of his race. There is a disjunction between Ted's embodied habitus regardless of his middle class background and his elite universities institutional habitus. Duncan, a working class student at Oxbridge, experienced similar lack of tutorial study relationship otherness. However his account goes further into his reflection of the learning opportunities and resources or capitals that he feels he missed out on because he was treated differently.

More importantly, you don't have peer or study buddy situation, whereas if you're working on an essay [with someone else] and there's something that you don't get, you've always got somebody else who you can come to an understanding with and pair up with. You know there are often different things that they bring to the table. There was something that I would begin to notice when it came to supervision. You know certain twosomes and threesomes would sign up together and they would have the same supervisions and then that means that they usually worked with each other when they're going through their essays and then somebody will read one of the books from the reading list and the other will read another book and they will exchange notes together and then you get that synergy in place. Whereas you're in the situation where you may be in a more disadvantaged situation in terms of

establishing some kind of kinship with your fellow classmates, that's not as immediately available to you as it is to many others[30]. (…) You don't have peer or study buddy situation, whereas if you're working on an essay [with someone else] and there's something that you don't get, you've always got somebody else who you can come to an understanding with and pair up with. You know there are often different things that they bring to the table. This can be something that many black students if they're not aware of the importance of having fellow students prepared to help you to do your work, you know to actually bounce ideas off of each other. They're in danger of falling into that trap. **(Duncan, Working Class, British Caribbean Oxbridge Graduate) [34]**

During our conversation I asked Duncan whether he felt he had missed out on additional study support due to his lack of kinship with other classmates. His reflective response surprised me, as he appeared to blame himself in part for lack of peer study relationships.

Duncan: I wouldn't necessarily term it as additional kinds of support. It's something that most of the other students[31] in your class are doing. It's almost like an unwritten standard that is there, and available to them. Whereas for me it's more of a situation of uhm, just a lack of peer to peer support. Maybe that was something that I could have worked more on. I can definitely vouch for the direct effects that it has on academic performance. 'Cause I can remember one of my closest friends at University, we lived next door to each other. Every time he would mention a topic of peer to peer support he really emphasized how important it was to helping him perform in the way that he did. He said 'you know me and this girl, we would do tests and trade answers from each other. We would just have discussions about different topics at a more in depth level that you can't necessarily engage in, in a lecture or without the involvement of two or three other people and their ideas.' I fell into that trap. I stumbled and I underestimated the importance of it. I started to realise that 'if these people aren't really interested in me then why should I try to put my arm out and try to extend some sort of interest in them?' when I definitely should have seen it in a very systematic way in terms of whether you like it or not it's a means to an end, you know? I think that could be a situation that may have affected a number of the black students. **(Duncan, Working Class, British Caribbean Oxbridge Graduate) [35]**

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[30] In my follow up interview with Duncan I asked him what he meant by others, other students. He told me that he was referring to white students as he was the only black student in his year on his course of study.

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Alex's experience with being 'other' (below) reflects how despite being middle class, his race and first generation British background[32] positioned him in a place of isolation at his university. His account also suggests that his habitus experienced a great deal of challenge due to the lack of knowledge or capitals necessary to bolster his academic and internship opportunities; things other white middle class students may have taken for granted as naturally embodied within their habitus which enabled them to advance because they knew 'how the system works'.

> *Alex: [For me…] there never has been an overall studying or guiding presence.*
> Constantino: What about study support? Did you feel staff were supportive or helpful to you when you were looking for internships or jobs or anything else?
> *Alex: No I didn't really know who to ask, I've always felt very isolated and especially doing Law, everybody knows what you're supposed to do. You're supposed to spend your summers doing work experience, pupillages in barristers' chambers or work placements in solicitor's firms, so by the time you graduate you've got enough experience to get a training contract. I knew what I needed to do, I just needed to do it but I suspect my life would have been considerably easier if I had parents with connections because if your parents are based and grew up in this country they know the system. If I took two academics out of this building and dumped them with their families in [names his mother's African country] and asked them to find their way around they wouldn't have a clue. They don't know how the system works.*
> Constantino: So is that more of a class thing, a race thing, what do you think?
> *Alex: I think it's all of them, it's all encompassing. It's class. It's race. I think its upbringing. You need to know the system before you can work the system and if you're trying to work the system on you own it's going to be a long long journey.* **(Alex Middle Class, British Caribbean Russell Group Graduate) [36]**

In contrast to the above accounts, John's discussion affirms the benefit that can emerge from having a positive supervisor-tutorial relationship. His account provides his experience of having a black personal tutor with whom he had a supportive and advisory relationship.

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[32] Alex's parents were both born overseas. He was born in the UK and attended boarding schools in the UK prior to attending University.

Everyone here has a personal tutor. Someone who is assigned to us, to monitor our academic performance. And they basically say you can come into them anytime to see them, if you have any problems. I happen to have a personal tutor who is the only black lecturer on the entire campus. He's actually from [African Country] so you know obviously I took a shining to him. He was a black African. So obviously a connection there straight away and you feel a lot safer that there's someone who can hopefully understand where you're coming from. And you know he's a very helpful guy. Very smart guy, obviously. And I think crucially it's inspirational as well. I mean he's the only black lecturer on campus. But it shows that if you're good enough, you can make it. And he's obviously made it. He was a lawyer back in [African country]. He was quite successful and you know he's really the epitome of a black man who has made it. And that's just inspirational. That someone at this university, a black ((his emphasis)) man can achieve so much. And having him as a personal tutor is a bigger bonus because he's someone close to you and he can really point you in the right direction. So that for me has been a big plus. **(John, Middle Class, British African, Oxbridge Graduate) [37]**

Socio-economic and class background is associated with unequal access to information about post-secondary education. Duncan discussed his awareness of the classed advantages that the middle class students at his university 'may' have over him, such as attending 'better' schools. We saw earlier that other research has highlighted the significance of unequal access to information in respect of entry to university. It appears that once individuals are within HE institutions, new forms of unequal access to information and resources continue to play a major role in structuring their experiences.

Lamont and Lareau (1988) argue that within the habitus of elite universities and their dominant students, there is a degree of exclusion with respect to the identification, possession and maintenance of certain forms of embodied social and cultural capital. These include 'attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviours, confidence, physical appearance, demeanour, goods and credentials' (Lamont and Lareau 1988: 156; Zimdars et al. 2009). Cultural capital in the form of what Bourdieu called 'linguistic and cultural competence' (Bourdieu and Passeron 1979: 494) of the dominant culture is also significantly present within the habitus of elite universities and embodied by the majority of its white middle class students. However in the aforementioned accounts, both

working class and middle class students discussed this exclusion with respect to the lack of relationships that many had with tutors, or in relation to not being involved in peer to peer study groups and 'overall studying or guiding presence'. Many of my participants' accounts suggested that they felt this placed them at a disadvantage in relation to the majority of other peers. Research indicates that the quality of relationships between faculty and students is a strong forecaster of positive student academic learning (Anaya and Cole 2001; Kuh and Hu 2001; Lundberg and Schreiner 2004; Wagenaar and Tinto 1988; Hurtado et al. 1998; Cole 2007). Allen's (1998) research found that black students experienced less supportive lecturer-student relationships with predominantly white faculty in universities. Furthermore white students develop closer rapport with white lecturers than black students (Allen 1998). My participants acknowledged this void being related to both race and class in the above-mentioned discussions which are likely to have led to feelings of isolation and a lack of belonging (Reay et al. 2005).

Relationships with faculty tutors can be a beneficial source of mentoring and social capital that can lead to future student growth via internships and job opportunities (Hall and Sandler 1983; Tenenbaum et al. 2001; Eby et al. 2008). However it appears that the experience for many of my working class and middle class black students was that their habitus did not appear to align with their tutors' habitus for which they were not afforded the social interaction that moves beyond discussions about class work[33]. Within the educational poker game and institutional habitus of elite universities there are ingredients of Bernstein's theory of pedagogic device (Bernstein 2000; Singh 2002) which require students to have 'recognition and realisation' of the rules of the field (Singh 2002: 579, cited in Crozier and Reay, 2011). Within society and more specifically elite universities, proper recognition and understanding of these rules or 'codes' by students leads to the representation of particular 'dispositions, identities and practices' (Bernstein 1990: 3) and knowledge that are deemed to be the appropriate meanings by those in the educational field. Crozier and Reay provide the example of students understanding the purpose

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[33] Though not discussed in this thesis Bernstein's (2000, 2004) theory of pedagogic device could also be useful in understanding what many of my participants may have been experienced with the lack of peer to peer relationships

of a lecture which is equated with being a recognition rule, whereas knowing how to behave and conduct oneself within a lecturer theatre is a realisation rule (Crozier and Reay 2011: 146). A similar analogy can be drawn with Duncan and perhaps many of my other participants' understanding of 'the rules'. Although Duncan understood the purpose of lectures and studying (recognition rules) he fell into a trap with respect to realisation of the study rules. Duncan was not in a position to realise or recognise the importance of the academic benefits that could be gained from fostering relationships though peer to peer study groups until it was too late. Duncan acknowledged that he had no control over student tutor relationships, he could have made more of an effort to foster peer to peer study relationships, even though he was aware that other students were not interested in him, he now realises that this was a useful tool in playing and succeeding in the education poker game. However, at the time, he and some of my other participants have reflected that they were not in an informed position where they would have been able to realise the importance of fostering relationships through study groups, which may have disadvantaged them in their ability to achieve their full potential.

In contrast to the majority of my participants' accounts, two students (John and Jay, whose experience is not shared here) who coincidentally attended the same university, acknowledged having a black tutor with whom they were able to foster a good relationship. These men shared the same and only black tutor at their university. John's account intimates that having a black tutor was beneficial to him as the tutor served as a mentor and a role model. It is unsurprising that only two of my sixteen participants had black tutors at their institutions as black faculty are extremely under-represented in higher education (Shilliam 2014, 2015; Jahi 2014). John's account suggests that having a black personal tutor was 'inspirational' and akin to having a mentor who could advise and help him make career choices.

8.5 Fear of Failing

Another common theme that four of my working class and middle class participants expressed in their accounts, was a lack of confidence that they had

or that they felt other white students at their universities experienced. Kevin, a working class Russell Group law graduate, provided an account where he explained why he believed some black students experience confidence deficit feelings even after they have been accepted, and whilst they attended his elite institution.

> *Kevin: There were two things. One is that, I think a lot of the black young people that go to university feel that they have struggled all their lives to get there and therefore when they get there, there's only one thing they're there for: to get their degree. Two, I think there is, there's a reassurance that middle-class white kids have when they go to university. They go to university knowing that they were always going to go to university. Feeling comfortable in whatever the situation is when they finish it. Whereas for black kids, from where they're coming from, from the areas they're coming from the past they're coming from, they know that this is their shot. (…) It's fear. It's fear to go to university and really and mess up. And therefore we don't take all the other good stuff from the University. That's what actually becomes the physical and visceral issue when you go there. You know black people could be there, you know, leading the societies. Say, that a black kid who cares about immigration wants to go to be the president of that society, you know even though most of the people who were members of group were all white. A lot of black people haven't had the space to go that far. You know the first step is educational success before understanding the world around you, and getting and taking interest in issues, you know? I would find some of my white peers that were really interested in Iraq or terrorism or really interested in homelessness and that had been part of their upbringing. And therefore they were able to put a lot of time and interest into it as well as their work. Whereas I think because we are so focused on that first step, which is getting into University that we miss out on some things.*
> Constantino: Do you think that missing out on those things prevents opportunities –
> *Kevin: – Exactly (…) what I'm saying is that it will have the reverse effect which is that (…) it will seem like we're not making any more progress. And then it will look like again like there's issues in the communities, and our community that are stopping us from succeeding or elevating ourselves. But really the issue is we need to chill out really, you know and realise that actually we can embrace some of these things that interest us and still be able to [do well] in University.* **(Kevin, Working Class, British African Russell Group Graduate)** **[38]**

Although Kevin does not define the type of white students he suggests embody confidence at his university, I would suggest that he is referring to middle class

white students, and sees working class white students as likely have similar fears of being able to succeed. A plethora of researchers have written about the capitals and confidence advantages that middle class white students embody that working class students are often deficient in (Gillborn et al. 2012; Reay et al. 2007; Reay 1998b; Read et al. 2003; Reay et al. 2009a, 2009b; Reay et al. 2008; Archer and Hutchings 2000; Archer and Leathwood 2003; Ball et al. 2002; Ball and Vincent 1998; Power and Whitty 2006; 2008). It is suggested that even in cases of first generation middle class black (and white) students, the dominant groups are over-confident, because their structural advantage gives them a sense of entitlement. Future generations of white middle class students are complacent in the fact that they will not only matriculate at an elite university, but that they will also perform well there academically' whereas for black and working class students, there is a confidence deficit, a fear of failing or falling off the attainment ladder when this is their one opportunity to educationally succeed[34].

In this chapter I have explored the different ways that my participants experienced being 'other' or being made aware that they were different. Chapter nine explores the different ways that my participants' described expressing and/or moderating their culture, masculinity and 'blackness' as expressions of resistance, conformity or acceptance while attending top ranked universities.

8.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the different ways that the majority (eleven) of my participants discussed experiencing being 'other' and being made aware that they were different because of the 'race'/ethnicity and gender on campus. For some participants there was the expression of feeling isolated by being the only one, or one of very few black British 'home' students on their campus. Issues of incongruence with the middle class habitus of their universities was a

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[34] [34] It is important to note that middle class students also possess this fear but have be trained by their parents at an early age to disguise it as it could 'threaten the very bases on which middle-class subjectivities are founded' (Reay 2001: 341).

common theme for working class students. However, Ted, a middle class black student also expressed feeling 'other' and not being able to seamlessly fit within his university's environs, even when he came from a similar background to the majority of the students at his College. His narrative seems to suggests that even though he has the middle class capitals of other white students at Oxbridge, he is still 'treated slightly differently' in the rural area where his university is located compared to how he would be treated were he attending a Russell Group institution in a urban area such as London or Manchester because of he is black and white students at his university are less familiar with knowing black people.

Another common theme that my participants shared concerned stereotypes that white students had about the physical prowess, violent behaviour that all black people must possess (e.g. white students' assumptions that black men stab, steal or kill) to what black men eat, how they dress, their musical preferences and how they socialise with women. Otherness was also experienced by these students in relation to the support they were able to access from staff and the isolation and lack of access to resources that were gained from being involved in white peer study groups. Lastly, in line with a plethora of existing research that highlights the apprehensions that working class students experience attending university (Ball and Vincent Reay et al. 2009a, 2009b), my black working class students expressed a fear of failing in their new environments if they became involved with activities outside of their academic studies. Similar to white working class students in higher education my participants expressed a feeling of there being too much on the line for them to take the chance of participating in extracurricular activities that might enhance their skills, resources and capitals because of their fear failing (Reay 2001), of losing out on achieving 'educational success' (Kevin: 178). Chapter nine explores the different ways that my participants' described expressing and/or moderating their culture, masculinity and 'blackness' as expressions of resistance, conformity or acceptance while attending top ranked universities.

Chapter Nine: Bodily Hexis and Playing the Cultural Performativity/'Moderate blackness' Game: Switching up … or Not?

> Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, And sorry I could not travel both And be one traveler, long I stood (…) Two roads diverged in a wood, and I - I took the one less traveled by. (Frost 1968: 228)

In this chapter I provide the accounts that a cross section of my participants shared about how they felt the way they performed their culture was perceived at their universities. Some felt the need to adapt or conform their performativity and masculinity in order to be accepted within their social and educational environments. Others chose a less travelled road through which to navigate their education. This chapter sets out the argument that there are multiple ways that black men perform their culture. However the way that culture is perceived by predominantly middle class white university students caused varying degrees of implicit and/or explicit abuse to my participants. The chapter also suggests that how my participants make sense of how they are perceived and how they choose to react to this perception, differs substantially as well.

9.1 Culture, Respect and Performativity

> Respectability is one of the most ubiquitous signifiers of class. It informs how we speak, who we speak to, how we classify others, what we study and how we know who we are (or are not). (Skeggs 1997b: 1)

Style of clothing, jewellery, language and how black men behave and perform their masculinity on elite university campuses represent subtle clues of social class and culture that comprise of a significant category of social dissimilarity from white middle class students. Bourdieu (1984) identifies these visually distinguishable markers of class as 'embodied cultural capital' which may help to promote upward class mobility. Many of my working class black participants provided accounts of adjusting or conforming their performativity in an effort to

become 'respectable' (Skeggs 1997b) through language, clothing and bodily performativity (Goffman 1959). The following section provides accounts of how some of my participants performed their culture at elite universities and how this was received by the predominantly white middle class student body.

In the following excerpt Damien, a working class British Caribbean Russell Group graduate, describes a degree of isolation that he experienced at university which he attributes to his representation of his culture.

> *Damien: Right, my very first day that I went into the uni, I'd been first into the lecture theatre for maths. I sat in the middle of the row in the middle seat. Then the entire lecture theatre has filled up without a single person sitting on my row. Now I probably haven't helped myself. Right. I'm wearing a fitted cap; I'm wearing a big coat. You know what I'm saying. I probably, I look like your typical hoodlum as far as the other students would be concerned. But as far as I'm concerned, I'm not doing anything illegal or whatever. This is my culture, so I'm allowed to look like this. And I'm a nice person above and beyond being an innocent civilian. But for them, it's all quite intimidating, because they've never seen anything like that before. Now in the end, the Asian kids who came in class last, came and sat on my row and said 'how are you?' and asked 'what's your name?' They are used to this. Even the middle-class Asian kids, they live in very ethnically diverse neighbourhoods. So it's no problem for them, 'cause it wasn't until after uni that I dropped the whole baseball cap, you know what I'm saying, the whole hoodlum type of thing. (**Damien, Working Class, British Caribbean, Russell Group Graduate**) [39]*

It is likely that Damien's performativity and cultural representation was off-putting for many of the white middle class students at his university who were not accustomed to people like him. In some ways Damien is presenting himself as an 'other' in the eyes of many of his student colleagues. However, his culture and performativity is not perceived as 'intimidating' to many of the South Asian students he encountered, because they are accustomed to socialising with people like him because they live in 'ethnically diverse neighbourhoods'. Bourdieu's concept of bodily hexis is useful in helping to understand the embodiment of Damien's habitus is problematic, in that the habitus consists of dispositions that are embodied, some of which are visible.

Bodily hexis involves the positioning of the body. Bourdieu describes it as 'a political mythology realised, embodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a

durable manner of standing, speaking and thereby of feeling and thinking" (Bourdieu 1977b: 94). Bodily hexis represents the body's motor skills 'in the form of postures that is both individual and systematic … charged with a host of special meanings and values' through classed and gendered frames of the mind (Bourdieu 1990: 74). Ingram (2014) contends that bodily hexis is not only concerned with 'bodily adornments such as clothing, jewellery and makeup, but also through posture, facial expressions, ways of moving, gait, accent and gestures' (Ingram 2014: 3), which Bourdieu argues we all produce and construct yet are unique to each individual. These constructions transmit meanings through the expressions one makes which, in turn, are interpreted and sometimes misinterpreted and designated different value or capital within varying social and cultural fields.

Damien also emphasises that he was unaware until his third year that the reason many students did not socialise with him is because they were scared of him. He discusses having a very isolated university experience. He told me that he spent a lot of his time in the library on his own or with his girlfriend doing homework. He didn't go to parties with his university colleagues as he wasn't invited. He explained how he came to the realisation during his final year that many of the students were afraid of him because of the way he expressed his culture.

> *Damien: A lot of the kids were scared of me it turns out. But where I come from I thought they probably just don't like me. Furthermore if you don't like me, I'm quite hostile to be honest, like I think (pause) the way in which my culture has been visible on me, until right near the end when students started to realise that for class work I know how to get the answers and I understand how it works. And I could explain in plain English terms the underlying core dynamics. I remember one time a girl said to me "we were all scared of you in first year". She's realised now that I'm really sweet, see. But she said, 'First year, first of all the way you spoke to [lecturer's name]. You know none of us would've spoken to any teachers at our school like that. I don't know, you just seemed so angry'. I speak in a very forceful way, near enough all of the time. If you're disputing a point at me, I will just take your point down to a fundamental level and these people probably found that intimidating. Probably more so than if it was a white person acting the exact the same way, because they've not really known many black people who are coming from my background. (Damien,*

Working Class British Caribbean Russell Group Graduate)
[40]

Research indicates that many working class secondary school students present a bodily hexis that is incongruent with their school's habitus and are presumed to be troublemakers by teachers, who often misrecognise and misinterpret these individuals' performativity as being indicative of them being non-interested in learning (Ingram 2009; 2011). These students performativity, also known as hegemonic masculinity, is often associated with laddish, hard, aggressive, anti-feminine identities that are seen as oppositional to the habitus and learning environment of their schools (Mac an Ghaill 1994; Epstein 1998; Renold 2001). Some students within the school environment may also be put off and may avoid students who display a particular bodily hexis. It is suggested that within elite higher education a similar understanding or misreading of Damien's performativity has occurred. The bodily hexis that Damien performs within his university's field may be misinterpreted and capitally devalued by the many predominantly white middle class students and faculty within this institution, causing his disposition to take on a different value or understanding in this field (i.e. one where many of the other students find him intimidating).

Damien also suggests that his race is also a factor in why students were afraid of him. He argues that he would have been perceived as less intimidating were he to have performed the same behaviour but have been a white male. He argues that part of the reason that the white students were afraid of him, is that it was a black body that was representing aggressive masculinity, rather than the white dominant body within his institution. Behaviours are based on a presumed, often unconscious common co-ordinated cultural knowledge[35] (Wilkins 2014; Ridgeway 2009) of how people are supposed to behave in particular environments which facilitates effortless, peaceful interaction (Goffman 1959, 1967). Damien's body may be the being placed into question and may be the site of moral judgement that it is not recognised as an acceptable university fit in its present performative state.

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[35]Example in the UK it is the law that people drive on the left hand side of the road. In the US people drive on the right hand side of the road. Often when American or other tourists from right hand side driving nations visit the UK are involved in traffic injuries because they unconsciously look to the left instead of the right for oncoming cars when driving or crossing a street (see Wilkins et al. 2014).

Researchers (Connell[36] and Messerschmidt 2005; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 2012; Ingram 2014) argue that masculinity is complicated and requires exploration into its frequently fragmented and variable constructions and configurations in relation to power. Critical Race Theory helps us to digest and understand that the determination of whose culture is most valued or accepted, is often dependent on the dominant capitals within a particular field (Yosso 2005). Where Damien's bodily hexis inclusive of his clothing, swagger and other hegemonic masculine bodily expressions appears to not smoothly align with his elite university's 'field', they very same bodily hexis may be understood and valued more positively within the dominant culture of his local community 'field' as something that represents strength, resilience and confidence.

9.2 Switching Up: Moderating Blackness

Within an elite university environment like any other field, humans have a need to co-ordinate their behaviour with others based on common cultural knowledge. Black students may experience challenges in transitioning into higher education which may act as a threat to their "authenticity and sense of selfhood" (Reay 2002a: 403). Black students may experience a double bind as they are highly visible amongst the predominantly white student body, yet they may also feel a sense of isolation or "black alienation" (Shingles 1979: 268; Wilkins 2012). Over time, transitioning and co-ordinating behaviour can lead to the construction of group differences. People create and use differences when seeking to make sense of others with whom they are interacting, by creating social categories to assist in discerning individual and group similarities and differences (Ridgeway 2006). This conscious and unconscious need to characterise interaction with other groups of people can lead to the social categorisation of people into stereotypes that are often based on culturally-specific resources used to conduct seamless negotiation with others. However relying on stereotypes to understand who other people are, is a weak and precarious substitute for actual information about the specific individual with

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[36]It is important to note that Connell's work focused on hegemonic masculinity being created though a set of fixed positions of dominance. Whereas Bourdieu's bodily hexis concept emphasize the ability for performativity to construct itself as fluid and shiftable depending on the field it inhabits and the individual's choice as to whether or not to adjust it.

whom a person is communicating (Wilkins 2012). Black students seem to be consciously and unconsciously aware of this construction and negotiation of cultural knowledge. Some black students appear to rework their performativity in an effort to fit more smoothly within their elite universities. This process can be termed 'moderate blackness' (Wilkins 2012: 34), or what Damien defines as 'switching up'. Moderate blackness can help black students to align their behaviour and appearance more closely with the white middle class performativity and habitus of their institutions and the predominantly white middle class student bodies therein. Moderate blackness is explored in-depth in chapter ten in the context of how my participants managed racism and discrimination through the adoption of certain worldviews. In the following excerpt, Damien reflects on his observation of how other working class black students performed their culture at his university.

> *Damien: I guess a lot of them, the way in which they had to deal with the university, from the get go is (pause) they would have to kind of, I guess be a bit more tactful in how they express their own culture. So you know you have to, not wear certain types of clothes, for a start. You have to conform. I've seen one of the dudes who I was speaking to you know, when he was with me he was just like a normal one of my friends at home. And then when a couple of his dudes from uni came along, right then he was completely stiff. I'm saying he switched up. It's the way he was talking and some of his views slightly changed, and the way he was expressing it.* **(Damien, Working Class British Caribbean Russell Group Graduate) [41]**

In accord with several of my participants, Damien emphasises that there is an expectation or practice by many students to change or moderate their culture and performativity when they are in university settings. Moderating ones culture or 'blackness' (Wilkins 2012) is a strategy that some black men utilise to manage their performance and emotions in certain environments to help ensure they maintain an acceptable fit in those fields. This supports Du Bois idea of double consciousness (Du Bois 1903) as the students are aware that they are performing two different mind-sets in an effort to conform and be more accepted within their educational and social environments. Damien expresses a very moral opinion of how he feels about people who conform at university. He sees it as a mark of dishonesty. This elucidates the dangers associated with 'switching up'. Although this 'dude' may be 'passing' due to his conformity and

adoption of middle class university habitus, he is judged by Damien and most likely others from his local community as a fraud for 'selling out' his original embodied habitus in order to fit within the habitus of the university field. Within the US, 'passing' has a history in the context of 'race' that dates back to slavery (Bogle 2001; Khanna and Johnson 2010). Racial passing was commonly understood as a phenomenon where an individual of one 'race'/ethnicity represented himself or herself as another, usually white (Piper 1992). Damien acknowledges that as a result of presenting his hometown culture at school and refusing to moderate his culture to the university norm, he chose a 'less travelled' route during his university years. Consequently he experienced a degree of apprehension from many students at his university. Damien resists adopting and conforming his habitus, though most of my participants' accounts reflected an adjustment or adaption of their habitus whilst attending elite universities. He says:

> *Damien: I could have done that as well. Except for the fact that I was just very hard-headed. You know what I'm saying, I could have very much. I could have done that. And I would have had a probably more integrated experience and benefited from it to be honest. But sometimes you have to go through these things.* **(Damien, Working Class, British Caribbean, Russell Group Graduate) [42]**

In a follow up reflection to how he was perceived by many of the students as 'other', Damien acknowledged that he didn't 'engage in much out of uni activities with any of these people'. Although he is aware that had he chosen to adjust his culture, he might have had benefitted from a 'more integrated' and probably more welcoming educational experience, Damien chose to stay true to his local community culture.

When I asked Dwayne, a working class Oxbridge graduate, if he had felt the need to adjust his performance at his university his response was mixed:

> Constantino: Did you feel the need to dress in a certain way or change the way you dressed when you first came here? And did your dress sense or how you acted change over time while at [Oxbridge]?

Dwayne: No. No No. No to both. So I think I very much sort of kind of wear my hoodies over my track suits, that kind of thing. And my trainers. Yep, I've got my trainers.
Constantino: So you haven't had any need to change because of people's presumptions or assumptions of you?
Dwayne: No. I think I've very much just kind of been true to myself.
Constantino: How were you dressed for your [Oxbridge] interview? If you can remember as I know that was a while ago?
Dwayne: So I think I kind of had it was suit and tie or smart shirt. But it was definitely smart dress. I think there are certain times for example in the interview where you just have to kind of accept kind of cultural norms. So it would have been unwise to have come to the interview in clothes that were kind of very casual. But I think there are kind of other times where you are kind of more able to just dress as you feel. **(Dwayne, Working Class, British Caribbean, Oxbridge Graduate) [43]**

Dwayne's account reflects that he only felt the need to change his dress style or performativity when he had his initial interview to get accepted at the university. He emphasises that there are certain times when you have to *'accept cultural norms … [and] it would have been unwise to have come to the interview in clothes that were kind of very casual'.* In other everyday university occurrences, Dwayne intimates that he maintained the same styles of dress, trainers and hoodies and performance that he had in his local community which has enabled him to remain 'true to myself'. As the majority of my participants had discussed moderating their culture and behaviour, something I would term 'playing the cultural performativity game', to ensure a more seamless pathway through university, I was curious to understand why the few black students who did, chose this path. Damien provided the most interesting and philosophical response to my question, 'Why do you think you chose not to 'switch up' the way you acted on campus?'

Damien: As I said it before, it wasn't until after uni that I dropped the whole baseball cap and hoodlum type of thing. 'Because the way I looked at it is I refuse to arbitrarily posit somebody else's culture above and beyond my own. I refuse to. Because at the end of the day this is all arbitrary and we have to recognise that. You can arbitrarily believe in the laws of physics or religion or whatever you want, yeah. Just so long as you realize which bits are based upon facts and which bits are just arbitrarily beliefs that you have formed. **(Damien, Working Class, British Caribbean, Russell Group Graduate) [44]**

Damien's ability to choose the road less travelled with respect to maintaining his own culture over 'switching up' to someone else's, made him one of the outliers in my study. He acknowledges that his dress style may have been perceived as 'hoodlum' in style but for Damien this represents and remains part of his authentic self.

Only three of my 15 participants, Damien, Dwayne and Jason, provided me with counter-narrativess where they refused to conform some aspect of their culture to fit in with the prescribed or expected university norms.

9.3 Language Performativity

Social origins strongly influence the use of language (e.g. Bernstein 1962), and academic discourse is relatively distant to working class students' family upbringing. Foreshadowing the concepts of habitus and cultural capital, Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) note the subtle and imperfect linkages from social origins to cultural lifestyles and the scholarly dispositions rewarded in French universities. A student's relationship to culture develops steadily but imperceptibly, discreetly and more or less indirectly; this "inherited cultural capital" is acquired, like a bequest, without conscious effort (Bourdieu and Passeron 1979: 20-23). In this way, working class students are "doubly disadvantaged" by the educational system. Not only are working class students largely excluded from advanced secondary training and the most prestigious disciplines, but they lack the "cultural capital" to participate fully in academic discourse to enable them to enjoy high returns on their scholastic investments.

Several researchers (Vincent et al. 2012, 2013; Gillborn et al. 2012; Rollock 2014) have discussed how black and white middle class parents work with their children to ensure that they attain, maintain and embody the cultural resources and 'capitals' that align with their white middle class schools' habitus in an attempt at acceptance, respect and a seamless fit within these spaces. Several of my participants discussed different capitals that they gained and ways that they performed these in an effort for acceptance and recognition in culturally white spaces. Language and how it was spoken was a recurring account of over half of my participants.

*Alex: When I was quite young I had elocution lessons when I was at prep school, my mother decided that was a good idea, but then I developed an infatuation with words and prose and reading and punctuation and grammar and I can speak the language and I can speak it very well and that absolutely helps, without a shadow of a doubt. I think I would lose gravitas and presence if I couldn't intellectually engage with people in communication I think (otherwise) they would dismiss me and I'm actually really glad about that, it's my greatest attribute and I think if I didn't have it, I don't know what I'd have to be honest, I think it'd be tough. **(Alex, Middle Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate)** [45]*

*Ted: Maybe it's my perception. But also just because there aren't that many black people at Oxford I feel that it is perhaps significant. I suppose also people sometime struggle or are perhaps put off by black people who speak or are able to articulate themselves more so than they can. It's like I'm using your mother tongue but apparently you don't think I'm from this country. But I can speak English better than you can (smiles and laughs). **(Ted, Middle Class, British Caribbean, Oxbridge Graduate)** [46]*

Both Alex and Ted are proud of their ability to speak English in a particular precise/highbrow/BBC manner. Alex feels that his ability to communicate in this way has gained him gravitas and respect in certain environments where he feels he might otherwise be dismissed. Rollock (2014) discusses how her command of language and her representation of herself in a certain way in certain academic circles enables her a level of respect within middle class white circles that she would not receive from white colleagues were she to speak with her native Caribbean patois. Similarly Ted appears to relish the fact that when he speaks English around classmates at Oxbridge, many are surprised by his delivery and presentation as many presume that because he is black and at Oxbridge he must be an international black student. Yet because of his intonation and presentation, of the English language he is bemused by some of the reactions he gets from white people*.*

In *'Race', Class and The Harmony of Dispositions'*, Rollock (2014) discusses her personal experience with the reality that despite sharing a middle class location, being black and middle class does not necessarily provide her with the equivalent degree of 'privilege' that her middle class white comrades are afforded. Reay et al. (2007) affirm this conundrum as they state: 'to embody both whiteness and middle class-ness is to be a person of value' (Reay et al.

2007: 1043). Rollock suggests that black middle class people sometimes actively and knowingly deploy capitals or 'class signifiers' (i.e. language, voice intonation, dress etc.) to facilitate acceptance within certain, usually white, middle class spaces. In the above-mentioned accounts my participants discussed engaging in this type of activity with respect to how they speak Received Pronunciation (RP) English which the Oxford dictionary define as, 'the standard form of British English pronunciation, based on educated speech in southern England, widely accepted as a standard elsewhere' (Oxford English Dictionary Online 2014).

Alex discussed how important this trait is to his embodiment as he says, 'I didn't have it, I don't know what I'd have to be honest'. Whereas Ted is amused by his ability to speak in RP and enjoys catching people off guard based on their preconceptions of who he is and how they presume he should speak. The deployment of capitals or class signifiers represents an intentional assertion of certain public identities that are used to try to convince others that they are 'legitimate members of the (white) middle class' (Lacy 2007: 73). Black middle class people are often able to gain access or recognition of their middle class location through moderating their blackness which also helps them to mitigate and/or minimise the likelihood of racial stereotyping and racism. Using such techniques enables black people to downplay, silence or deny racism and to exonerate those accused of engaging in racist behaviour, which involves the recipient of the discriminatory act to refute any kind of scrutiny, intentionality or responsibility on the part of the perpetrator of the act (van Dijk 1992).

Another participant, Franco, discussed how he had to adjust his language and way he spoke based on the environment that he was in. In this, he credits his mother with providing him with the tools to have a 'telephone voice'.

> *Franco: Because my mum is a secretary and she taught us how to speak on the phone, when we were young. So for example, if someone calls me now and you're here and you're my mom or whatever, I would speak and respond in a way so that you could understand what was being said. I understood the concept of a telephone voice. (Franco, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [47]*

Consequently the phone voice that Franco learned growing up was beneficial to him in modulating his language and culture when he was at university.

> *Franco: So I used this speak, a lot of slang and things like that. And I understood that sort of street culture and I was part of it, yeah as much as I could be. But what I realised as well was that people didn't even understand what I was saying when I was at [Russell Group University]. So what I found myself doing is I started to (pause), what I didn't want to do was speak differently when I was with my friends from home and differently with my friends from [Russell Group University]. So what I realised was, I found this balance where there were certain words that I would still continue to use across both. And there's words that maybe I would've used in [in his hometown community] that I stopped using.* **(Franco, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [48]**

When I asked Franco whether he changed the way he presented himself in different environments he acknowledged that he 'tried not to, but I probably did'. Again this reflects an understanding of 'double consciousness' and Franco feeling the need to present himself in different ways in different environments in order to be understood and accepted in his new university field. Even though he was not always comfortable doing so, Franco was aware of the risks associated with being considered not legitimate or believable in adaption of his language in his elite university field (Harries 2014). There is the possibility that he may be perceived as a 'sell out' (McLeod 1999) in his local neighbourhood for not maintaining the language and culture with which he grew up. In the following excerpt, Franco discussed the occasion of going back to visit his old council estate and being perceived as 'posh':

> *Franco: There was this woman across the way she had three or four kids. Each had a different dad, right. She was our neighbour for ages. I bumped into in [name of his local community] and she was with her sister and I said 'Oh, how are you and how are your kids?' And she was really nice. And then her sister said, 'Oh it's not often I get to meet posh people'. And I was shocked. Because you know I said, 'I lived across the road. Across the way from your sister for my whole life and you're saying I'm posh?' And I was really shocked. What I realised was, you know, even the way I'm speaking now or was speaking at the time. After going to [Russell Group University name] it's not appropriate for the workplace. And so I had to make sure I used my T's more. Appropriate (T -*

emphasised), instead of appropriate (T not emphasised). **(Franco, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [49]**

Franco acknowledges that he made a 'conscious' pragmatic decision to present himself in different ways in different environments (i.e. university versus his local neighbourhood and amongst local friends) in order to be understood and accepted. Sociolinguistics would maintain that Franco is performing code switching (Bernstein 1962). Similar to Franco's account yet in the field of secondary education, Ingram (2011: 289) discusses the challenges that some working class students experience in navigating and managing their working class 'field of origin (incorporating family background, geographical location and social class)' with the different social fields and peer groups they encounter when they attend grammar schools. Ingram's research suggests that a tug of war often occurred that caused a destabilisation of her students' working class habitus of origin, as it conflicted with the habitus and field of their elite secondary schools. In Franco's account he admits that he experienced some difficultly switching back and forth between the varying language codes. Bourdieu stressed that bodily hexis was a fluid and multi-faceted 'physiognomy … through which class origin is recognised-misrecognised' (Bourdieu 1998: 36).

Many of my participants suggested that adjusting their performativity prevented racial ignorance and prejudices from being directed at them. When I asked Franco why he felt the need to adjust his language presentation his response was:

> *Franco: Because when I was in [Russell Group University], you know to them I appeared like a rude boy. A bad boy to some extent. And I really wasn't. But just by being myself and speaking in the way that I did, and the people that I know in that world made me appear to be one.*
> **(Franco, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [50]**

Although Franco is working class, during our discussion he acknowledged that he aspired to be middle class. As a middle class aspirant, I would suggest that Franco is trying to adopt and perform middle class symbols that not only allow him to participate in the middle class elite university field but also to perform in

this field as someone who also has a comfortable 'fit' and 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu 1990). Research suggests that some working class students are more versatile than others and may be able to successfully adjust, adapt and transform their performativity strategy in a way that enables them to move between various fields 'with what are seen to be classically middle-class academic dispositions' with a degree of versatility (Reay et al. 2009b: 1105). With a degree of effort Franco accomplished this oscillation. Thus habitus is adaptable, transformative, less fixed and more permeable and responsive (Allen and Hollingworth 2013) than some researchers have often understood. Research suggests (Reay 2002b; 2009; Ingram 2011) that students most likely cultivate and accumulate these skills or 'capitals' during their primary and secondary schooling years. However Reay is also quick to caution that there may be serious 'psychic costs' (2002b: 221) and 'tensions' that these students endure as a result of incorporating a 'disjunctive and divided habitus' in varying fields (Ingram 2011: 298). This can be seen in how Franco was emotionally caught off guard when his neighbour considered him to be posh, based on how he spoke.

In my conversation with Bob, another working class participant, I asked him about whether he dressed any differently at his University, which was located in a somewhat rural area compared to the college that he had attended, which was located in his hometown in a large urban city. His response follows.

> *Bob: Um not dress wise. Language wise like I did. I dunno, back home I spoke a kind of [city where he grew up] slang I suppose which is kind of vaguely influenced by a kind of Caribbean patois. But you know it's [city where he grew up], so I feel like that influence has been felt there so long that it's kind of almost lost its connection to the Caribbean.*
> Constantino: So did you remove that slang from your everyday speak at uni?
> *Bob: A little bit, I had to kind of spread it out because obviously I had come from [City where he grew up] having a group of friends where everybody kind of knows what you mean when you say certain things. In [Russell Group University] that circle becomes much smaller, so um as a general way of speaking it obviously wasn't appropriate anymore because you know for comprehensibility reasons no one understands what you're saying. Though obviously with closer friends you get to know each other over time and you know, you end up affecting each other's*

language codes. **(Bob, Working Class, British Caribbean, Russell Group Graduate) [51]**

In Bob's experience, adjusting his language was necessary for other students at his university to understand him, as they were unfamiliar with his local city dialect and language. However it also appears that he must have maintained some of his Caribbean patois as he and close friends were able to learn a bit about each other's local language nuances. From an additional conversation that I had with Bob, not shared here, this exchange appears to have been positive as it affected 'each other's language codes' and enabled him and his friends to learn a little about each other's differences.

9.3.1 Intersectionality of Appearance, Voice and Language Performativity

Allen, a middle class Oxbridge participant, shared accounts of experiences where he was aware that people are surprised to meet him based on his appearance, voice and language*.*

> *Allen: So basically that kind of thing happens – or then you get people who are surprised – and you can tell people are surprised with how you look based on what you sound like on the phone, or how you dress.*
> Constantino: Can you elaborate on what you mean?
> *Allen: I've had a call [for a job] and then I've met them and they like say, 'I didn't expect you to be', (pause) they wouldn't say I didn't expect you to be a black guy. But they would say, 'oh, you don't look how I expected' (…) I have had quite a few experiences of – – I wouldn't call it, it's not racism in the same way – but I know there are times when I have surprised people by being black. Or by doing what I am doing and also being black. That's happened a few times. Or just that assumptions get made about me or. So for an example, (laughs) a couple months ago I was walking, to train and somebody came out of the train at the same time as me and she clearly needed help and didn't know where she was going. And I was saying. 'Are you okay? Do you need a hand?' And she was like 'Yeah thanks. I'm trying to get to this place." And I was like, 'All right, yeah it's down this way. I know the area. Uhm let me show you.' So I walked her down and we got chatting and she actually says, 'you have a* really *posh voice' and then she just continued the conversation. And then she said, 'But you're really posh aren't you?' So, what was interesting about that from a racial perspective was she was white and really posh. (Laughs). She was a model and she was really posh and like she was almost herself a*

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stereotype of like a white posh model. And what was interesting is that I know the reason why she found my voice surprising or really posh was because I was black. Not because my voice sounds like I could've been a male version of her, if you see what I mean?
***(Allen, Middle Class, British African Oxbridge Graduate)* [52]**

Allen provided intimations where, based on his race/ethnicity, white people have been surprised by how he speaks on the phone when they see him in person for internship placements. Additionally Allen emphasised that when he was professionally dressed (i.e. in a suit) he appears to believe that interviewers are also surprised that he is a black man. Like Allen, I have experienced similar situations in the States when I have had face-to-face job interviews after previously speaking with someone on the phone to confirm the interview. I argue that the 'you don't look how I expected' phrase is a form of everyday racism that some white people subconsciously possess about black males, due to their presumptions that we are going to sound and dress a certain type of way.

Although Allen does not identify his encounter with this white female model as racist, the woman's presumptions of what type of black man he is are based on co-ordinated behaviour (Wilkins et al. 2014) based discriminatory presumptions that are negotiated and naturalised by his 'posh voice'. It appears that Allen thinks that this woman is surprised by his voice because she is expecting a London estuary *'innit'* inflection English (Crystal 2010), rather than the more prestige British dialect that Allen speaks. This account supports Leonardo's (2009), Gillborn's (2008b) and Rollock's (2014) contentions of whiteness as a racial identity, that in addition to class, represents a dominant position of power within society and elite universities. 'White racial knowledge' (Leonardo 2009) tends to occupy an implicitly invisible, 'silent but highly formative presence' (Rollock 2014: 447) in discourses about class where there is, in fact, also an intersection of class and race.

Allen also provided an account of how he saw presumptions/discriminations as beneficial to him. The way he presented himself at university prevented white students from making 'negative assumptions' about the type of black person he was.

Allen: I think I'm around good reasonable people and that I behave in a way that is also good and reasonable so that people are not given additional (pause) are not given any random opportunity to make negative assumptions about black people based on how I behave.
(Allen, Middle Class, British African, Oxbridge Graduate) [53]

Allen's portrayal of himself appears to suggest that due to the fact that he is around 'good and reasonable people' who are not likely to think of him in a pejorative way as a certain type of black male (the angry or aggressive black man) and because of the way 'he behaves' he does not give white people any reason to think of him as anything other than a positive, normal and good black man. Allen's account is an example of what is referred to as "rules of racial standing." Here, statements from minority ethnic people about racism are seen to be special pleadings and are usually not given serious consideration (Bell 1992). Consequently, when people of colour dismiss claims of racism made by others, they often receive an enhanced status, which may enable them to gain admittance within a particular institution or space (Burdsey 2011). Simultaneously a person who gains such admittance may experience being challenged by other black people about their black cultural authenticity (Nguyen and Anthony 2014) and may be perceived as a fraud, or what is colloquially known as 'selling out' their culture amongst other black people (McLeod 1999).

It appears that Allen is presenting a form of acceptable 'respectable' middle class white performativity, which he believes prevents white people at his elite university from perceiving him in any sort offensive, racist or ignorant 'other' way. Skeggs (1997b) contends that people who are from marginalised backgrounds endeavour to escape their stigmatised marginalised location by making an effort to not represent themselves as being from a marginalised position (Goffman 1963). By doing so, they carve out the parts of their frame or construct that they want to disconnect from in order to portray themselves as something else that fits within the normal structures/confines of the dominant culture's reality (in this case white middle class society). This enables Allen to be naturalised and to be perceived as normal or 'neutral' (Harries 2014: 8) within the social environment of his university. From a historical perspective, for

centuries during colonialism, practises of 'shape-shifting' (Gilroy 1995: 16) occurred as a response to the performative expectations that the dominant, privileged and implicit field of whiteness required black people, particularly black men, to perform in a subtly restrained civility-coded manner (Fine 1997; McLaren 1999; Wildman 1997). This prevents black men from being perceived as possessing an inappropriate temperament, from stereotypes that range from the lazy to the mean or angry black man. However, Harries (2014) and Wilkins (2012) suggest that the personal and psychological costs of denying racism are considerable and may be detrimental to one's health.

Furthermore Allen's account suggests that he thinks these discriminations are also harboured by some black people, which he sees as a positive thing for him.

> *Allen: There's another side to it as well which you could describe as a more positive side of pride and surprise. Lots of people have been really happy that I'm like doing whatever I'm doing and that I'm black. So often that comes from black people as well. It's like you know they are seeing me give a speech or like agreeing to do something or going to a meeting and they are clearly surprised by the quality of my conversation or how good my argument was. And they're really happy about it. And they say things like 'It's really good to see young people like you doing something positive like that. But that's the other side of it.*
> Constantino: Do you think that they see you as a role model for some of these other black people a black kids or whatever?
> *Allen: I mean yeah. Honestly (pause) yes basically. Yeah. A role model. But also like it does also affect another thing about society's expectations of black people and what we assume about black people. So every person who says 'It's really good to see a young black guy like you doing this', what they are also saying is young black people like you don't normally do stuff like this.* **(Allen, Middle Class, British African, Oxbridge Graduate) [54]**

In this excerpt Allen discusses how black people are often surprised by how he speaks and presents himself in public. Allen has been involved in community activism throughout his university years and has an ethos that emphasises the need to give back and support disadvantaged, marginalised often predominantly black communities to enable them to have a voice to improve their localities. Throughout his counter-narrative there was a reverberation about the importance of him as a black man doing the type of community work

he did which usually is promoted by white middle class people to BME communities. In marginalised communities Allen's account suggests that he is perceived as a role model for what other black young people should be doing.

9.3.2 Dress, Music and Food: Double Standards for black Men

In the previous section Damien discussed the importance of maintaining his culture and his refusal to substitute performative practices in order to fit with the predominant white culture of his university. Similarly, several of my participants expressed their frustration with white students' co-ordinated behavioural stereotypes that presumed that there was a certain type of 'generic' black person that inhabited elite universities. Jason's account offers a clear example of something that was apparent across nine of my participants' experiences during their time at their universities.

> *Jason: The only thing that annoys me is the ghetto thing at [Russell Group University]. Just people being like "ah you're so gangster," because of the way I dress and everything. I'm like, look, I'm not. Like being gangster is not cool. Like urban is different. Urban is kind of like a culture. I was brought up with this type of music. I was brought up appreciating this kind of sport. I was brought up with this kind of mentality where my friends didn't get so drunk that you did things that embarrass yourself because you had a reputation to keep and family you didn't want to embarrass. Because that's the way I had been brought up and they mistake all of those things for being gangster. Just because I listen to hip-hop music or I dress a certain way. Or I like Rocawear and Sean John. Like, the way I view it and I find that it is more so an issue in [town where his Russell Group university is located]. And it frustrates me when it doesn't happen to me at home. I resist fitting into something generic. People may argue that I'm generic and gangster because I like hip-hop. I do like these things. But I don't think that makes me gangster. Although I like hip-hop and generic things like that, I also like playing golf. And those things don't really go hand in hand. Like I choose what I like and what I do.*
> ***(Jason, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [55]***

In accord with eight of my other participants, Jason finds the predominantly white middle class environment where his university is located a bit stereotypical in how it views him as a black 'gangster' man based on the way he dresses, the music he listens to, and the way he represents himself culturally.

Eight of my other participants expressed themes of frustrations similar to Jason's, with respect to being stereotyped by white students and considered to be a certain type of black male because of their style of dress, music preferences and/or their cultural representations (performativity).

In the discussion that directly followed Jason's frustration with being typified as 'gangster', he shared with me the double standards he thinks exist with respect to how people are judged and perceived when performing their culture based on their race.

> Constantino: Do you think there's an image that people have in their minds that they identify with a black man?
> *Jason: Yeah straight up. I think people who are of the ethnic minority understand diversity a bit better than maybe Caucasian people. Because you have white people my age who have an idea that 'this is what black guys are like'. I never think, "Ah this is what a white person's like". I never look at someone who's white and say they should be acting like this; they should be really kind of posh, middle class whatever. Mainly because, I have a wide variety of white friends that range from different scales. And it's fine for them to be very British or to be very urban. Whereas if you flip that around and you're black, if you're Carlton at this end, you'll probably get rinsed by black people for being Carlton or white people will say you're a coconut[37].*
> Constantino: Who is Carlton?
> *Jason: You know Carlton Banks[38] from the Fresh Prince of Bel Air? Like a black guy who has very white tendencies. So if on one side we take Wesley Snipes or whoever as being black on this end and we take Carlton Banks as the sort of the whitest black guy, like, essentially being at the other end, who is like not really being respected as someone who's black. But being white and urban is ok.*
> **(Jason, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [56]**

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[37] The term coconut, has been used to accuse someone of betraying their race, or culture, by implying that, like a coconut, they are brown on the outside but white on the inside. Similar racial terms to denote 'acting white' while from another ethnic group include 'bounty bar', 'oreo' and 'banana'.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/worldhaveyoursay/2010/06/_in_bristol_a_black.html

[38] The character of Carlton Banks played by Alfonso Ribeiro on the Television sitcom the Fresh Prince of Bel Air was recognised by people of colour as the quintessential 'oreo' due to his lack of proper American accent (i.e. lack of a "blackcent") and his , über preppy clothing and adoration of Tom Jones music.
http://duanesmodernlife.blogspot.co.uk/2009_06_01_archive.html

Jason said that white people have more freedom to present their culture in multiple ways without being judged. Ironically, Jason finds that there is a hypocritical double standard whereby black people are judged for their performativity by white and black people in a way that black people do not judge white people for performing their culture – or anyone else's culture. In the eyes of some black people, how some black people perform their culture can be perceived as being too hip-hop-ish (i.e. the Fresh Prince of Bel Air) or too white (i.e. Carlton Banks on the Fresh Prince of Bel Air). Depending on how a black man presents himself may determine whether he is perceived as gangster (too urban) or a coconut (a black person with brown skin who is trying to personify/represent himself as white). Consequently similar to 'passing' (Piper 1992) in some situations, the different performances that black people express are representations of double consciousness techniques (Du Bois 1903; Fanon 2008) that marginalised groups often perform in order to gain acceptance. Within predominantly white middle class elite universities there may be the aspiration to adopt a white middle class performativity and a desire to subconsciously acquire the trimmings of a white middle class habitus.

9.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided an overview of my participants' accounts of performing and in many cases adjusting or moderating their blackness in an effort to manage a way through elite higher education. A few outlying participants provided accounts of their refusal to conform or substitute their cultural performativity to align more symmetrically with their universities expected norms. However, for most participants, there was a sense of moderating their blackness (Wilkins 2012) through 'switching-up' or managing a double consciousness depending on their situation in which they were involved. This behaviour involved emotional work with risks involved in an effort to ensure when to moderate one's blackness and when one could present their local personal culture as one could risk being interpreted as inauthentic in their attempt to moderate their blackness within their universities' habitus (Reay 2002a). Four of my participants discussed how their ability to perform language was beneficial tool to gain them entrance or acceptance within their

institutions. Additionally several of my participants discussed how they moderated their language and bodily hexis/performativity depending on who they were speaking or socialising with. This chapter concludes by discussion the conundrum and irony that even when black students do moderate their blackness whether through language or bodily hexis (Ingram, 2014)., they may be perceived as a fraud by white students for acting too white or as intimidating for acting too black. At the same time my participants may experience being criticised as imposters or 'sell outs' (McLeod 1999) if their behaviour is viewed by other black people to be too white. Contemporaneously white students are not scrutinised in the same way as black students. White students are able to perform along a performative spectrum: from being ultra-urban hip hop-ish to excessively white and preppy without being questioned about their legitimacy within the university's elite field. In chapter ten, I explore my participants' perceptions of racism and discrimination, as well as how they respond and/or manage their experience with it.

Chapter Ten: Worldviews and the Management of Racism and Discrimination

Racism:

> Individual actions (both intentional and unconscious) that engender marginalization and inflict varying degrees of harm on minoritized persons; structures that determine and cyclically remanufacture racial inequity; and institutional norms that sustain white privilege and permit the ongoing subordination of minoritized persons. (Harper 2012)

People of colour respond to racists and discriminatory experiences in a multiplicity of ways. In chapter nine I explored some of the different ways that my participant moderated their blackness to through their bodily hexis and performativity. This chapter explores the discourse of surprise and tolerance when issues pertaining to racism, discrimination or ignorance are discussed in straightforward ways in my participants' stories. When black people are confronted with racism or discrimination they often make a conscious choice to respond to the insults/abuse in different ways. Some people choose to confront the perpetrator of their abuse, whereas others may choose to minimise and/or ignore the discriminatory instance by 'moderating' their blackness' (Wilkins 2012).

Research suggests that black men face different assumptions and perceptions of their racial performances to black women, as well as different expectations of their gender performances than white men (Fanon 2008; Alexander 2004a, 2004b; Kaiser and Major 2013; Leonardo 2011; Mcgee 2013; Wilkins 2012). These differences also differ by class (McGee 2013; Wilkins 2012). Using a feminist intersectional approach with race, class and gender with Critical Race Theory can help to make sense of some of the complexities black men encounter in their performativity (Berger and Guidroz 2010; Collins 2004). A moderate blackness strategy is accomplished by producing positive, restrained emotions that require black university men to "not see" everyday racism (Wilkins 2012: 45-46). Moderate blackness is not something that only middle class black

students exercise. It is a form of cultural capital that working class – yet middle class aspirant black students may learn in order to attempt to try to fit better within their university's institutional habitus. By moderating their blackness these black students may perceive their actions to help them become more upwardly mobile over time.

An individual's worldview plays a significant role in how a person approaches bigotry. In many instances, a common thread amongst my participants' accounts centred on racism being ignorance or even the denial or lack of acknowledgement of race as an issue. Using moderate blackness strategies can help black students to align more closely with the white middle class habitus of elite institutions. This may enable black students to maintain positive, meritocratic and optimistic views of life which can help to maintain beliefs that it is possible to achieve and succeed despite ignorance or racist occurrences.

Ten of my sixteen participants' accounts emphasised experiences of being routinely involved in integrated situations, which enabled them to foster naturally good relationships with white people. This enabled them to maintain equanimity and good cross-racial relationships. Within elite university settings moderate blackness can be a particularly useful tool for black men, when issues pertaining to race arise because it uses emotional restraint as a strategy to fashion black identities that is aimed at naturalising their membership in middle-class institutions. In this chapter, participants' narratives are discussed in terms of how they position and construct themselves within discussions of racism in a generation that sees itself as diverse and politically and multi-culturally correct (Billig 2002; Tajfel and Turner 1979). I explore my participants worldviews or understandings of the social world through the coping strategies they utilised to respond to and manage (or dis-identify or disengage with) racism and discrimination on their university campuses.

10.1 Confronting Racism

In my conversation with Franco, I asked him a question as to whether he had experienced any situations at his institution that he felt were ignorant or possibly racist. He said:

Franco: We had this one really interesting scenario where it was me, my friend who's black, and [John Doe] this other guy who's very middle-class and white. So what happens is we've got these three hot sort of like South Asian girls, okay. One is Sri Lankan. One is Middle East Asian and the other one is from India. Okay, and we're back at one of their places. And it's like okay great. And I was smoking.
Constantino: Smoking a cigarette?
Franco: Smoking a cigarette. And then someone says (pause) one of the girls says 'oh look you nigger lipped it'. I'd never even heard that phrase before. I didn't even know what it means. I didn't even know what it meant. So me and my friend, the white one, because we were all, you know we were all actually gonna get some (laughs) he looked a bit stressed and he said (pause) you could see him counting 5-4-3-2 and he tried to pretend she didn't say it. And then he heard me say, 'WHAT?!' [said loudly, his emphasis]. Yeah and that just, (pause) I basically ruined the evening for everybody by freaking out. I said, 'What does that mean? What the fuck are you talking about? I've never even heard that phrase'. I started swearing and freaking out yeah. So I was surprised that she said it. I was really surprised.
Constantino: And this was from an Asian woman?
Franco: Yeah she was Asian. But she was international. She wasn't British. So I thought, wow. And so I freaked out at her. We made up in the end. The next day she came and apologized. She brought a teddy bear to apologize and stuff. But even then to be honest, I was pretty pissed off. I threw it away and then I behaved myself. I was just being stupid. **(Franco, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [57]**

Franco describes actually being physically upset by the racial comments made by a girl with whom he and his friends were socialising. He confronts the situation head on, which is risky because of how the dominant group (in this instance white middle class students) will perceive a reactionary response (Burdsey 2011; Sue 2010). At the moment when the racial remark occurred due to its blatancy, Franco is unable to contain himself by moderating his blackness (Wilkins 2012) and expresses his anger to the woman. However the next day when the woman apologises to him, he not only accepts but appears to blame himself for his initial angry reaction to her racial offense. It seems disturbing that to a certain extent Franco blames himself for not behaving properly when he says, '*I basically ruined the evening for everybody by freaking out*' … and when he says, '*I was just being stupid*' for throwing away the woman's 'teddy bear' peace offering.

10.2 Moderating Challenging Circumstances by 'Brush[ing] it Off'

One of the strategies incorporated in moderate blackness include disengagement, which enables the person to avoid the stress of discrimination 'by denying the existence of the problem' (Miller and Kaiser 2001: 80). Another tool is dis-identification with the problem whereby, some people choose to tune out or disengage from the experience to avoid being angered or hurt by a racial experience (Miller and Kaiser 2001). This is achieved by measuring the costs versus the benefits of confronting a situation. When the benefits outweigh the costs, some people cope by voluntarily disengaging with the discriminatory situation in order to minimise the emotional stress on themselves (Ruggiero and Taylor 1997). The following account involves two of my participants who were housemates at the same Russell Group University. In the first extract, John describes an incident that occurred in his final term at university while he and three of his black friends were socialising at a local club.

> *John: So obviously we [John and 3 of his black university friends] were out having fun (…) and then at about 1:30 AM in the morning a scuffle broke out in the club near us. And then out of nowhere, a middle-aged female white woman threw a bottle at one of my friends. And he fell to the ground. And obviously he was angry at this point so he got up in anger. And as he was about to confront the lady he was held back by about two or three bouncers and he was pushed out of the club. So we had to obviously follow him out to see if he was okay. And by the time we got out of the club there were I think about two or three police vans waiting. So we were so shocked because we thought, well obviously we are not the ones who were in the wrong. We are the victims here. My friend has been bottled. We found ourselves involved in a drunken scuffle out of nowhere. And the police were very quick to point the finger at our friend being the starter of the problem. It was a very surreal experience but at the end finally me and my friends talked to the police very calmly. We did not lose our temper. And we were able to amicably resolve the dispute with the police*
> Constantino: And how did that make you feel?
> *John: We were physically angry, because we'd gone to have a good time at the club but then all of a sudden we'd become involved in a scuffle and then you know our friend is injured in the process and then we are labelled as the cause of the problem. My friend thought of suing the club. But obviously he didn't go ahead. We did nothing wrong. And we just tried to brush it off as just, you know one mistake in a drunken affair that got out of hand.*

Constantino: Okay so you don't see it as discriminatory or as an injustice?

John: Yeah I think this was just really a one off. So no I don't think it was a discriminatory thing. It was perhaps an exceptional case of drunken madness that got out of hand

Constantino: Okay only reason I ask is because the fact that they so quickly assumed to that you folks were the culprits, which is kind of –

John: – Yeah, yeah that was puzzling for all of us, to be honest. Uhm, again I'm very cautious to say categorically to say that it was discrimination. **(John, Middle Class, British African, Oxbridge Graduate) [58]**

Although John says he and his friends were 'shocked' by the way they were treated by the club staff and the police for a circumstance for which they were not responsible, he is still apprehensive about calling the incident discriminatory. He said he and his friends chose to '*to brush it off as (…) one mistake in a drunken affair that got out of hand'.* This is an example of attributional ambiguity (Crocker et al. 1991), whereby John finds it difficult to verify whether his account of being profiled represents something that could be concretely called discrimination.

In a separate interview, I had the opportunity to have a follow up conversation with John's university housemate Jay, who was one of the other three black students directly involved in club scuffle. I asked him whether he felt that he and his friends' treatment had been unjust or discriminatory. In accord with John's account, Jay said the experience was not discriminatory. However, as he reflected on the experience his response changed. Jay said:

Jay: Honestly, I think if any of us had even raised our arms or even said anything derogatory we would have been in jail. There's no question about that because they already had their suspicions about us from what happened earlier in the club. So any wrong step from us and we would've been in jail. So I think we had to be very careful not to antagonize an already boiling situation. So I think we were lucky to play it safe.

Constantino: Do you think you would have been treated exactly the same way by the club's bouncers and police if you were three white dudes?

Jay: (Long pause) I think maybe now in reflection I'd say no, I don't think it would be the same.

Constantino: And why is that?

Jay: (Pause) I mean to this day I'm still puzzled as to why we were singled out because I mean it's not as if we had any reputation for being violent or for being aggressive you know. I guess you can say that there are some, some pre-held or deeply held perceptions about how black boys behave. And I think even amongst people who you think are just and are not racist, there are some deeply held, deeply seated conceptions about how black boys behave or should behave (…) To be honest the reason why it never got out of hand was because we all thought about our law degrees. We actually told our friend who had been bottled, look you're about to graduate because he was in the last few months of his last year of law school. So we told him we know you're angry but think about your law degree. If you do anything to jeopardise it now then you will have killed your future forever. So don't try and overreact. Keep your comments calm and keep your cool. And then go home and forget about this. So that's what we said to him. **(Jay, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [59]**

Jay's accounts suggests that he has accepted the reality that regardless of his and his friends non-aggressive behaviour at the club, some people, even those who consider themselves non racist have ingrained pre-conceived notions of 'how black boys behave or should behave as quintessential[ly] mean black men' (Alexander 2004b: 647). Consequently black men may be pre-determined in others eyes to be culpable of acts they have not done simply because they are black. When prejudice or racial insults occur, anger is one of the most frequent responses that stigmatised people experience (Miller and Kaiser 2001). However, my participants were aware that it is risky to act on this anger, as they could be perceived as seen as angry and thus presumed guilty black men. Jay said that an angry response or 'any wrong step' would have resulted in his group of friends being incarcerated for the night. It also could have risked jeopardising the hard work they put into their degrees by causing them to receive criminal records. Instead, the students reacted in a calm manner and did not lose their tempers which enabled them to 'amicably resolve the dispute with the police'.

Often raising a complaint about a mistreatment or microaggression can be counterproductive in the absence of structure through which the racist situation can be resolved. My participants made a conscious decision to 'play it safe' by taking compulsory care to temper their emotions through the exercise of socially

skilful behaviour (Miller and Kaiser 2001; Alexander 2004a, 2004b). By moderating their blackness (Wilkins 2012), my participants were able to achieve their academic goals despite their perception that prejudice was present in relation to how they were treated.

10.3 Things White Staff Said to Black Students

Several of my participants expressed experiences where they felt treated differently by white staff than their white peers were during university lecture theatres and lab environments. This feeling was prevalent in six of my participants' counter-narratives when they discussed their peer-to-peer revision and supervision experiences. The following extracts represent some of their accounts.

Damien: I went to my first economics class, it's a small-group tutorial and I'm a joint honours student. So I hadn't had the same introduction to the course that all the economic students have had. So the very first question that the lecturer has given when he's come into the room is; "Okay has everyone done their homework?" And I put my hand up and said, "What homework?" And the teacher's very first response to me is "the homework that was put up on blackboard you moron!" The first thing I've said is: "I'm a joint honours student. I haven't been introduced to a blackboard yet, you moron!" To which I've been actually sent out of class. And you know, it's like is this really what university life is can it be about?" After class the lecturer caught me walking across the corridor and took me to his little room and we had a conversation about it. And to be honest, he actually had not bad ideas behind why he was being harsh. But he was stereotyping me. He would openly admit it if you asked them to this day that he was stereotyping me. He had assumed because I had my baseball cap on, my big coat on that I was trouble. I didn't even know there was homework. To which he now understands, okay I'm on the joint honours student path. We don't get an introduction to the online resources, which gives you your homework.
Constantino: How did this make you feel?
Damien: It did make me feel like a stereotype. Why are you stereotyping me in the first place? (…) Yeah and he just made his assumptions. The way that I look at the situation is that you should be looking at me like, wow, out of all of these, you know attributes and characteristics which you deem – that you associate with ignorant people yet I am still in this institution. It's your first chance meeting with me, you know what I'm saying? Maybe you can impress upon me the benefits of this [education], rather than making me go at loggerheads with you and the system

immediately (…) I've just been offended that… don't come disrespecting me straight away the first moment that I've met you.
***(Damien, Working Class, British Caribbean, Russell Group Graduate)* [60]**

As discussed in chapter eight, many teachers have pre-conceptions or misrecognitions of black youths capabilities based on culture and performativity (Gillborn 1998; Mac an Ghaill 1988; 1994; Youdell 2004). Damien's account suggests that within higher education some faculty may hold similar pre- and mis-conceptions about black students. Within the same discussion, Damien provided the following account of a faculty member misrecognising him.

Damien: I actually went with [my girlfriend] to him to see him. She had some issue. And we've [the lecturer] had a conversation and all. And he's said to me 'Oh, and what do you do?' And I've said 'I study maths and economics' here. And bear in mind we are in [Russell Group University's] Sociology the Department. And his response to me has been, 'Oh at [name of post-1992 university located nearby]?' Which is bizarre to me because I'm clearly in the University of [Russell Group] right? I said 'No in the University of [Russell Group] – that department over there. And his response has been "Did you get here through an access course?" Now there are many subjects you can get to university through widening access period like social work, I've known media studies, I've known music, but I'm telling you I've never heard of someone going to study mathematics through an access course. The whole concept seemed so bizarre. So I notice what's being done to me, even though, you know I've gotten to this level. And so the guy is still coming to ordinance with such a narrow mind. So I would say that was the most blatant. If he was my teacher I would have challenged him. But because he was dealing with my girlfriend I didn't want to cause any hostilities. I just laughed it off even though it wasn't really that funny.
(Damien, British Caribbean, Russell Group graduate) [61]

Damien is aware that his habitus is incongruent with the elite university field in which he is placed and that stereotypes and 'assumptions' are made about him based on the way that he dresses and performs. However, he is surprised that a Russell Group faculty member within the university's sociology department would hold such stereotypes as it is a field that researches, discusses and often challenges insults and abuses associated with discrimination, stereotype and oppression. It is interesting to note that Damien informed me that his girlfriend is from a white working class background similar to his own. However, her ability

to be a student at this Russell Group University was not questioned. This is an example of 'race'/ethnicity representing a more significant element in oppression than class. When I asked Damien whether he ever moderated his culture he was emphatic that he had made a conscious decision not to moderate his blackness or culture at university. He is offended that he has been judged on his presentation and performativity rather than the fact that he has been smart enough to have been accepted into a joint honours programme at his elite institution.

Like Damien, when I asked Dwayne if he had ever felt the need to change his dress, style or the way he presented his culture at university, he said:

> *Dwayne: So I think I very much sort of kind of wear my hoodies over the my track suits, that kind of thing. My trainers. Yep, I've got my trainers. I haven't felt the need to change. (…) I think I very much just kind of have been true to myself.*
> **(Dwayne, Working Class, British Caribbean Oxbridge Graduate) [62]**

Dwayne and Damien's accounts suggest that they maintained their culture as a means of truth or integrity to themselves. Of my 15 participants only three, Damien and Dwayne, both working class British Caribbeans, and Peter, a lower middle class British African, maintained and refused to adapt or conform the way they presented themselves at their universities. As discussed later in the next chapter, the remaining 12 participants discussed adjusting or moderating their performativity to some degree, in order to align more fluidly with their institutions' habituses.

In addition to the benefits of maintaining ones culture, there are class and race related risks associated with not adapting and conforming in elite university settings. Damien's challenges with the university were prevalent in more than one lecture setting.

> *Damien: Some of them [lecturers] were either classist or racist or something. They were hostile above and beyond what a teacher should be like at school. (…)*
> Constantino: Can you give me an example?
> *Damien: So I've been talking with this teacher in an econometrics class (…) and I've noticed a hostile undertone. Especially beyond*

how he's been talking to other people in this class. So I'm aware of that. But sometimes I think well, maybe I'm just being paranoid. But then I had some big issues with some of the underlying theories in the class so, I went for some extra tutelage from the lecturer, with a few people from class. And I felt automatically like, the guy is not being very responsive to me. He's distant and he's giving me a very short skirt and service[39] which don't really get to the bottom of the issues. So I'm actually feeling, right, I'm being discriminated against. I don't know on what grounds because I'm not disruptive in his class. Yeah I just don't know where it's coming from. So I stop going to see the lecturer and I've resorted to going to see my small group tutor for everything.

Constantino: Did you ever confront the lecturer about how you felt he treated you?

Damien: No I didn't because I guess it wasn't obvious enough. It wasn't like he spoke badly to me in one particular instance above and beyond others, you know? It was just that I got the feeling that the guy was giving me the minimum he could give me at all times. I remember people saying to me, "Don't you think he's acting a little bit strange with you? Have you pissed him off or something? And I'd be like, no.

Constantino: I'm surprised you didn't confront the situation because you seem like someone who doesn't take crap from others.

Damien: I don't really feel like I've got enough grounds to prove it. And it's one of these things, here. I'm not able to point out exactly what he was doing that made me feel like that. But he certainly made me feel like that. (…) I don't know what I had done to offend him (…) so as far as I'm concerned I'm going to put it under the issue of my class and race. **(Damien, Working Class, British Caribbean, Russell Group Graduate) [63]**

Damien is aware that his lecturer is giving him 'short skirt' and it clearly has affected him. Ingram (2014: 11) says that this is a 'phenomenon of looking and knowing you are not liked'. Lecturers are able to subtly impart their impressions of students through their own 'bodily and facial expressions' (Ingram 2014: 11) while simultaneously reacting to the bodily hexis of their students, which is what Damien's account depicts feeling like he is disliked and 'being discriminated against'. Based on the way his body is perceived or misrecognised by his lecturer, Damien may be experiencing a form implicit yet unrecognised symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1990a) based on the way his body is perceived or misrecognised by his lecturer which exemplifies and validates ''middle-class

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[39] In my follow up interview with Damien, I asked him to clarify what he meant by short skirt and service. He told me that the lecture was being 'short, patronising and dismissive and didn't like me for no reason but I think it was because of how I represented my culture. You know my baseball cap, hoodies and my style.'

norms [while] simultaneously invalidat[ing] the norms of the working class'
(Ingram 2009: 431).

Damien said he failed to confront the lecturer with his classist and
discriminatory concerns because he felt he had insufficient 'grounds to prove it'.
A failure to confront discriminatory situations, coupled with feelings of inequality
and ambiguity about justifying their perception of an offense was a common
threat that 11 of my participants expressed in their accounts. It appears that my
participants accepted these experiences as inevitable and impractical to
challenge. Research by Harper and Hurtado (2007) found that there is an
'unwritten code of silence regarding racism' and discussion of race on university
campuses by faculty, administrators and student as the subject doxa, that which
'goes without saying' (Bourdieu 1993b) or is 'deemed too unspeakable' and it is
preferred to go unspoken so as to prevent making 'others feel uncomfortable'
(Bourdieu 1993b: 23). It is also possible that Damien is experiencing a stigma or
microaggression as a result of this stressful situation whereby, there is a
substantial degree of dubiousness as to whether circumstances that occurred
are in actuality the result of racism or something else that he cannot quite put
his finger on (Crocker et al. 1989; Crocker and Major 1989; Miller and Kaiser
2001). The implicit yet subtle nature of covert racism enables microaggressions
to go unchallenged and dismissed as innocuous misunderstandings.
Furthermore, had Damien challenged the perpetrator of the suspected subtle
insult, there is a risk that his actions would have dismissed him being overly
sensitive due to his misinterpretation of the act.

Edmund provides an account where he appears to have his habitus somewhat
aligned with his university. However, it is not fully symmetrical with his university
as he is called out as an imposter in the form of a discriminatory slight from a
lecturer due to his 'race'/ethnicity.

> *Edmund: Like one of my lecturers in front of like 500 students, he
> called me Tiny Temper.*
> Constantino: Tiny Temper the rapper? Why was that? Were you
> acting up in class or something?
> *Edmund: No it wasn't that. Basically he was doing an economics
> equation. I think it was C Plus I plus G minus E X. So he wanted us*

to memorize that. And then he said oh can we try and rap this. And then he said "[Edmund], Tiny Temper, you do it" and everybody was like "Oooooooohhhh"
Constantino: Why do you think he took license to do that?
Edmund: I don't know. He thought that, I don't know you're one of the only black guys in the class you can probably rap.
Constantino: Did he apologise?
Edmund: Yeah he did. He said he was very sorry
Constantino: How did that make you feel at the time?
Edmund: I was like be cool. Like there are jokes, I mean, but it really wasn't really necessary. I just walked out of the class.
Constantino: Did you ever confront him on it?
Edmund: No. I'm not the confrontational type. Anyway he apologised and said that he told his wife that he thought one of his students was going to take him to court.
Constantino: Did you think about doing that or following up with the universities administration about this?
Edmund: No. I haven't got time. I'm trying to get a degree.
(Edmund, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [64]

Edmund's account of being racially insulted in front a full lecture hall is one of many stories shared by five of my participants, though most do not identify the experience as racist but rather as a form of ignorance or banter. This counter-story is indicative of the way many of my participants reacted to discriminatory incidents. Resistance to the institutional and lecturer's habitus status quo comes with risks. It is suggested that Edmund conducted his own cost benefit analysis of his occurrence and determined that it was not beneficial to exhaust copious amounts of energy to challenge a racial microaggression. Plus the lecturer did apologise to him, which doesn't appear to excuse his actions in Edmund's account, but does enable him to reduce the level of anger he had over the situation. Like most of my participants Edmund is 'moderating his blackness' which enables him and most of my other participants to separate themselves from the inappropriate act. He has made a conscious decision to adopt coping strategies to deal with the stigma of discrimination – and unless he can find a very compelling argument for why he should challenge an offensive act or subtle slight. Edmund and the majority of my other participants have chosen to use strategies that help them 'keep calm and carry on' in order to avoid confrontation and keep their heads down, while simultaneously keeping their minds intently focused on attaining their goal: their degrees. Furthermore, there is a faculty-student power dimension that occurs at university whereby students

may be apprehensive interacting with and/or challenging a staff members offensive actions (Peterson 2007; Clark 2008).

Educational settings are supposed to be welcoming, safe, supportive and welcome learning environments where students of all backgrounds fit in. Many institutions believe they provide such a habitus. hooks (1994) says that:

> *Many professors have conveyed to me their feeling that the classroom should be a "safe" place (...) [yet]   many students, especially students of color, may not feel at all "safe" in what appears to be a neutral setting (...)the politics of domination are often reproduced in the educational setting...* (hooks 1994: 39).

It is clear from Damien and Edmunds accounts with discriminatory insults [60], [63] and [64] that they did not feel welcome or treated as fairly as white students because of their colour and the preconceptions and misrecognitions that faculty had about them.

10.4 The Role of Worldviews

As discussed in the literature review, research indicates that adoption of certain worldviews can help to assuage humans' fundamental need to understand their social world and to feel like people of worth (Fiske 2004; Hogg and Abrams 2001; Solomon et al. 1991). Individuals' self-esteem is dependent on their core beliefs and assumptions of how the world works (Greenberg, Solomon and Pyszczynski 1997; Janoff-Bulman 1989; Koltko-Rivera 2004). The following counter-narratives represent some of my participants' accounts of their embodied worldviews of discrimination and the techniques they have used to manage it.

In my conversation with John, I enquired whether he had ever experienced covert or indirect racism. His response follows.

> *John: I think that's a myth. I mean you're either you're racist or you're not. I mean you can't really have a middle ground in terms of racism. It's a clear cut thing that you're deliberately out there to discriminate against someone. I don't think you can have a covert racist. I mean who is that person? What would you say that person*

feels like? Because I don't think that term really exists per se. I think that's a really defunct term. It doesn't really apply, I think the reality is you're either a racist or you're someone who's either ignorant or just misguided. **(John, Middle Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [65]**

John's worldview of racism appears to be one that is a product of moderate blackness (Wilkins 2012) and the need to silence racism (Harries 2014). John's account suggests that he does not believe that someone could be covertly or subconsciously racist. An abundance of research suggests that worldviews also shape how individuals appraise, cope with, and ultimately respond to prejudice and discrimination directed against them or against their group (Major 1994; Major *et al* 2003; Major and O'Brien 2005; Major *et al* 2002a; Major and Schmader 2001). Research suggests that holding such a neoliberal meritocratic worldview about discrimination may enable John to see the people in society as fair and egalitarian. Duru-Bellat's and Tenret's (2012) research found that adults' pursuits of higher education are associated with 'the degree to which they perceive social rewards to be fairly distributed on the basis of merit' (Warikoo and Fuhr 2014: 700). People with higher education attainments 'are more likely to believe that their country is a meritocracy' (Warikoo and Fuhr 2014). This means that if something is said to John that he finds racially offensive, John is likely to construct the occurrence as ignorant, which enables him to believe that it was not deliberately done. Ascribing to this perspective allows John to hold onto his worldview, brush aside the incident and continue with his life (Hafer and Olson 1989; Jost and Banaji 1994; Sidanius and Pratto 1993; 1999). This reaffirms research by Ball *et al* (2011) who argue that people from black middle class backgrounds develop and employ strategies, mechanisms and worldviews to combat racial and social injustice often through avoidance of confrontations.

Seven of my participants were specific about distinguishing which types of comments or actions they believed were acceptable and which were not. In concurrence with Allen's excerpt [66] below, several of my participants made the justification that black people were always going to experience some degree of racism. This suggests that many of my participants have accepted that

certain forms of discrimination must be tolerated because it is inevitably going to occur because 'its just one of those things' (Allen [66]).

> *I think I guess it would depend on the person who's doing it, like if they are saying it in the way of like they don't… they are saying it unknowingly and they're not truly kind of aware of what they are saying then I will try and like explain it to them like "you don't say this because for these reasons" but then if it seems like they've made up their mind and they have a fear of black people or whatever then it'll usually be a kind of thing of like drop it like sort of thing, you can say that to your friends in a corner when I'm not there but don't say it around me, don't try and disrespect me by doing it. But I think for the most part you're always going to get that. Like they're not black, they're not us, they'll never really understand. It's just one of those things.* **(Allen, Middle Class, British African, Oxbridge Graduate) [66]**

In my conversation with James, a working class participant, I asked him if he had any black teachers or role models during his educational journey. He responded 'No'. However he also shared advice he had received from a secondary school teacher with regards to how to cope with racist accounts, which he seems to have adopted as his mantra to succeed in university and his future career.

> *None of my teachers in college were black teachers. In my secondary school however because it wasn't very high up the pecking order we had a lot of black teachers and there was one that taught me history and his name was Mr [X] and he was a very, very inspiring teacher. He was very big on you working very hard because it's a hard world and forget the racism. He said just be the best that you can be and you'll get somewhere.* **(James, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [67]**

James' black secondary school teacher's suggestion (about forgetting about racism and focusing on working hard to achieve his goals) is a common theme and belief shared by the majority of my participants. He appears to be locked into a worldview of racism as something that exists simply because of poor and disrespectful psychological and interpersonal attitudes of people towards each. For James, it appears that if people treated each other better, discrimination or racism would not exist. As a black male researcher I was surprised and amazed by James' interpretation of discrimination, as it seemed to minimalise and

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discredit its prevalent ingrained and institutionalised significance within society. Hall (2002) and Ahmed (2004) assert that racism and discrimination exist due to subtle and deeply pervasive systems that are based on 'real social economic and political conditions that have 'real' structural, cultural, material and symbolic effects on society. Hall states:

> How could race or class exist merely as ideas, when people everywhere are fragmented and bound in their daily lives by their immediate experiences of class and racial structures of dominance? If these were only ideas, then simply by changing your mind, you could change your reality. But the institutions that create and regulate the cultures in which we live are also determined by the social and political relations operating throughout society. (Hall 2002: 453)

Instead of acknowledging racism and discrimination as endemic, socio-economic, political and structurally institutionalised constructs in society, James sees people's personal behaviours as being the culprit requiring change and adaption. Racism perceived as merely a subjective and difficult to prove concept not worthy of challenging could act as a form of racism management and protection to enable James to maintain focus on his goals, without challenging offensive occurrences in his life. However, racism is not a personality disorder or irrational prejudice. It is an ingrained complex, contradictory and anti-human social practice that is everywhere, that adapts itself to the conditions in which it functions (Hall 1996a, 1996c). From a meritocratic perspective, by forgetting racism's presence and focusing on working hard, James is allowing himself to perceive the educational and career playing field as meritocratic, fair and equal for everyone (Major et al. 2002).

When I asked Allen about whether he had any experiences with racism or discrimination, he acknowledged being made aware of it by his parents at a young age. He also emphasised that his parents refused to accept using the occurrence of them as a deterrent for achieving one's goals.

> *Allen: So for me growing up there was definitely an awareness of racism and (…) sort of like that of there was almost an unspoken, not a law but a perception that things were more difficult for black people. We had a couple of run-ins with the police because of*

terrible neighbours that we had in our estate. There was a really strong sense that the police weren't paying attention to us and they weren't taking us seriously. And basically, I don't know whether they [his parents] said this explicitly, but the understanding was that the police men were racist. That what was behind the police is like a lack of care and attention. But they wouldn't talk about their challenges in terms of racism. You know they talked about it being hard to like live in this country, and life being hard, you know hard coming to the new country and starting things, and doing well in Britain is really difficult. Struggling for money. But they wouldn't talk about it in terms of race very often. They wanted me to be ambitious and to not limit myself. They had quite a strong sense of personal responsibility and so I think they wouldn't want me to blame my circumstances on anyone other than myself as well.
(Allen, Working Class British African Oxbridge Graduate) [68]

Allen and his parent's perspective on racism, suggests that it is acceptable to acknowledge racisms presence, but not to use it as an excuse for not achieving despite its existence. Allen and his parents speak about achievement in terms of 'personal responsibility'. For them it was far more important for Allen to focus on being 'ambitious', working hard, keeping his focus on his goals and not allowing racist occurrences to be as accepted as excuses for him not succeeding.

Harries (2014) discussed the political neoliberal climate that many perceive we currently live and how it has enabled many to believe that Britain is a 'post racial' society. She and a host of other researchers argue that the concept of a 'race neutral world' has been imagined to conceal and legitimise racism and protect white privilege (Harries 2014; Gillborn 1998; 2008b; Rollock 2007b). Denying racism or making it neutral enables people to recreate a perception of racism that lacks power relations or what Bourdieu calls symbolic power. By ignoring the 'meanings that effect race', one can ignore the problems of race. This is accomplished by not talking about race or naming or identifying racism in everyday circumstances.

Research indicates that students who perceive having personal control over their lives had a decreased likelihood to see themselves as victims of racism (Shoery et al. 2002). Furthermore, when individuals who espouse a meritocratic worldview experience failure, they see themselves as being responsible for their

outcomes and deserve them because they did not work hard enough (Goldthorpe 2002; Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Crandall and Martinez 1996; Furnham and Proctor 1989; Jost and Hunyady 2002;; Major et al. 2007; Kaiser et al. 2006). Additionally, research by Knowles and Lowery (2012) found that adoption and endorsement by whites of meritocracy as a distribution rule, causes whites to regard themselves as high in merit, thereby allowing them to maintain a self-view that denies racial privilege (Knowles and Lowery 2012: 202). Thus a 'norm internalization' (Knowles and Lowery 2012: 203) worldview of meritocracy by some white and black students causes individuals to focus on themselves, their hard work and talent as being the means to their achievement. Under this world view, if a black person fails to succeed, their failure is predicated on their lack of hard work but never on racism or discrimination. Like Allen's account, five of my other participants (middle and working class) provided counter-narratives involving the denial of racism in public spaces and discourses. For these participants, acknowledging the presence of racism merely acts as a deterrent to focusing on one's goals and may also lead to the black person being singled out as a complainer or troublemaker who raises the issue of racism as a possible factor or scapegoat to justify any problems or failures in their own lives (Kaiser and Miller 2001). Universities are especially difficulty fields in which to raise issues of racism, as these institutions perceive themselves as liberal towers of rational thought where irrational doctrines of discrimination and fascism descend to oblivion when confronted with intellectual discourse.

Often my participants shared discriminatory accounts that they excused as being due to the white person's lack of knowledge about black people. In the following excerpt, James discusses his experience working in a magic circle law firm. The magic circle is an informal term for what are generally regarded as the five leading and most prestigious law firms and the four or five leading London-based commercial barristers' chambers in the United Kingdom. These firms consistently generate the highest earnings per partner and earnings per lawyer among UK-headquartered law firms. James account discusses the challenging ambiguity of determining whether a black person is rejected from a position because of merit or simply because of their 'race'/ethnicity:

James: A lot of them [in the law firm] are friendly but there's hardly any black people. Even the person they wanted to mentor me was mixed race, so it was kind of that's the closest we can get.
Constantino: Do you think that's why they paired you with that person?
James: Yeah, because they thought oh yeah maybe this would go well. (laughs) It was funny because you know what their intent is. They had good intent. In the two internships I was only one of two black people out of about forty at one. And in the other firm I was one of three out of about 30 or so. And I got to go to a lot of networking sessions and hardly any of the lawyers that come to speak are black. Like it's a rarity. Yeah sometimes it's difficult to know whether you are not good enough at a particular point and that's why you didn't get something or whether or not the cliché is because you're black. A white partner at a law firm explained this to me once: it's not really that we don't want to hire women or ethnic minorities but it's easy to get (pause) it's easy to hire someone that you think you are going to get on well with if someone comes from a similar background and has gone to a similar school. It's just easier to have a rapport with them and more likely for them to have a good interview. So it's a circular thing, you know? It's not sort 'of oh yeah he's black. I don't understand him kind' of thing. But that's why you need to be very good. Because if you're very good then they look beyond all of that. And it's just wow, you have a really good academic record and then it's about why are you interested in our firm?
Constantino: So you wouldn't think that was almost a way of (pause) like subconscious racism?
James: No I don't think so. Sometimes they just don't think oh, he might not enjoy it just because there's not really like a lot of, (pause) you know people like me. **(James, Working Class British African Russell Group Grad)** **[69]**

It is suggested that James' worldview prevents him from identifying the law partner's way of selecting interns and future employees as discriminatory. I would suggest that the law partner's explanation of their job searching process is an example of his misrecognition (Bourdieu et al. 1990) whereby people who have come from similar background and have attended similar institutions are favoured over others who may have the qualifications, lack the similar background and elite schooling.

In addition to the law partner's misrecognition that he was discriminating on a basis of select schooling (class) and people from similar background (race/ethnicity), James is also misrecognising the discriminatory occurrence.

James' meritocratic worldview enables him to discount the partner's words as sensible and logical because he sees the partner's argument as classist, not racist. Because James has attended an elite university and has exceptional grades and he has conformed to the habitus of his institution and the majority of its middle class students, he believes that he now embodies the class capitals necessary to be considered recognisable to this firm. In another account, James identified faith as the foundation for his success. He appears to have a meritocratic Protestant work ethic (Weber 2005) which suggests that he believes that as a result of his faith, hard work and persistent attitude, he has acquired the necessary class related 'capitals' to succeed in the aforementioned and other magic circle law firms. This worldview enables James to ignore, dis-identify and disengage with possible issues of discrimination in an effort to keep his eye on his pursuit of the prize by working harder to show that he is worthy of being considered for a position within an elite law firm. His worldview enables him to believe that his diligent and fastidious skills and work ethic will be observed by the firm, which will cause the hiring partners to overlook his 'class' and ethnic background because of his hard work and the excellent skills and capabilities he has demonstrated to them during his summer internship. However, were James to accept the law firm partners' comments as discriminatory, his worldview would sustain a serious blow because it would call into question whether social mobility is achievable through hard work, regardless of one's initial class starting point. Furthermore, if discrimination is considered a factor this worldview becomes dubious, because although it is possible through hard work and a bit of luck to modify one's social class, it is not possible to transform ones 'race' or ethnicity.

10.5 'It's Better to Educate These People Than to Say "Oh You're Racist" Because it Doesn't Fix Anything'

In my discussion with Jay about whether covert or indirect racism existed, he too was careful not to identify something as racist unless it was coupled with aggression. Additionally, his account suggests that should something racist actually occur it is the responsibility of black people to resolve and explain to the person how what they've said is offensive without, naming their action racist.

Jay: Uhm I just always couple it with aggression. So, I'm never quick to say someone is racist because they've been inquisitive. So whether they're asking something about 'uh, do all you guys always like that rap?' I always just see that as an inquisitive mind and it's better to educate these people than to say oh you're racist because it doesn't fix anything. Uhm, So racism is only when, for me, when they go out of their way to be aggressive towards me. So (…) if I'm walking on one side of the street and then [someone] crosses the street to talk to me to to say something offensive about my skin colour. That to me racism. I definitely think it exists. But to define it, is almost an impossibility because especially for a black person once you start saying to say people are indirectly racist, it's very easy to just blame everything on, on someone being racist all the time. Like I know some black people that whatever anything bad will happen them is like 'Oh it's because this person is racist, uh they're just being racist towards me'. That's why I think it's something you should stay away from to be honest. Because there's prejudice in the world that exists, it's something that we have to deal with. But (pause) to just, I don't know imply that someone is racist all the time is just a negative behaviour that's not gonna get you anywhere really. **(Jay, Middle Class British African Russell Group Graduate) [70]**

A common theme in my participants' story regarding racism, was that it had to be intentional and either verbally or physically aggressive. Jay's response to dealing with 'inquisitive remarks' that might be perceived as racist is that black people should 'educate these people' because telling them they're a racist doesn't solve anything. Jay's conciliatory way of dealing with ignorant situations also suggests that if racism is challenged and people are called out for being discriminatory, it is black people, not the offender who receive the bad press and are singled out as trouble makers who are looking to blame anything bad that happens to them on racism. Research indicates that black people and other marginalised group members who confront discrimination are often viewed negatively when they attempt to confront discrimination (Schultz and Maddox 2013; Harries 2014). Marginalised people often attempt to escape marginalised positions by denying or dis-identifying with their subordinate position or by trying not to resemble their 'real marginalised' position (Skeggs 1997b). Instead they try to possess or perform a neutral position so that when issues of discrimination do arise they are able to ignore or deny the effect that racism has on them in an effort to promote the concept that the space is a post racial one (Skeggs 1997b; Harries 2014). Jay's coping strategy enables him to accept the

comments that a white person says that may initially *appear* to be discriminatory as unintentional or inconsequential. This allows him to maintain a worldview of white people as 'racially innocent, well intentioned, and educable, rather than racially hostile' (Wilkins 2012: 41) thereby preserving positive feelings about them. Consequently, Jay is able to preserve positive feelings about them, because implying that someone could be racist 'is just a negative behaviour that's not gonna get you anywhere really.' Although Jay's strategy may be beneficial to his immediate comfort it is argued that it can also have a detrimental effect on society because 'without talking about race, it is difficult to talk about [and address] racism' (Harries, 2014: 13).

Carvallo and Pelham argue that acknowledging discrimination represents a threat to people's need to be accepted and belong in a particular field/environment (Carvallo and Pelham 2006). For most people there is a desire for frequent, positive and stable interactions with others. In an effort for social acceptance, people make efforts to try to g*et al*ong with everyone. Thus racist issues may not be acknowledged or confronted out of a fear of being ostracised (Goodwin et al. 2010). Jay and some of my other participants may also be exercising discrimination dis-identification techniques (Skeggs 1997b) to avoid being stigmatised as 'other' and to gain acceptance and belonging from the 'in groups' (Carvallo and Pelham 2006: 96), in this case the predominantly white middle class group, at their universities.

10.6 Perspectives on Racism and Moderate Blackness

As discussed in chapter six, Methodology, when exploring my participants' accounts of racism, one tool that I used was a video entitled 'Shit white girls say to black girls'. This video was beneficial in enhancing my ability to get my participants to share their accounts about discrimination and racism in ways that that did not emerge as easily with semi-structured interview questions. The following examples represent my participants' accounts of their experiences and how they managed them.

> Constantino: Do you recall any experiences at [Russell Group University] where ignorant or discriminatory things occurred similar to the video you just watched?

Peter: Never in the kind of like in a serious way I don't think. I think people use it as tongue in cheek. I think that's kind of where I think that's where things are in my sort of social circles or work place. I think most of the people I'm around like still come forward with the kind of have a bit of fun with comments about colour and different ethnicities. But no one's racist and everyone knows you're kind of having a bit of fun. So no not really. I think it's rare that I would think: 'God damn that's racist'.
Constantino: So what does being a racist mean to you? Or prejudice? How would you define that?
Peter: Uhm I guess like conceptually it's like a derogatory thing to people with a certain race I suppose.
Constantino: And you've never had that happen to you though?
Peter: Oh no. **(Peter, Lower Middle Class Russell Group Graduate) [71]**

Peter's account suggests that he has never experienced racism in university. He dismisses comments made about colour as banter not to be taken seriously. By claiming a racist comment as a 'joke', Peter constructs himself as someone who accepts the insults as a non-issue. This prevents attention from being directed at Peter over the 'joke' and also enables other white people to perceive him as someone who does not take discriminatory 'jokes' offensively/ too seriously (Burdsey 2011; Billig 2002). Furthermore, not speaking out against a racist comment alleviates Peter risking being too 'politically correct' and unable to take a joke (Pickering and Lockyer 2009, cited in Burdsey 2011: 269). As I was somewhat surprised by his response, in my follow up interview with Peter I asked if he could provide me with accounts where he had experienced discrimination. He responded, 'no the people I associate with don't have issues with race. I think that's a problem that was probably more of an issue when my mother was a kid'. Peter's accounts say that he has lived a life in which he has never experienced racism. Seven of my participants have reaffirmed accounts similar to Peter's where they said they were not aware of discrimination entering their lives. Due to his account of not experiencing discrimination, Peter can only conceptualise that being racist would involve a 'derogatory thing' happening to a person of colour.

Peter may be exercising moderate blackness as a way to explain away or deny possible instances of racism. For instance, when colleagues say things when people make 'comments about colour and different ethnicities', Peter is quick to

suggest that such situations are fun and light banter as he says, 'But no one's racist and everyone knows you're kind of having a bit of fun.' Peter could be responding this way because of the expected institutional habitus of the educational and work environment that he was in (a Russell Group graduate) - and is presently in (working in a predominantly white prestigious business firm) - where there are strong expectations of how he should act within these white middle class organisations.

As previously discussed in the literature review, Reay et al. (2008), Skeggs (2004b), Byrne (2006) and Harries (2014) have argued that a white middle class position represents a position of 'symbolic power' and acts as 'a valuer of others' (Reay et al. 2007: 1042) from which normative values are carved out, that become the definitive determining factors of who 'fits,' or who is acceptable and who is not, in their society. By performing or reacting in a naturalised way to possible situations where ethnic banter has been involved, Peter is neutralising the possibility of any racist undertone being present which serves to 'silence race and racism' (Harries 2014). Additionally the fact that Peter has identified himself as middle class suggests that his own middle class habitus, coupled with the capitals that are embodied in being middle class creates an expectation or requirement that he respond this way.

In my use of the parody video with Allen and Franco, both participants recognised similar experiences that they had with white students on campus who were unfamiliar with black people.

> Constantino: Can you tell me what you think about the video?
> *Allen: (Laughs) Well, like most funny things it's funny because it's a bit true. It's funny because I recognise some of those things. It's funny because of her impression of white people.*
> Constantino: Have you had any of those experiences yourself?
> *Allen: Oh yeah. Yeah. Of course. Touching the hair. At school university. Like it's happened loads of times. (Laughs). Or if I get a haircut like in particular it happens as well. And white people using black slang in an ironic way. So I think what's good about that video is like none of that is like, most of the time it's not done in like an aggressive way of or like in a hurtful or hateful way at all. So it's fine. And sometimes it's ironic. And then sometimes it's not. And sometimes it's reflective of a bit of white ignorance or nervousness*

*around like black people or issues to do with race. **(Allen, Middle Class, Oxbridge Graduate)** [72]*

*Franco: Yeah you hear that stuff like about the hair in particular. Yeah oh, your hair feels this. Your hair feels like that definitely I've had all of that. I have to say some of its just curiosity. It did occur to me that some people literally just don't know. They actually don't know because they're not socially adept and don't know that they shouldn't do that or touch someone's hair. Like, for example people have said 'you're the first person who is black that I've met'. That's a really stupid thing to say. I don't think they were trying to be offensive. I think they were just articulating that they don't really know any black people. And it's only then when I heard all those things that I realised that I was the first. **(Franco, Working Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate)** [73]*

Similar to Peter's [71] response, Allen appears to perceive a lot of the comments that are parodied in the video as non-aggressive, non-malicious, unintentional and non-racist. In line with Jay's aforementioned account, Allen and Franco perceive white people's inquiries about touching his hair as 'ignorance or nervousness' and 'curiosity' rather than discrimination because they are not familiar with black people. It is also possible that Allen and Franco may be exercising moderating blackness strategies (Wilkins 2012) by remaining calm when people speak in slang or touch their hair in order to be better aligned with their university environments. However, when I asked him if he thought we lived in a post-racial Britain, Allen's response surprised me.

Allen: No. I don't believe that we are post-racial in any way.
Constantino: Okay. So then what do you think –
*Allen: – I think I'm around good reasonable people and that I behave in a way that is also good and reasonable so that people are not given additional – – are not given any random opportunity to make negative assumptions about black people based on how I behave. **(Allen, Middle Class, British African, Oxbridge Graduate)** [74]*

Allen's response surprised me, as he seemed to possess a worldview that managed and dis-identified with discriminatory occurrences, thus I thought he would ascribe to a post-racial view of Britain. In accord with Peter, Allen said that how he is treated by white people is based on the fact that he socialised with reasonably minded people and that based on how he 'behaves' he has not given them 'any random opportunity to

make negative assumptions about black people'. This is another example of moderate blackness where Allen presents himself in a way that prevents him from the possibility of being anything that white people might associate with a black stereotype. This is also Allen's way of preventing himself from being seen as a victim.

It is suggested that Peter and Allen's accounts confirm Skeggs' (1997b) contention that often disadvantaged people attempt to avoid being perceived as marginalised – or in this case, black, by taking measures to present themselves as not resembling the 'real' thing. In doing so, people attempt to pass instead as 'neutral' – or British, rather than black. Rollock (2014: 446) argues that part of this strategy requires individuals to deploy 'class signifiers' to help them facilitate acceptance within certain, usually white middle class university spaces in order to convince others that they are legitimate members of the (white) middle class. This can minimise the likelihood of racial stereotyping and racism. Allen and Peter's accounts of moderate blackness in relation to deployment of class signifiers was common amongst many of my middle and working class participants. Their performances are also expressions of what Du Bois (1903) and Fanon (2008) have discussed as double consciousness: adaptive survival techniques implemented to enable marginalised groups to perform as though they are part of someone else's reality (Moore 2005), which in this case would represent a white British middle class reality.

I could relate to my participants' counter-narratives and I am fully aware of my double consciousness and role that I often perform when representing myself in certain environments. I also found myself upset by the burden of responsibility that these men had to undergo on a daily basis, based on how they would react to white people's perceptions of them. In the majority of my participants' accounts, where issues of racism or discrimination were discussed, the felt obligation to moderate or naturalise the apparent act lay on the black participants in order to prevent a possibly negative situation from occurring.

In contrast to the majority of my participants' responses to the video, Alex, a middle class British African Russell Group graduate was emotionally affected by the video.

> *Alex: I think it shouldn't be called "shit white girls say to black girls", it could be "shit white people say to black people" and pretty much variations on those are things I will hear for pretty much the rest of my life and in fact it made me feel very sad, I'm not going to lie, until you see them all like that back to back…at first I thought it was quite funny and uh, I wasn't laughing by the end*
> Constantino: So what mechanisms do you use prepare yourself or to deal with those kinds of situations?
> *Alex: In many ways I'm probably quite well equipped to deal with them because I don't think about them I don't make a plan, I just go in and (pause) I think It's bizarre (…) because I know I've heard statements like that my entire life and I suspect that, like with most things I try and talk through them.* **(Alex, Middle Class, British African, Russell Group Graduate) [75]**

Alex's reaction to the video suggests that some of the examples illustrated emotionally affected him because he experienced them in a way that hurt. In Alex's account, his reaction to the parodied racial situations in the video suggests that he may have experienced racial microaggressions (Solórzano et al. 2000: 60; see also: Solórzano et al. 2002; Sue et al. 2007) due to similar racist remarks that he has encountered 'his entire life'. Racial microaggressions can be intentional or unintentional, yet create the same result which is to communicate denigrating, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to people of colour (Sue et al. 2007). Alex says that he usually confronts racism when it occurs but that there is a tightrope balance that he must walk with respect to when to challenge it. Research suggests (Sue 2010: 55) that the 'most frequent reaction to microaggressions seems to be doing nothing'. It is risky to react to them. Alex must be cautious to know when to confront a situation and when to let it go in order to prevent himself from being labelled the angry black man or 'troublemaker' (Burdsey 2011: 277), who white society may perceive as a person who is looking to find discrimination in everything that occurs in society. Recipients of racism may also fear the risks of speaking out against racism as they may be viewed as risky or 'terrifying' bodies' (Puwar 2004: 52) which can cause stigma. To do so involves emotion work whereby

Alex may exercise coping mechanisms to 'deal with' the occurrences by moderating (Wilkins 2012) or regulating his upset emotions (Major 2011).

10.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided an overview of my participants' experiences managing race and class within their elite universities. Issues of class were usually identified head on. However all of my participants usually found racist occurrences more difficult to pin point. It is suggested that part of the reason that classism was immediately discussed and racisms misrecognised or denied is that class appears easier to manage and overcome. The majority of my participants' accounts described meritocratic worldviews that subscribe to the belief that classed capitals can be acquired with hard work and determination. In other words, one can change their class and become upwardly mobile, but 'race'/ethnicity is not easily changed. Thus to admit that racism is an impacting occurrence on their lives would be a barrier and challenge that would be incompatible with most of my participants worldviews and could prevent them from believing that with hard work they can achieve their goals.

An overarching theme of the majority of my participants' counter-narratives was a denial of the existence of racism and discrimination – except in extreme or physically combative situations. Instead participants suggested that offensive occurrences were due to ignorance, social ineptitude or simply banter of white people. Usually conscious and unconscious decisions have been made to silence or shift racism's centrality from life experiences, because to acknowledge its presence is to acknowledge being a victim, which is painful (Skeggs 1997a, 1997b). Furthermore, to confront discrimination is risky, as its recipient and identifier may be labelled a complainer or trouble maker (Kaiser and Miller 2001) and may be ostracised from their field or university where they seek to have a sense of belonging. Multiple performativity strategies were implemented by my participants to manage, deny, silence and cope with the discriminatory experiences. However there are risks involved in engaging in these strategies: from being perceived as an imposter to the psychological effects of denying that one has been discriminated against. Denial and misrecognition of racism can lead to a silencing of racism which implies that

society is post-racial (Harries 2014). Consequently, failing to acknowledge and challenge discriminatory offenses by attempting to make racism appear invisible has the opposite effect by making it implicit and permeable throughout society, yet more ambiguous and difficult to identify locate and redress.

Chapter 11: Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

11.1 Conclusions and Implications

My research has qualitatively explored, via their counter-narratives, the experiences of 15 BACM students who attended elite HE institutions in England and Wales. My research was underpinned by two overarching aims:

➢ To explore BACM's student experiences studying at predominantly white elite HEIs in the UK

➢ To ascertain how have 'race'/ethnicity, gender, class and culture impacted these students' constructions of their identities on their trajectories to and through elite UK universities.

The primary questions underpinning this research are:

1. How have black males' secondary educational trajectories impacted their experiences in elite institutions?

2. What resources and capitals (economic, cultural and social) do elite university black students perceive, as well as fail to recognise themselves to have? And are these men able to successfully exercise these resources within elite HEI environments?

3. Did participants experience discriminatory incidents during their educational journeys and if so how did they manage these situations?

A subset of questions underpinning the aforementioned explored BACMs accounts of their trajectories from secondary school into higher education through their performativity. Examination of the different kinds of kinds of capitals and resources that these students identified as being beneficial to their success of their academic journeys were also explored. This chapter provides an analytical summary of my four finding chapters.

The first of my analytical chapters (chapter seven), explored BACMs recollections of their behaviour and perspectives of their lives inside and outside

of education during their secondary and sixth form years, to ascertain how this may have influenced their onward journeys to higher education. Over a third of my 15 participants discussed having disruptive or what I have termed B[4]:'bravado and bad boy behaviour' at school and in and around the neighbourhood where they lived. As discussed in the literature review, many black and working class boys seek to portray a masculine image of being 'hard', tough, well built, good at sport, cool or innovative dressers who are on the cutting edge musically (Willis 1977; Connolly, 1995; Epstein, Elwood, Hey and Maw 1999; Connell 2005). This helps to synonymise these men as being quintessentially representative of all things male and may gain them school popularity as well as success and attention from girls (Connolly 1995). This behaviour is not new and has been written about since the mid-1970s (Willis 1977).

Some of these BACM behaviours are a response to feeling alienated within a schooling environment that espouses middle class values (Connell 2005; Read et al. 2003; Reay et al. 2010). Some research demonstrates how schools are a primary environment where dominant notions of masculinity associated with class, 'race/ethnicity, culture and sexual grouping are produced and transmitted (Wang 2005). Several of my participants accounts confirmed this research as they discussed how black youths' hyper - masculinised black performativity enabled them to gain popularity and respect from other students which may have also helped to prevent them from being bullied, yet could have led to them being excluded by teachers at school. At the same time their accounts (e.g. Jason [1]) maintain that their performativity also gained them street credibility which may have prevented them from threatened or beaten and earned them respect amongst other students (Willis 1977b; Sewell 1997; Mac an Ghaill 1988; Mac an Ghaill 1994).

For all of the cultural capital benefits that 'B[4]' may provide these men with their peers, there are an equal set of challenges widely regarded as signalling opposition to the values and practices of the school: their performativity is disincentivised in the perception of the school. Teachers perceive 'B[4]' as disruptive to class and misaligned with their schools and often their own middle

class values. Black and working class white boys who misbehave are seen as aggressive, hyper-sexualised, violent, defiant, disrespectful, intimidating and unintelligent to many teachers (Martino and Mayenn 2001). Consequently boys displaying aggressive hyper-masculinised performativity are often referred to lower tiered educational sets or excluded from school for their bad behaviour (Gillborn and Youdell 2000; Wright et al. 1998; Youdell 2003; Youdell 2006). Four of my participants, James, Damien, Jay and Jason who misbehaved in school were aware that they were unique in not being excluded for their actions. They all attributed their success and ability to avoid expulsion to being identified as being 'smart' by teachers at their schools. A fifth participant, Kevin, said he was 'very lucky' to be smart and he was 'good at sports' which enabled him to get on with teachers while also being popular with students. Only one of the participants, Jay [5] whose past appeared to suggest 'B^4' was middle class. I suggest that most of my middle class participants did not represent 'B^4' because they came from middle class backgrounds and attended middle class schools (see Appendix G – table 10).

Parental influence on BACMs aspirations was also explored in chapter seven. Thirteen of my 15 participants provided accounts where there were parental ambitions and expectations that they would attend university. Parental aspiration was supported by expectations of hard work and a strong emphasis amongst seven sets of parents that their children would successfully pursue educational pathways that specialised in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) or law. Only one participant, Bob, who described himself as coming from an 'underclass' socio-economic background, did not identify parental ambition as an impetus for his success.

This chapter concluded by exploring capitals and resources that my participants said influenced their ability to be academically prepared to gain access to Russell Group and Oxbridge universities. A subset of this section of the chapter also explored participants' knowledge (or lack thereof) of instrumental capital such as afterschool preparations courses and exposure to Oxbridge through open day visits and preparation and a good working knowledge of the Oxbridge application and interview process. Although many participants acknowledged

the existence of afterschool preparation courses like LSE choice, there was a consensus among six of my participants that many black and working class students are unaware of the existence of these programmes or how to access them. For some of my participants, there was an acknowledgement that their schools were ill equipped to support students through the Oxbridge process, because of their lack of familiarity with these institutions application procedures. An implication of these participants' accounts is suggests that the inconsistent variability of schools to provide after school programs has tangible effects on maintaining inequalities related to post-compulsory education opportunities.

In chapter eight, I explored my participants' accounts of their experiences at elite universities. Stories of feeling 'other' or isolated because of their 'race'/ethnicity on campuses were a common theme amongst the majority (11 out of 15) of my participants. Furthermore, class was raised as an issue that separated some of my black working class participants from their white middle class student colleagues. Despite many of my BACM participants coming from middle class backgrounds (which may have enabled them to possess cultural or social capitals to more easily align with the predominant white middle class universities habitus), many still felt like 'others' because some white students had discriminatory pre-conceptions of black men. Working class and middle class BACM accounts of ignorant encounters with white students ranged from queries about their hair and food regimes, to their treatment of women and presumed violence ('have you ever killed anyone?' - Franco). 'Othering' was a prominently featured in 11 of my 15 participants' accounts. Two of my participants, Ted and Duncan, provided accounts of 'othering' in relation to peer-to-peer and staff-to-student tutorial support, that excluded some of the embodied social and cultural capital benefits that were exchanged (Lamont & Lareau 1988) during all white peer-to-peer study groups and staff-to-student tutorial and supervision meetings. Lastly, four of my participants' accounts included discussions around feeling a lack of confidence in comparison to white students. These individuals represented a mixture of working and middle class backgrounds. There is extensive research that discusses middle class advantage conferred by greater confidence in education and its opposite (Gillborn et al. 2012; Reay et al. 2007; Reay, 1998; Read et al. 2003; Ball and

Vincent 1998; Power and Whitty 2006, 2008). I would suggest that a lack of confidence is a significant dimension of BACM student experience amongst many black and working class students, as well as recently upwardly mobile middle-class students.

Chapter nine explored how my participants performed and managed their culture while attending elite universities. Performativity can be represented in forms of social, cultural and symbolic capital. In eight of my participants' accounts, bodily hexis (Bourdieu 1977) and 'moderate blackness' (Wilkins 2012) were exemplified in their performances of dress, body language and/or spoken language. Often, participants discussed performing in a moderate manner in anticipation of preventing or mitigating the effects of discrimination notions by white students about how it was assumed they would perform their culture, but this adaptation presented its own conflicts. For Damien [41, 44], moderating his blackness is not an option, as it would represent being untrue to his own culture. In concurrence with researchers McLeod (1999) and Nguyen and Anthony (2014), Damien's account suggests that 'switching up' is dishonest and he equates it with selling out of his culture for someone else's which he said he refused to 'arbitrarily posit somebody else's culture above and beyond my own'. Whereas in Dwayne's account [43], he takes the diplomatic middle road by moderating his blackness and performativity, and fluctuating between fitting in and asserting his culture depending on the social circumstance.

In accord with several of the accounts in chapter two, some of my participants perceived a double standard. This was represented in Jason's 'Fresh Prince of Bel Air' account [56], whereby black people are not allowed the freedom from judgement to express and perform their culture in multiple ways as white people can. Black people may experience a double edged sword conundrum, whereby they are presumed or expected to be, or perform a certain way by some white people. When they do not, white people are often surprised or uncomfortable with their representation of their own selves. This reaffirms CRT scholars Delgado and Stefancic 2012; Leonardo 2009; Bell 1995; Ladson-Billings 2006, 2005) assertion that whiteness in Western society is considered a normative everyday attitude from which the representations and performativity people of

colour are measured. At the same time, the other side of the sword indicates that often when black people *do* perform in a particular way (that fits within the expected white dominant institutional habitus of a field, in this case elite universities), they may also be judged to be a 'coconut' or not 'black enough' by some blacks in society.

In chapter ten, I explored ten of my participant's accounts of their worldviews on racism, discrimination and meritocracy. This was useful in understanding the different strategies they engaged in, in situations where they chose to moderate their blackness. Some of my participants' worldviews were a product of their parents' perspectives during their childhoods, as in the case of Allen, whose parents acknowledged the existence of racism in society but took a very practical and meritocratic view of how it should be understood and managed. Allen [68], said his parents insisted that he should not let the presence of discrimination limit his ambitions. They emphasised that he should maintain 'a strong sense of personal responsibility and (…) not blame my circumstances on anyone other than myself'. Often my participants (i.e. Franco, Alex and John) described conscious choices to manage their emotions when confronting offensive discriminatory situations to avoid being perceived or stereotyped as 'angry black men' (Burdsey 2011) by white students. In addition to some participants moderating their blackness, John [58] and Jay's [59] accounts represented them and their friends exercising calm and measured performativity, a 'brushing off' an unjust experience with the police. This was consciously exorcised in an effort for these BACM to maintain their meritocratic worldviews of focusing their attention on attaining their academic goals, without the obstruction of being angered and caught up in discriminatory abuses. This worldview was also represented by Edmund [64] who was discriminated against by a lecturer, yet failed to challenge the situation through university administrative channels because he said 'I haven't got time. I'm trying to get a degree'. Concurrently Edmund's account could also indicate a subtle and pragmatic decision on his part to not challenge his lecturer's actions due to the power relationships inherent in his student-teacher relationship.

In accord with meritocratic worldview standpoints, James' account [69] of his conversation with a law firm partner represented what I understand as a misrecognition of racism, yet he accepted the law firm partner's words and actions as just being a case where he like the majority of people in elite law firms are white and are usually unfamiliar with black people, so they are less likely to have contact and relations with them, therefore it is just logically easier and more likely that white interns and will be chosen and hired by the form. James' maintenance of a meritocratic worldview requires him to misrecognise (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) and deny discrimination and enables him to dis-identify himself as a marginalised person (Skeggs 1997) who has been mistreated by the firm.

Through my use of video as a 'third object' (Winnicott 1977) in exploration of my participants' accounts, four participants (i.e. Peter [71], Allen [72, 74], Franco [73] and Alex [75]) may have been more forthcoming about how they felt about discrimination than I think they would have been without the use of this technique. With the exception of Alex, my other participants were more comfortable brushing off or managing racist occurrences. Alex's account says that he experienced a great deal of hurt or 'racial microaggressions' (Solórzano et al. 2000; Sue et al. 2008) from his student experiences. Peter's account [71] represented a neutralisation of racist experiences strategy, whereby someone actually expressing a racist thought needed to pass a very high threshold with him before the occurrence would be considered racist. Research by Harries (2014) argues that this strategy serves to silence discussions about racism, and that this lack of discussion can then aid others in asserting that Britain is post-racial.

11.2 Challenging institutional racism in schools

My research aims to make a contribution to on-going debates on 'race', ethnicity, class and gender in UK higher education. This research has focused on exploring BACM experiences with 'race'/ethnicity, gender, class and culture on journey to and through elite universities. A common thread in my participants' stories is the subtle reality that institutionalised racism and discrimination are still prevalent in the secondary and higher education

environments. In this section, I revisit the issue of institutional discrimination and provide some suggestions for remedies to address this deep-seated problem. However, to prevent putting the cart before the horse, it is necessary to address some of the challenges that exist in secondary education before discussing HE. I am aware that for a study that focused on BACM in elite HE, a substantial amount of my implications and recommendations focus on schools. However this is due in part to the substantial time my participants' accounts spent on sharing challenges they experienced during secondary school which could have impeded their progress to elite HE. My participants' accounts reinforce the extensive literature on the challenges that black students experience in school. However, their experiences go further by their discussion of the implicitness of discrimination within compulsory education that many participants either acknowledged and or chose different coping strategies to manage and/or dis-identify.

Within secondary schools, racism often takes the form of presumptions about some black and working class students' academic capabilities due to the way they present themselves and perform their culture. Research (Gillborn and Youdell 2000; Mac an Ghaill 1997) evidences, and five of my participants reaffirmed, that some teachers perceive black boys' representational behaviour as aggressive and violent. For some teachers, these youth are labelled as trouble-makers whose presence is non-conducive to the institutional habitus of their schools. Research concurs that one of the primary issues that impeded black children is institutional racism (Troyna 1984; Macpherson 1999; Graham and Robinson 2004; DfES, 2006b).

Although schools are often supposed to be places that influence learning understanding and diversity, unfortunately they are often also establishments that actually reproduce discriminatory behaviours through a range of institutional and individual practices (Pearce 2005: 3). Racism is inevitably a part of the school's institutional habitus. One problematic issue in the UK is the high proportion of teachers who are white. Approximately 93 per cent of current teachers in England and Wales are white, with only 1 per cent of teachers classified as black Caribbean (BBC 2014; DfE 2014). Many white people do not

see themselves as belonging to a racial group and consider themselves to a neutral identity (Wright, Thompson and Channer 2007). However being white significantly influences how a person sees the world and black pupils (Pearce 2005:2).

Some teachers associate black performativity with anger, violence and bad behaviour. Consequently they also perceive these culturally expressive black students as being less academically inclined. Black students are more frequently and more harshly disciplined for less serious misbehaviour than their peers (Gillborn 1998; Gillborn and Youdell 2000). Furthermore they are less likely to be praised by teachers than other pupils from the earliest stages of their education (Pilkington, 2002). However my participants' accounts suggest that they were often able to avoid being harshly sanctioned because they were lucky and perceived as smart by teachers. In fact Damien' accounts [3, 4] suggest that for black and mixed race youth at his school, how well one performed academically and how smart one was considered by teachers could prevent or reduce the level of sanctions placed on a student, because of the value that the student could add to the schools exam results.

My participants also provided accounts of managing their performativity in educational settings through the utilisation of moderate blackness strategies (Wilkins 2012). Black students who fail to adjust or moderate their blackness are more likely to be relegated to the lower tier educational sets and/or excluded (Gillborn and Youdell 2000). This is done to minimise the 'problems' teachers assume these black student might cause for more school-habitus aligned students who they subconsciously consider to be more academically able minded pupils. Often teachers are unaware of the stereotypes and prejudice and that they subconsciously possess and fail to realise the negative outcomes that their actions can have on black pupils.

Such actions by some teachers represents misrecognition of the black students capabilities based on their performativity. These students may in fact be quite intelligent, but because some teachers have pre-judged and discriminated against them, their negative future academic fates are often predetermined at

an early stage in the secondary schooling years. The Department for Education and Schools' research found that there was 'largely unwitting but systematic racial discrimination in the application of disciplinary and exclusion policies' (DfES 2006b: 16). I suggest that UK secondary schooling is institutionally racist in its perception of many black and working class students. This institutional racism often occurs without conscious intention as it is often misrecognised by teachers (Gillborn 2008). Schools and teachers need to recognise that racism is still far from being a problem of the past for many students, often because the discriminatory actions are prescribed by teachers towards black pupils within their own institutions. Despite government policy and legislation that emerged out of the Macpherson Report, the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and now current Single Equalities 2010 Act, that imposed several responsibilities on schools and other public bodies to promote racial equality[40] and to engage with discrimination issues (QCDA 2005; Gaine 2005), progress has been slow. A government funded evaluation of secondary schools in England[41] found that in the mid-2000s, two thirds of schools had no targets to change the achievement gaps amongst different ethnic groups (Gillborn 2008, 2010). Furthermore these schools did not think that they needed guidance on how to promote equality in order to combat racism (Gillborn 2008, 2010). Clearly much work still needs to be done.

The UK Governments Equality Act of 2010 requires public authorities and all employers and service providers to promote equality in everything that they do – including ensuring that they meet their legal duties to promote equality. This Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of certain characteristics including 'race' (i.e. ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin) which schools have a duty to abide. The Equality Act is about ensuring equal opportunity for all. Within schools this means providing every individual the chance to achieve their potential, free from prejudice and/or discrimination, regardless of what 'protected characteristics' (i.e. race, gender and sexual

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[40] From 2002 specific duties were placed on schools to: 1) Prepare and maintain a Race Equality Policies with an action plan 2) Assess the impact of all policies on pupils, staff and parents of different racial groups, including the attainment levels of such pupils 3) Monitor, by reference to their impact on such pupils, staff and parents, the operation of such policies, including the attainment levels of such pupils 4) Take reasonable steps to report on progress annually and review and revise the scheme at least every three years. (QCDA, 2009)
[41] Data was unavailable for Wales.

orientation[42]) they might have that are different from others. Even though this is a compulsory duty, I suspect few teachers are aware of the Act and even fewer incorporate it into the life of the school[43].

11.3 Reflections of the Interviews, Future Research and Future Research

11.3.1 Reflections

> *Reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research. Reflexivity [looks] … at ways that a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research* (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999: 228).

Reflexivity concerns the way researchers scrutinise their actions and experiences and how their values affect and impact on the research process (Guillemin, 2004). Nightingale and Cromby (1999) suggest that researchers carry personal, social and political baggage that is reflected in the questions that they ask their participants and how they hear the answers. Reflexivity is not conducted to reveal value-free and objective explanations of a data because qualitative researchers rarely subscribe to the concept of non-subjective, valid and reliable standardised outcomes. Reflexivity is a personal tool to help researchers engage in and manage analytical vacillation between the researcher and participant (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Self-reflexivity can also help to bring 'to consciousness some of the complex political/ideological agendas hidden in our writing' (Richardson 2000b: 254). My on-going reflection enabled me to consider how my participants' experiences were similar to and/or different from my own experiences from secondary through elite university experiences 20 years earlier. In many ways I was an insider with whom my participants were very comfortable sharing their university accounts. In other ways I was very much a frustrated outsider when trying to

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[42] Unfortunately class is not a protected characteristic in the Equality Act
[43] All universities have a duty to develop Equality Policy's and schemes, though putting these plans into action is often not followed through.

understand how these young BACM interpreted discrimination in a very different way than I had experienced it as African American university student in the US.

11.3.2 Future Research

In conducting this research I found that I had so much rich data that I had to be extremely prudent about what to include in my thesis. Anything that was not directly relevant to my central research questions was not included in the thesis. Hence there are areas within my findings that I could not explore and present as deeply as I wanted to. There are also chapters that I developed concerning recurring participant themes that were unable to be included in the thesis due to space limitations. However I intend to use much of the remaining data in future sociological and educational publications. An example of this is a journal article that I drafting on the impact of faith as resource/capital which five of my participants' accounts discussed as being influential in their successful journeys to and through elite universities.

11.3.3 Limitations of the Research

In acknowledging the limitations of my case studies, I do not assert that my research has generalizable impact as it is based on the interpretive experiences and unique accounts of a relatively small-scale case study of BACM participants. Alternatively I contend that due to the paucity of research in this area, it provides insight into some BACM's experiences in elite UK HEIs. Furthermore it is only once we explore elite BACM's HE experiences that we can begin to try to understand and make sense of their challenges and how the habitus of their HE environments might be improved to make their access and trajectories through these institutions more welcoming and supportive.

11.4 Recommendations

11.4.1 Recommendations for change in schools

Research indicates that teachers who do not have strategies for promoting race equality often play down ethnic and cultural differences in efforts to promote colour-blindness by treating all children the same (SRTRC 2011). A research

study commissioned by Show Racism the Red Card (2011) carried out with 148 teachers at schools across England, found that 'only 35 per cent of teachers who had graduated in the last ten years had received training on tackling racism (SRTRC 2011: 13). Furthermore, Hick et al. (2011) found that the majority of new teachers are predominantly white, middle class monolingual females who feel out of their depth when dealing with race equality issues, due to their lack of understanding of discrimination as well as their personal backgrounds.

A good place to start to improve unfair schooling practices would be to require compulsory bi-annual equalities training for all staff at schools. Additionally, under supervision of a trained equalities individual, school staff would be required to develop and refresh an equality policy for their school on a bi-annual basis. The duty to act and practice the ethos of the 'schools' equality policy should also be enshrined in the school's bylaws to ensure they have gravitas. It would be mandatory for these plans to be annually monitored externally to ensure their effectiveness.

The majority of my participants shared accounts of having few or no teachers who were black. It is suggested that some educators may be misaligned or unfamiliar with the habitus of their black students[44]. I recommend that a mandatory part of all new teacher trainees' training require them to participate in a training course on 'race'/ethnicity, diversity and equalities issues. Upon completion, trainee teachers would be required to participate in four week internship placements located in an 'urban' school. My definition of urban would include any school population comprised of at least 25 per cent black people (most likely located in cities such as Birmingham, Cardiff, London and Manchester). Even if a teacher trainee plans to work in a rural school, she or he would still be required to participate in this programme and would need to be sponsored by the UK Government to partake in a four week placement in an urban school. Trainee teachers would become student buddies with four students of colour (one per week) and shadow their daily lives (i.e. class room, sports and afterschool/faith groups involvement, etc.) to gain insight into pupils' daily routine and lived experiences with racism and discrimination.

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[44] Damien is the only participant who had a black secondary school teacher

A Critical Race Theory perspective emphasises and challenges teachers to recognise their significant influence and power in white teacher-black student learning environments. Furthermore, CRT pushes teachers to acknowledge their often discriminatory presumptions/misrecognitions about students based on their 'race'/ethnicity and/or hyper-masculinised performativity. By engaging in a buddy programme with black students, it is hoped that misrecognised presumptions of these students would be exposed and challenged to inform teachers of their discriminatory pre-conceptions.

Teacher trainees should be required to conduct one-to-one interviews with students of colour about issues of racism, on which findings would be drafted as part of their teacher training internship experience report. Teacher trainees should also be required to have one dinner with each student and their family or carer, with an emphasis on the teacher asking the family members/carers about their experiences with discrimination. At the completion of the internship, teacher trainees would have to draft a report that would describe their observations as well as provide them with an opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs and behaviours and how the experience affected them. Additionally, teacher trainees' papers would need to identify three things that they believe could be improved within their embedded school in order to raise awareness of discriminatory issues while fostering racial equality.

11.4.2 To apply or not to apply?: Making elite universities welcoming places for 'people like us' to consider

Throughout the majority of my participants' accounts a recurring factor that they discussed contributing to their decision to apply to elite universities were their visits to university campuses. Appendix G, table 10, indicates that 11 of my 15 participants were involved in university visits to Russell Group institutions. Five of my working class participants - Dwayne, Kevin, Duncan, Edmund and James - provided accounts of visiting Oxbridge. In accord with Dwayne's account [17], for these students, seeing the campus and becoming acclimated with its environment was influential in their decisions to apply to Oxbridge. Dwayne mentioned that his university visit to Oxbridge was a 'one off' that has not been

repeated at his secondary school since he graduated. Only two of these five participants were successful in their applications. However, their accounts suggest that a factor that influenced their decision to apply was their ability to visualise the possibility that Oxbridge could be a place where people like them could fit it.

Considerable research (Ball et al. 2002; Bathmaker et al. 2013; Bourdieu 1998; Bradley et al. 2013; Reay et al. 2009a, 2009b; Ridley et al. 2005; Warikoo and Fuhr 2014) has discussed the fact that working class students often 'self-exclude themselves from the process of ever applying Oxbridge and Russell Group universities in general because they don't see them as places for people like them. My participants' accounts suggest that, in addition to having the academic skills and capabilities to apply to elite universities, an important resource that is beneficial in promoting black and working class students' consideration of elite universities is a university visit to the campus(es).

University coach trips visits are expensive and can be cost prohibitive to may black and working class students. Elite universities should be involved in organising trips with State schools located in diverse socio-economic communities. University visits to elite universities should be offered to students when they are in years seven, eight and nine of their schooling. This would provide students with an elite university perspective at an early enough stage in the academic coursework to enable them to realistically consider whether elite universities interest them. This would also provide students with sufficient time to academically prepare themselves for the rigorous application process. Elite institutions should subsidise these trips for students who cannot afford to participate. These coach trips should involve overnight stays at the universities' dormitories or halls. Wherever possible, students should be paired up with currently attending students who are from similar class and ethnic backgrounds, to allow them to observe examples of people who are like them who are attending an elite institution. This exchange would also enable black young people to ask students questions about their experience and adjustment to an elite institution, which would most likely not be raised by students were they to

be taken on a typical open day at an elite university.

11.4.3 Improve BAC knowledge about Russell Group application processes.

In Chapter seven, in the 'knowing yet not really knowing section', Nine of my participants' counter-stories discussed similar issues regarding lacking adequate knowledge about Russell Group and Oxbridge academic requirements and application processes. Several participants' experiences suggested that this lack of information placed them at a disadvantage when considering whether to apply to these institutions (see James [13]). However, several participants' accounts provided experiences of ways that they were successful in gaining beneficial knowledge that aided them in preparing for elite applications, through after school and Saturday programmes that they attended. Five of my working class participants - Kevin, Duncan, Edmund, Dwayne and James - and one of my middle class participants, Allen, discussed the benefits that they gained from attending after school or weekend academic programmes (Appendix G, Table 10). Their accounts suggested that these programmes were instrumental in developing their confidence and a motivational mind set, which encouraged them to believe they could achieve the grades required to attend an elite university. Based on their accounts I contend that school programmes, formal and informal were an important resource that assisted these black students in resisting the trend to not apply to elite universities. Elite universities should be involved in funding and delivering more programmes, like 'LSE choice' in diverse working class school environments, which often lack the knowledge and resources to inform and prepare their students for elite applications. This would enable these students to be provided some of same knowledge base about elite HE applications as is commonly provided at private schools (and some State schools) in predominantly middle class communities.

11.4.4 Improve Staff-Peer and peer to peer support for black students attending elite HEIs

The aforementioned recommendations have focused on issues raised in my participants' accounts prior to being accepted at an elite university. However, for the few black students who do attend elite universities, a challenge that many of

my participants' experiences discussed was the problematic nature of staff tutorial-supervisory relationships with black students and white peer-to-black peer study group relationships. In chapter eight, six of my participants' accounts discussed the different treatment they experienced in staff tutorial and peer study group situations. In addition to many feeling isolated and 'other' on campus, additional challenges ranged from the different relationships beyond the core subject of study that they felt white faculty forged with white students compared to black students (Ted [33]), to the lack of 'peer or study buddy' support that came from studying with other students, that would have enabled them to perform better academically (Duncan [34]). Staff at elite universities, who are predominantly white, may misrecognise that they establish different types of relationships with black and working class students during tutorials and supervisions, than they do with white, middle class students during tutorials. This may be due to the fact that they these staff more seamlessly relate to people who are most like them; usually white and middle class people. A Critical Race Theory approach to improving this problem involves working with white faculty to make them uncomfortably aware of misrecognitions through workshops and proactive training to assist them in learning how to establish a rapport with black and working class students similar to that they which they often have with other white middle class students.

Elite universities should be required to provide staff with annual equalities training. Additionally, a safe space where black students can have frank accounts with senior staff about how they feel about the supervision that they are receiving would be beneficial. Staff need to need to foster more open and welcoming student study environments for peer-to-peer study groups by organising ethnically diverse student study groupings in their courses that encourage black and white students to see the benefits of working and learning together.

11.4.5 Challenging the educational structures of race and class through community engagement

hooks (1994) and Freire (1996) asert that education should achieve a degree of social and political transformation which they call 'conscientization'. The

relationship between education and an awareness of the politics of race and class was evident in a few of my participants' narratives. Community activism was cited as one motivator for studying, but this theme emerged most strongly in relation to careers, which I was unable to elaborate on in this thesis due to space constraints. Three of my participants - Allen, Kevin and Dwayne - sought to challenge the structuring effects of race and class by transmitting the cultural capital they had gained at university into community service. Furthermore, although not entirely community focused, several of my participants' accounts expressed a desire to enhance the academic and economic opportunities for future generations of people of colour from the communities where they grew up, through their own future career paths, which suggests their conscientization.

It is suggested that elite universities become more involved in social justice programmes in some of the working class and often socio-economically challenged communities where many participants grew up. This could be accomplished though the elite universities' establishment of study preparation programmes with schools, local community centres and faith organisations located in areas that have socio-economically and ethnically diverse students. The programme would involve a tutorial and mentoring scheme involving university staff[45], as well as participation from existing elite university students. Through expressing an interest in improving the conditions in these schools and communities, elite institutions (i.e. faculty volunteering their knowledge and services to local community organisations) will be showing that they are aware, can relate to, and are committed to helping to improve conditions in these areas. Through elite institutions and their staff investing their time and resources in these communities, bright, working class black students may become more inclined to see themselves as having some common ground with these faculty and their universities. The consequence of these interactions may cause young black people to be less inclined to perceive that they will feel like 'others' at elite universities, which could reduce the likelihood of self-excluding

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[45] It is particularly important that mid-level and senior staff participate in these programmes as their involvement would provide the programme with more gravitas. Furthermore, these staff are more likely to be in positions where they can effectively campaign for improvements/reductions in institutional discrimination and misrecognition within their institutions.

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themselves from even considering to apply to these institutions.

11.4.6 'Otherness' and ways to combat the black parochial London and urban city HE attraction conundrum

Four of my participants discussed apprehension they had felt at the prospect of attending an elite university. They felt either because of class and/or their 'race'/ethnicity that they would feel like 'others', as they did not think the institutions were for 'people like us' (Reay et al. 2009). As discussed in the literature review and in chapter seven, several of my participants' accounts of their university experiences discussed being in foreign environment or 'fields' where their culture, class and habitus was not compatible with that of the University's institutional habitus. In an effort to find comfortable environments where black students 'fit in', research suggests that many students apply to universities where there are more people with ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds similar to their own. As discussed in the literature review, in the case of most black students, there is a tendency for the majority to attend universities in metropolitan areas such as London and to a lesser extent Birmingham and Manchester (Bhattacharyya et al. 2003; Boliver 2012). I would suggest that for many black students and parents, there is an apprehension of the unknown; a fear of being located in environments where there is minimal black representation. Some black students fear experiencing a cultural misalignment of their habitus with the habitus of certain elite universities that are located in non-urban areas, with concerns including that a rural elite university may not have access to the everyday needs of black students. These parents want their children to study in educational environments where there will be 'people like them' on campus to assist in their acclimation to university.

In parts of my discussion with Allen, not included in the analysis, he spoke about some of the everyday anxieties that parents and prospective black students shared with him when attending open days at his institution. Common questions ranged included 'How is black culture and music represented and supported here?; How am I going to get the food that I like?; and 'where am I going to be able to get my haircut?' These are all important concerns that black students perceive may not be readily accessible to them at Russell Groups

institutions located in non-urban areas. As discussed in the literature review, it is suggested that with the majority of elite universities being located in non-urban, middle class areas, a 'psychological self-exclusion' process (Reay et al. 2005) may occur amongst black (and working class) students and their families, whereby these universities are dismissed as educational considerations before the application process has begun. Like black students, research on working class white students and their parents in Wales who are in the process of selecting university applications, suggests that they too make similar conscious decisions to keep close to home environments where they are ensure a sense of cultural comfort and familiarity with their educational terrain (Mannay 2013).

I suggest that it is a logical propensity for black parents who are in the process of assisting their children to select a university to seek out 'safe option' institutions, where there are likely to be more students in attendance from ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds similar to their own. It is understandable that students and parent choose locations where they will have access to their common necessities and creature comforts while simultaneously feeling comfortable in their surroundings. Hypothetically, were a predominantly black elite university in the UK to exist that was located in predominantly black or minority ethnic environment, it would be interesting to explore how many white students and parents would to choose to attend such an institution over a 'safe option' institution where there were more representations of people like themselves. It is likely that such a choice would stand outside the comfort zones of many white families. Most likely the majority of white parents and children would choose to attend a predominantly white elite university where they would have the security in knowing that there would be more 'people like them', from similar backgrounds and cultures around them.

11.4.7 Institutional racism in elite universities: admissions and general staff

Research details a widening of HE participation amongst black students over the past thirty years. However, as discussed in the literature review, fair admission access for black students applying to elite institutions is questionable. There is over two decades of research that details Black,

Pakistani and Bangladeshi applicants being considerably less likely to be offered places to attend Russell Group institutions – even when they have obtained the same A-level grades as their White peers. Boliver (2015) says 'something else' may be transpiring in elite admissions processes. In accord with Boliver, I would suggest that it is possible that some staff in admissions processes may misrecognise that they are subconsciously prejudiced against admitting too many black ethnic minorities – even when they have the equivalent scores as their white counterparts. For some faculty involved in admissions, what a fair balance should look like in in terms of ethnic representation of the student body may be in question, which subsequently works against high scoring black students (Boliver 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2015). It is suggested that this misrecognition is a hidden yet implicit factor within the institutional habitus of these universities. In order to redress the unintended bias in the admissions processes, university staff should be involved in annual equalities training and research events that require them to reflect on their own practices. In order to effect positive cultural change within elite institutions there is a need for staff to have greater involvement with prospective black students to help them be more cognisant and able to relate to the perspectives and habituses of these individuals.

Lastly, Russell Group universities should be bolder and less risk averse with respect to recruitment of black students to their universities. The organisation of a 'majority black' widening participation team is suggested as a way to engage black students by making them aware that there are people like them studying at the elite university. Recruitment prospectuses need to be bolder and more representative of black students who look like them rather than the predominantly white middle class pictures that are routinely found in these fliers. Outreach should also involve the use of social media through avenues such as Facebook and Twitter in areas that black students are more likely to read. Universities should tap into the resources of the few existing black students on their campuses to gain a better understanding of what marketing and recruitment tactics would be most amenable to them, to help them rebrand some of the universities' materials.   This type of recruitment could go a long

way towards dispelling myths that these institutions are not for 'people like them'.

11.4.8 The need for robust strategies to increase black faculty representation on elite campuses

Several of my participants' accounts discussed their experiences with racism, discrimination and stereotyping in chapter eight. Solórzano (1998) describes these incidents as microaggressions which are a predominant device through which racism and discrimination are transmitted in elite HEIs. As discussed in chapter ten, often these subtle offenses occur through multiple interactions that black students have with white students and faculty at their institutions. Although research (Solórzano 1998, Sue et al. 2007), suggests that it is healthy to challenge the donors of microaggressions with education, there are great risks involved in doing so, with outcomes that can be counterproductive. As a consequence, many of my participants' accounts describe situations where they adopted coping strategies to respond and manage these offenses by moderating their blackness, shrugging off, or denying the microaggression. When microaggressions come from the actions of staff (as in the case of Damien [61, 63] and Edmund [64]), the power dynamics of faculty-student relationships often ensure that those offended will suffer in silence rather than challenge the discriminatory perpetrator. Regular occurrences of microaggressions can lead to black students being cautious and distant about their future interactions with white staff and students. Compounding this problematic institutionalised racist environment, is the under-representation of black academic staff, whom black students might seek out for advice or support.

Negative racial stereotyping is difficult but important to challenge in educational settings. One of the most effective strategies for tackling stereotyping and raising achievement for BME pupils is through an increased presence of BME faculty at elite universities. The majority of my participants said that they had no black faculty during their higher education experiences. However, John and Jay were fortunate to have the only black faculty member on their campus as a tutor and mentor who they identified as inspirational, supportive and advisory to both of them (John [37]).

Throughout the academe, an endemic institutional problem persists due to the lack of black academics. There is a need to increase the number of black staff at various levels in HEIs – and particularly in elite institutions. Shilliam (2015) demonstrates that Black people remain under-represented in staff positions across the university system. Nationally, black people comprise one point two per cent of all academic professionals in the UK, yet blacks represent three point three per cent of the UK population and six percent of Britain's national student population (Shilliam 2015). At the same time white people are over represented in higher education as they constitute 87.23 per cent of academic professionals yet represent 86 per cent of the UK population (HESA 2015). Of the 19,750 professors in the UK, only 85 are black (Grove 2014; HESA 2015; UCL Panel 2014; Richards 2014). Furthermore, there are only five black academics in the entire UK who are in senior management roles within universities (Shilliam 2015).

Improvement in faculty representation can be facilitated through diversity training to raise awareness of racism and to empower staff involved in human resources to reflect upon and challenge their own and others' stereotypes, (mis)understandings and unconscious bias about race, as well as their hiring practices (Sewell 1997; Pearce 2005). Development of an equalities strategy that is instituted through active initiatives to recruit black faculty and routinely monitor the number of black applicants who are shortlisted and interviewed for advertised positions, can help to improve who gets to the interview door. Lastly it is recommended that for a period of thirty years, positive discrimination/affirmative action strategies be implemented to increase black and BME representation at elite universities. In a manner similar to the way the all-women shortlists implemented by the Labour Party (though available to all political parties) such policies should be carried out until there is a substantial increase in the representation of black and BME faculty in higher education. At the end of this fixed period of time, the numbers of black staff who are represented at elite universities in lower, mid and senior management[46] roles should be reviewed to determine if the strategy has made considerable

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[46] For example president and vice chancellor levels

improvements in representation levels or should be extended for an additional period of time due to minimal increases..

11.4.9 National Policy Recommendation

To achieve sustainable and long term improvement in the numbers and the positive experiences of black students attending elite universities, the Government needs to acknowledge and accept that institutional racism in education is a national issue of concern, similar to the way it is focuses on literacy and global educational competitiveness issues. If the Government is serious about tackling discrimination in higher education it needs to enforce the requirement that universities not only embrace the Equalities Act 2010 but also act and utilise the legislation in the everyday practices of universities as workplaces, through implementation of a national strategy. The strategy would need to amend the Equalities Act to recognise class (specifically working class people, using measure related to socio-economic deprivation) as a protected characteristic[47]. This Government strategy would need to establish targeted outcomes for schools and universities, requiring these institutions to provide examples of how they are working to effectively combat inequalities related 'race'/ethnicity and class in education. In order to foster effective equality in education, elite universities would be required to provide proof of increases in black admission rates and black staff hiring rates, through annual reports that provide specific, measureable, assignable, realistic and time specific (SMART) outcomes. It is hoped that, over time, a national strategy would help to reduce disparities in black and working class students attending elite HEIs and increase the representation of black staff at these institutions. Without a dedicated national strategy, which acts to challenge the educational ethnic and class status quo in HE, the institutionalised challenges shared in my participants' accounts will remain unshackled.

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[47] Under the Equalities Act 2010 'race'/ethnicity is a protected characteristic. Class is not.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Letter of Recruitment to Russell Groups

Cardiff School of Social Sciences
Director Professor Malcolm Williams
Ysgol Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol Caerdydd
Cyfarwyddr Yr Athro Malcom Williams

Month Day, Year

Cardiff University
Glamorgan Building
King Edward VII Avenue
Cardiff CF10 3WT
Wales UK

Tel *Ffon* +44(0)29 2087 5179
Fax *Ffacs* +44(0)29 2087 4175
www.cardiff.ac.uk/

Prifysgol Caerdydd
Adeilad Morgannwg
Rhodfa Brenin Edward VII
Caerdydd CF10 3WT
Cymru Y Deyrnas Gyfunol

Dear [Professor/Master/Mistress/Principal/
       Warden/President/Provost/Lord/Sir X],

I hope you will forgive this somewhat 'out of the blue' request. I am a first year African American PhD student at Cardiff University. I am writing to you following the suggestion of my supervisors, Professor David James and Dr. Katy Greenland.

My research focuses on the experiences of final year undergraduate British African Caribbean males attending some of the more prestigious UK institutions. I am keen to increase the number of such students in my study, and my hope is that you may be able to help me make contact with one or more student(s) who may then consider participating.

I have enclosed two copies of a flyer which is fairly self-explanatory, and would be very grateful indeed if you could pass this on to students who may be interested in participating. Alternatively, it could perhaps be displayed so that final year undergraduates might see it around the start of the term.

An overview of the study can also be seen on the Facebook page I have created for the project. A printed copy of this is attached, and the web address is given below.

I do realise that you are very busy indeed, but would greatly appreciate your help in passing on my information and contact details to anyone you think may be interested in participating in this project. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me (or either of my supervising tutors). My own details are as follows, and those of my supervisors are at the bottom of this letter.
DumanganeC@cardiff.ac.uk
07931729602

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Constantino Dumangane, Jr., MsC, JD
PhD Student
Cardiff University School of Social Sciences, Education
2nd Floor, 1-3 Museum Place, Cardiff, UK, CF10 3BD

Facebook link:
http://www.facebook.com/pages/British-African-Caribbean-University-Research-Project/266353123438744

Supervisors:

Prof David James – Tel: 029 2087 0930. Email: JamesDR2@cardiff.ac.uk

Dr Katy Greenland – Tel: 029 2087 5379. Email: GreenlandK@cf.ac.uk

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Appendix B - Student Recruitment Flyer

Appendix B – Recruitment Flyer

Are you a British African Caribbean Man in your third or final year of study at one of these Universities?

- University ▄▄▄
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➤ Would you be willing to participate in an informal face-to-face discussion about your life, your experiences at university and your ambitions are after graduation?

➤ If you would like to take part or want more information about the project, please check out my Facebook page or feel free to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY PRIFYSGOL CAERDYDD

Constantino Dumangane
Phone: ▄▄▄▄▄
Email: DumanganeC@cardiff.ac.uk
Facebook - Page: British African Caribbean University Research Project
Address: Cardiff University, School of Social Sciences, 1-3 Museum Place, Cardiff CF10 3BD
Recruitment Active: ▄▄▄▄▄▄▄

Constantino Dumangane 07931729602 DumanganeC@cardiff.ac.uk

Appendix C – Participant Information Sheet
Participant Information Sheet

Thank for taking time out of your busy schedule to be interviewed as part of my research study

The information gathered from this study is strictly private and confidential. All personal details/information shall be made anonymous and kept private to maintain the privacy and confidentiality. A copy of the final transcription can be provided upon request. If you have any questions about the study please feel check out the Facebook page at: http://www.facebook.com/pages/British-African-Caribbean-University-Research-Project/266353123438744 or feel free to contact me on 07931729602 or at dumangancc@cf.ac.uk.

Who can take part?

Any young male who identifies as British African Caribbean, black or mixed race between twenty to thirty-three years of age who is enrolled in their third (final) year of undergraduate study – or has graduated within the past 11 years from an elite university[48] in England or Wales.

What is involved?

Your participation will involve two interviews/conversations. The first interview will occur during your second or final year of university study.

A second interview will commence 3 to 12 months after you have completed your undergraduate degree where we will have a conversation about your current work and or educational experiences.

The conversations will be videotaped (where possible), digitally recorded and transcribed. Each interview will be followed up with a telephone call or Skype conversation to check my understanding of the discussion as well as to revisit any issues that may require clarification.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Only you, my supervisors and I will have access to the information you provide. All recordings and transcripts will be anonymised. Prior to any recorded conversation you will be asked to select a pseudonym (false name) for yourself to help maintain your confidentiality

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[48] **For purposes of this research elite universities include: The colleges that comprise of the Oxbridges and the 24 Russell Group Universities**

and anonymity. This will be the only name used throughout the entire research process and in any future publications.

Additionally I will change any other identifying features including the names of family, friends, universities and places of residence, to avoid identification and to maintain your anonymity. Any sensitive information that is shared will be afforded the utmost care and anonymity. Records of our conversations will be stored by pseudonym in accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act. Surplus background information on participants will be destroyed. All data (digital and video recordings) will be kept in a locked storage unit or on password protected computer files for a minimum of five years in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1994).

Where and when is the research happening?
The interviews will happen at a time and place convenient to you. This can be organised as soon as you have given your consent to take part.

How will the research that is collected be used?
The information that you provide will be used for two things: I will analyse the information and use portions of it in my PhD thesis, and I may publish the information in academic research articles, books/chapters and conference presentations.

Can I withdraw?
If at any time you decide that you do not wish to take part in the study, you are welcome to withdraw with no questions asked. Just send me an email, write to me at the address below or call me to let me know that you do not wish to take part. I will then remove all recordings and transcripts of the interviews you participated in from the research.

Who is the researcher? Who is funding the research?
The researcher is Constantino Dumangane, Jr., PhD student at Cardiff University School of Social Sciences (Education pathways). The research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. You can contact me in the following ways:

Email: dumanganec@cf.ac.uk
Phone: 07931729602
Post: Cardiff University School of Social Sciences
                 1 – 3 Museum Place
                 Cardiff, CF10 3BD

If you would like to take part in this study, please complete the consent form on the next page and return it to me.

Consent Form

Please read the following statements and initial the box next to them to confirm you agree with them.

	Please initial
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
I understand that a copy of my interview transcript can furnished to me upon request.	
I understand that extracts of my words from the interviews may be used in the following ways: • A PhD thesis • Academic research papers, books/chapters and presentations	
I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.	
I agree to take part in the study.	

_____   _____
Signature of participant   Date

Appendix D - Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement
for
Transcription Services completed on behalf of Constantino Dumangane Jr.

I, _____, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all Dictaphone and computerised USB files and documentation received from Constantino Dumangane, Jr. related to his doctoral study on: *The Experiences of British African Caribbean Men in Elite Higher Education in England and Wales*. Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents;

2. To not make copies of any dictaphone or computerized USB files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Constantino Dumangane, Jr.;

3. To store all study-related dictaphone or computerized USB files/materials in a safe, secure location (e.g. password protected if stored electronically, or in a locked filing cabinet) as long as they are in my possession;

4. To return all dictaphone or computerized USB files and or study-related documents to Constantino Dumangane, Jr. in a complete and timely manner.

5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed) _____

Transcriber's signature_____

Date _____

- **Please make entries to indicate approximately every 3 minutes of dialogue/conversation**
- **The rate of pay for this work is £1/minute of transcription. In other words, for a 60 minute interview that you transcribe, you will be paid £60.**

Example of transcription [25.05 – 33.08]

[25.05]:
Constantino: Did you feel better equipped the second time?

Dwayne: Yeah I think both times because there weren't massive expectations I could just kind of go in and try my best. And you know if it happens or if it doesn't, I haven't really invested anything … the first time I really didn't know what to expect.

Constantino: Right so it's not like your school did any prep with you about how to do these exams or anything else?

Dwayne: Uhm no, So it was just one of those things [where the] systems weren't in place to kind of help me during the application process. So even kind of speaking to my teachers about kind of producing the application, they just didn't really know how to help me.

Constantino: So it's not something that they were used to?

Dwayne: No no no no …

Constantino: Do think that there's a big difference between the types of support there [at a State Comprehensive] and say Public school?

[28.07]
Dwayne: Definitely. Uhm, I think it's very much expected that I mean I think it's why a lot of parents will pay the money with which they do pay cause they want to see their children at like Halvridge and Yalebridge or that type of University. So it's expected that those schools will kind of provide better uhm yeah just preparation for the whole application process. And I think definitely I mean a lot of schools and it's a lot more common for some people coming to Halvridge where a lot of people had been to this kind of school before or you have 10 other people who were in other colleges here from that [secondary] school from your group who are here and they have sort of kind of contacts. Yeah it's very different.

Constantino: So do you think a lot of it is about who you know and the context you know before you get here in terms of the people you were just talking about?

[31.40]:
Dwayne: Uhm I think that that can definitely help as well. I think a lot of it will be through siblings and through brothers and sisters sort of having somebody who went to Halvridge like the year before and can kind of tell you about the tutors and a bit about the institution and what to expect. I think that kind of situation would really help a lot of that kind of information just kind of wont be passed down if you don't have those contacts.

Appendix E - 'Shit White Girls Say to Black Girls' Video DVD

Appendix F - Pen Portraits

Appendix F - Table 9: Participants' Biographical Pen Portraits												Page 1
Name	Age	Race/ Ethnicity	Class Other Info	Single/Dual Parenting	Mother's Race/ Ethnicity/ Birth Origin	Mother Completed Secondary School Location	Mother's UK Post-Secondary Education or Qualifications -Occupation	Father's Race/ Ethnicity/ Birth Origin	Father Completed School Location	Father's UK Post-Secondary Education or Qualifications -Occupation	Participant's School Type Good State/Faith Struggling State Failing State Private	Partici-pant's Univ. Type	Other Infor-mation
Kevin	23	British African	Middle Class but reverted to Working Class at age 9 due to divorce. Raised on Council estate	Single parented from age 9	African	Yes Africa	Yes White Collar Worker	African	Yes Africa	Self Employed business owner	Good State School	Russell Group	Two brothers have ambitions to attend Russell Groups
Peter	26	British African Mixed Race	Lower Middle Class	Both parents living but raised by mother from age 7	British-African	Yes UK	Yes Education Worker	White British	Yes UK	Yes Education Worker	Faith School	Russell Group	Two sisters attended Russell Groups.
Damien	24	British Caribbean-Mixed Race	Working Class	Dual parented	Irish UK birth	No UK	No Administrative Worker	Caribbean	No Caribbean	No Blue Collar Worker	'Struggling' State School	Russell Group	Four half-siblings. None have attended University

Appendix F - Table 9: Participants' Biographical Pen Portraits											Page 2	
Name	Age	Race/ Ethnicity	Class Other Info	Single/Dual Parenting	Mother's Race/ Ethnicity/ Birth Origin	Mother Completed Secondary School Location	Mother's UK Post-Secondary Education or Qualifications -Occupation	Father's Race/ Ethnicity/ Birth Origin	Father Completed School Location	Father's UK Post-Secondary Education or Qualifications -Occupation	Participant's School Type Good State/Faith Struggling State Failing State Private	Partici-pant's Univ. Type	Other Infor-mation
Franco	35	British African	Working Class Raised on Council estate	Single Parented	African	No Africa	No Administrative Worker	African	Not known	No Self-employed Consultant	Initially attended a Struggling State School. Mother was catalyst for his relocation to a Good Faith school	Russell Group	One younger brother. Russell Group graduate
Duncan	23	British Caribbean	Lower Middle Class	Dual Parented	British African – born in UK	Yes UK	No Health Worker	African	Vocational diploma UK	Yes Self Employed business owner	'Failing' State School closed down by Ofsted Relocated to Struggling Public School	Oxbridge	One older brother, Non-university attendee. One younger brother; one younger sister. Both attend Russell Groups.

Name	Age	Self ID Race/ Ethnicity	Self ID Class Other Info	Single/Dual Parenting	Mother's Race/ Ethnicity/ Birth Origin	Mother Completed School Location	Mother's UK Post-Secondary Education or Qualifications Occupation	Father's Race/ Ethnicity/ Birth Origin	Father Completed School Location	Father's UK Post-Secondary Education or Qualifications Occupation	Participant's School Type Good State Struggling State Failing State Private School	Partici-pant's Univ. Type	Other Infor-mation
Appendix F - Table 9: Participants' Biographical Pen Portraits													**Page 3**
Allen	26	British Caribbean	Middle Class – revertted to Working Class at age 11 due to father's death. Relocated to Council estate	Dual Parented Father died during end of secondary schooling years	African	Yes Africa	Yes Education. Worker– but had to permanently stop working due to health issues	African	Yes Africa	Yes Education Worker	Good Faith School	Oxbridge	Two younger siblings with ambition s to attend Oxbridge
Jason	24	British African	Working Class Describes Family as being Refugees	Dual Parented	African	Yes Africa	Yes Science Worker	African	Yes Africa	Yes Science and Education Worker	Good Faith School	Russell Group	Older sister attended Oxbridge Younger sister attends Russell Group
Alex	30	British African	Middle Class	Single Parented Father abandoned family	African	Yes Africa	Yes Government Worker in Africa	African	Yes Africa	Yes White Collar Worker in Africa	Elite Private School	Russell Group	Two older brothers Both attended post-1992 univ.

Appendix F - Table 9: Participants' Biographical Pen Portraits													Page 4
Name	Age	Self ID Race/ Ethnicity	Self ID Class Other Info	Single/Dual Parenting	Mother's Race/ Ethnicity/ Birth Origin	Mother Completed School Location	Mother's UK Post-Secondary Education or Qualifications Occupation	Father's Race/ Ethnicity/ Birth Origin	Father Completed School Location	Father's UK Post-Secondary Education or Qualifications Occupation	Participant's School Type Good State Struggling State Failing State Private School	Partici-pant's Univ. Type	Other Infor-mation
Bob	28	British African Caribbean 'mixed-other'	Working Class. Bob defines himself as 'underclass' Raised on Council estate	Single Parented Father abandoned family	British Caribbean	No UK	No None	African	Yes Africa	Yes Government Worker in Africa	Failing State School	Russell Group	One sister attended post-1992 univ. One sister non-univ. attendee
John	23	British African	Middle Class Describes Family as being Refugees	Dual Parented	African	Yes Africa	Yes Educational Worker	African	No Africa	No Self Employed Businessman	Good State School	Russell Group	One younger brother with ambitions to attend Oxbridge
Jay	23	British African	Middle Class Mother's family has lineage in diplomatic work	Dual Parented	African	Yes Africa	Yes Educational Worker	African	Yes Africa	Yes Educational Worker	Good State School	Russell Group	No information available

Appendix F - Table 9: Participants' Biographical Pen Portraits													Page 5
Name	**Age**	**Self ID Race/ Ethnicity**	**Self ID Class** **Other Info**	**Single/Dual Parenting**	**Mother's Race/ Ethnicity/ Birth Origin**	**Mother Completed School** **Location**	**Mother's UK Post-Secondary Education or Qualifications** **Occupation**	**Father's Race/ Ethnicity/ Birth Origin**	**Father Completed School** **Location**	**Father's UK Post-Secondary Education or Qualifications** **Occupation**	**Participant's School Type** **Good State Struggling State Failing State Private School**	**Partici-pant's Univ. Type**	**Other Infor-mation**
Edmund	24	British African	Working Class Grew up in a Council estate house which his family now owns	Dual Parented Father died at the end of secondary education.	African	Yes Africa	Yes Health Worker	African	Yes Africa	Yes Businessman	Good Faith School	Russell Group	Two older sisters attended Russell Groups
Dwayne	25	British Caribbean	Working Class	Dual Parented	Caribbean	No Caribbean	UK Vocational Courses Education Worker	Caribbean	No Caribbean	UK Vocational Courses Businessman	Struggling Public School	Oxbridge	One younger brother has ambition to attend Oxbridge
Ted	23	British Caribbean	Middle Class	Dual Parented	Caribbean	Yes UK	Yes	Caribbean	Yes Caribbean	UK Vocational Courses Businessman	Private School	Oxbridge	No info. available
James	22	British African Born abroad. Attended UK Schools from age 10	Working Class	Dual Parented	African	Yes Africa	Yes Health Worker	African	Yes Africa	Yes Health Worker	Struggling State School 'under special measures' In year 11 school closed for 3 during which time no alternative school placement was provided.	Russell Group	Two sisters attended Russell Groups; Younger sister has ambition to attend Oxbridge

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Appendix G - Participants' Capitals, Resources and Possible Threats

Appendix G - Table 10: Participants' Accounts of Capitals, Resources and Threats that may have contributed to -or detracted from their trajectories into Elite HEI												
Name	Age	Race/ Ethnicity	Being Middle Class Y/N	Participant's School Type	Mentors in school	Mentors out of school	Aspirational parents	Faith	University visits prior to applying	Outreach programmes	University Type	Other Comments
Kevin	23	British African	**No** Began life Middle Class. Reverted to Working Class due to divorce	Good State School	None	Social Justice Activist provided him support and guidance	Single parented from age 9. Mother had high HE expectations for her son. Expected him to be a role model for her younger son	Christian. Attended church – but did not identify it as a significant contributor to his ED journey	Yes	Formal Afterschool Academic Programme	Russell Group	First generation in HE
Peter	26	British African Mixed Race	**No** Lower Middle Class	Good State School	None	None	Dual Parented with high expectations that for their children to attend elite HEIs.	Not applicable	No	None	Russell Group	Father went to Oxbridge. Second generation in HE
Damien	24	British Caribbean- Mixed Race	**No** Working Class	Poor State described as 'almost failing institution'	None	None	Single Parented No expectations	Not applicable	Yes	None	Russell Group	First generation in HE
Franco	31	British African	**No** Working Class	Poor State School. Mother moved him to better school in different catchment	None	None	Single parented. Mother was a school catchment searcher. Had high expectations that Franco and younger son would attend Oxbridge	Does not subscribe to any particular faith – but does believe faith has had an influence on his life.	No	None	Russell Group	First generation in HE. Younger brother also attended Russell Group
Duncan	23	British Caribbean	**Yes** Lower Middle Class	Under performing State School that was closed down by Ofsted.	None	Father. Respected in community as only black person to own his business.	Dual Parented with high expectations that all their children would attend university	Christian Church and informal youth church events. Identified faith as a central to his academic success	Yes	Afterschool Faith-based Academic Programme	Oxbridge	Older Sister rejected from Oxbridge. She attended as Russell Group.

Appendix G - Table 10: Participants' Accounts of Capitals, Resources and Threats that may have contributed to -or detracted from their trajectories into Elite HEI Page 2												
Name	**Age**	**Race/ Ethnicity**	**Class Other Info**	**Participant's School Type**	**Mentors in school**	**Mentors out of school**	**Aspirational parents**	**Faith**	**University visits prior to applying**	**Outreach programmes**	**University Type**	**Other Comments**
Allen	26	British Caribbean	**No** Culturally Middle Class – but reverted to Working Class due to death of father at age 11.	Faith Based School	None	1. Pastor 2.Social Justice Activist Says both provided him support and guidance	Dual parented. Both parents had high expectations for him to attend Oxbridge. Also expected to be a role model for his younger siblings	Christian. Church regular attendee. After school, church events. Identified faith as central to his academic success	Yes	Formal Afterschool Academic Programme	Oxbridge	Father attended Russell Group
Jason	24	British African	**No** Working Class Describes Family as being Refugees	Good State School but transitioned into Private school upon receipt of scholarship	None	None	Dual parented. Both parents expected and assumed he would attend an elite university	Practising Muslim. Identified faith as central to his academic success Says faith impacts how he lives his life socially and academically	Yes	None	Russell Group	Both Parents attend UK HE. Father attended Russell Group Older Sister attended Russell Group
Alex	30	British African	**Yes** Middle Class Alex was single parentally raised	Elite Private Boarding School	None	None	Single parented. Mother had high expectations that her 3 sons would attend UK HE	Not applicable	No	None	Russell Group	Mother attended Russell Group then returned to Africa to work. Sent all her sons to study at UK HEIs. Alex is the only son who attended a Russell Group

Appendix G - Table 10: Participants' Accounts of Capitals, Resources and Threats that may have contributed to -or detracted from their trajectories into Elite HEI												Page 3
Name	Age	Race/ Ethnicity	Class Other Info	Participant's School Type Other Information	Mentors in school	Mentors out of school	Aspirational parents	Faith	University visits prior to applying	Outreach programmes	University Type	Other Comments
Bob	28	British African Caribbean 'mixed-other'	**No** Working Class. Bob defines himself as 'underclass'	Good State School	None	None	Single Parented. Mother had health issues which led to family living on benefits on Council estate throughout his youth	Not applicable	No	None	Russell Group	First generation to attend HE
John	23	British African	**Yes** Middle Class Describes Family as being Refugees	Good State School	None	None	Dual Parented. High expectations that John would attend elite HEI. Aspiration also comes from grandparents in Africa who have attended HE and expected he would do the same.	Not applicable	Yes	None	Russell Group	Father attended HE in Africa. John is first in his family to attend HE in UK
Jay	23	British African	**Yes** Middle Class. Mother's side of family has a long history of work in diplomatic field.	Good State School	None	None	Dual Parented. High expectations that Jay would attend an elite university	Not applicable	Yes	None	Russell Group	Both parents attended HE at non Russell Groups. Jay is second Generation in UK HE

Name	Age	Race/ Ethnicity	Class Other Info	Participant's School Type Other Information	Mentors in school	Mentors out of school	Aspirational parents	Faith	University visits prior to applying	Outreach programmes	University Type	Other Comments
Edmund	24	British African	**No** Working Class Grew up in a council estate in a home which his parents now own	Good State School	None	None	Dual Parented. High expectations that Jay would attend Oxbridge	Church regular attendee. Identified faith as central to his academic success	Yes	Formal LSE Choice Programme. And informal Faith-based study programme.	Russell Group	Both parents attended HE in Africa. Edmund is the first generation to attend UK HE
Dwayne	25	British Caribbean	**No** Working Class	'Okay' State School	Teachers	Local Politician	Dual Parented. High expectations that Jay would attend an elite university	Church regular attendee. Identified faith as central to his academic success	Yes	Informal Afterschool Faith-based academic programme	Oxbridge	Both parents took vocational courses in UK. Dwayne is the first generation to attend UK HE
Ted	23	British Caribbean	**Yes** Middle Class	Private School	None	None	Dual Parented. High expectations that Jay would attend an elite university	Does not attend any particular faith – but does pray and acknowledges faith as having an influence on his life.	Yes	None	Oxbridge	Mother attended post-1992 university during his adolescent. Ted is the first generation to attend UK HE
James	22	British African Attended UK schools from age 10.	**No** Working Class	Good State School	Form tutor	Identifies God as his mentor who guided him through a dangerous school and community.	Dual Parented. High expectations that Jay would attend Oxbridge	Church regular attendee. Identified faith as central to his academic success	Yes	Afterschool Faith-based Academic Programme	Russell Group	Both parents attended HE in Africa. Edmund is the first generation to attend UK HE