

'Spaces to Speak' of Sour Milk: Exploring African-Caribbean-British Women's Activism and Agency on  
Childhood Sexual Abuse from the 1980s to the Present Day

A thesis submitted in fulfilment with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

London Metropolitan University

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Joanne Wilson

## Declaration

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this research study is to add the voices of African- Caribbean British female victim-survivors of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) to existing knowledge(s) on childhood sexual victimization. In so doing the study will examine whether racialisation, racism and cultural identity and cultural factors have had any bearing on African Caribbean British women's 'space to speak' of childhood sexual abuse. The study also explores Black British feminist activism on CSA from the late 1970s- mid 1980s in order to further explore the issue of spaces to speak.

The thesis presents findings from 5 in-depth interviews with Black British feminists (Experts); a partial content analysis of British feminist periodicals from 1980s onward; 7 in-depth interviews with African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA and a survey examining Black, Asian and Minority, Ethnic service provision (BAME) in 13 Rape Crisis Centre's in England and Scotland.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*I had a boyfriend but I was never really allowed out; because my mum said you can't trust people out the street, I think that is rather ironic really.*

*Q. Who were these people that you couldn't trust?*

*I: White people and rapists. Isn't it ironic? (Ciara)*

The above quote from a survivor interviewed for this thesis sets the context for this research. The idea of home or 'homeplace' (hooks, 1990) as a place where black people could take refuge from the realities of white racist oppression is problematised by her words: home was not a sanctuary for black/African-Caribbean British women and girls who have experienced child sexual abuse (CSA). The lived experiences of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA appear to have slipped through the gaps in accounts of sexual abuse, sexual violence support provision and are missing from discourses which address the everyday experiences of racialisation. This thesis argues that African-Caribbean British victim-survivors are situated within a liminal space, 'betwixt and between' the privacy of the home and sexual violence and the public realm and the perceptions and reality of everyday acts of racism and exclusion.

### SETTING THE SCENE

Where recent research has begun to address the subject of sexual violence in the lives of women associated with colour, it could be argued that the African-American female victim-survivor voice has come to represent the experiences of all women of African descent residing in the West. African-American feminist scholars have a long history of writing on the subject of child sexual abuse. Additionally, they have outlined how intersections of race, gender and class have further problematised and complicated sexual abuse experiences and help-seeking behaviours of African-American victim-survivors in the United States.

Yet in regard to African- Caribbean British women's experiences and black British feminist activism on the subject of CSA, little is known. The lack of African-Caribbean British victim-survivor voices has enabled the African-American perspective to eclipse the specifics and experiences of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors. At present, there are virtually no accounts within existing discourses on CSA which explore how racialisation, racism (every-day and structural) impacts the agency of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors in the UK and or black British feminist activism on the subject of CSA. Consequently, African-Caribbean British women's experiences of CSA and the localised circumstances which may enable, or hinder opportunities to 'speak' of histories of CSA within both the private and the public realms are poorly understood.

In contrast, feminist scholars and violence against women campaigners and advocates have enabled the unveiling of men's sexual oppression toward women within the white patriarchal home by publicly addressing such issues in the lives of women from the 1970s onwards (Rush, 1974; Brownmiller, 1976; Maynard & Winn, 1997). The origins of their activism began with one pivotal act: speaking. Yet for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors speaking of the African-Caribbean British home and communities is fraught with complex considerations of racialised and gendered positioning. Patricia Hill-Collins has suggested that for diasporic Africans in the West, 'blackness' represents the private and safety, with 'whiteness' representing the opposite for these communities (Hill-Collins, 1991; see also sections below for a more in-depth discussion of racialisation and culture).

However, dynamics of racialisation appears to shroud black on black child sexual abuse in the lives of African-Caribbean British women through a self-induced silence regarding all matters sexual, especially in regard to the black male. How these restrictions deny African-Caribbean British women opportunities to 'speak out' openly regarding everyday realities of both sexual abuse and racial abuse will be examined in this study, including the impact on our subjectivity, the consequences of intersections of race and gender oppression in how survivors gain meaning and the coping strategies employed in order to live with histories of CSA as African-Caribbean British women.

Therefore, this study aims to:

- reclaim and analyse activism by Black women on the issue of child sexual abuse in the late 1980s/early 1990s;
- explain the decline in attention, service provision and research attention to African-Caribbean British CSA survivors;
- discover how African-Caribbean British survivors cope and make sense of their experiences;
- outline unmet needs with respect to service provision and suggest how these might best be met.

In order to address the areas of investigation outlined above the thesis will draw on original data sets: the accounts of seven victim-survivors; interviews with five black British feminist activists; a survey of thirteen Rape Crisis Centres, a partial content analysis of feminist magazines from the 1980s and a literature review.

All seven of the victim-survivors had been raised in and resided in the Greater London area. Although attempts had been made to recruit nationally, the study was unsuccessful in recruiting a more diverse nationwide sample. The age range of the victim-survivor participants ranged between 51-24 years of age. Only victim-survivor participant had no dependants. All seven identified as heterosexual; 4 gave their marital status as 'single' 2 'in relationship' and 1 as 'divorced'. Only one woman had no formal qualification. Three women gave their employment status as 'unemployed', 3 in employment and 1 student (also see Chapter 3).

The expert interviews were also conducted in Greater London. Their ages ranged from 50- 60 years of age. With the exception of one, all had been active on the black British feminist scene from the 70s onward. Being an active black British feminist one a major qualifying factor for eligibility to participate in the study. Another qualifying factor required some form of active engagement, work, research, etc. involving working with, or in some capacity with African-Caribbean British women with experiences of

CSA. The final expert although not originally a member of a black British feminist group, fell within this latter eligibility criteria. Two other experts also qualified under this criterion along with their activism in feminism.

A survey with Rape Crisis was undertaken in order to understand current support service provision. With Britain becoming ever more culturally and diverse with a rise in asylum seeking and global migration, the study sought to understand how sexual violence/CSA support provision had evolved to meet the needs of both established migrant groups for example, African-Caribbean British and South Asian women and provision for more recent migrant women to the UK.

Similarly, the literature review and the contents analysis aimed to investigate understandings of how women of victim-survivors of African descent in the UK were acknowledged in discourses on CSA both historically (contents analysis) and within the present (literature review).

## SOUR MILK

The title of the thesis - Sour Milk: African Caribbean-British Survivors experiences of Childhood Sexual Abuse - pays homage to Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* (1987). The novel centres on the rape of runaway slave Sethe. Yet Morrison at no point uses the word rape to describe Sethe's ordeal. Rather Sethe's sexual abuse is metaphorically hidden and invisible, described by the following words: "*they took my milk*" (1987, p. 17). Employing Morrison's metaphor of 'milk' for rape and sexual abuse the historical and present position of women of African descent feeling obliged to hide occurrences of rape and sexual violence in our lives (Hammond, 1999; Field, 2011) is acknowledged.

The addition of the word 'sour' signifies the rancid traumatic legacy and impact that silences in regards to CSA historically and within the present lives of African-Caribbean British/black victim-survivors can cause. It attempts to capture the impact of silences which surround the subject of child sexual abuse and how being situated as 'other' as a consequence of racialisation often positions victim-survivors within a liminal space, a location of in-articulation illustrated by Morrison's (ibid) reimagining of the

middle-passage where personhood was suspended on slave ships. The liminal positioning of African-Caribbean British women, and especially victim-survivors of CSA, adds further silences which have the potential to deter African-Caribbean British women with histories of CSA from seeking support.

This silence is also evident with respect to the knowledge base: research which explores the particularities of race and colour from a black female viewpoint tends to focus on African American experiences. As a result, little is known of, or has originated within, African-Caribbean British communities. These issues are explored in more depth in the literature review (Chapter 2).

The homogenisation of minority women has been useful for state classification purposes, and has enabled equality legislation to enclose traditionally marginalised groups under collective terms: Black, Minority, Ethnic (BME)/ Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic (BAME). At the same time this convenient tool of racial categorisation appears to disavow the particularities of experience of the various groups of people embodied within the category (Richardson, 2006; Aspinall, 2002). Thus, the lived experiences of women of African descent, and more importantly for this thesis, the experiences of African-Caribbean British women, are often subsumed within the very categorisation which was created to enhance inclusion and equality. Under this collective term we are not enlightened on how African-Caribbean British women engage with the state, statutory and voluntary bodies, as any eligible member falling under this categorisation is able to “speak” for others. This is problematic: a white Polish victim-survivor of CSA living in Hastings cannot articulate the experiences of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors living in Coventry or South Asian victim-survivors in Milton Keynes. Attitudes toward acts of CSA within differing cultures need to be recognised if sexual violence provision is to effectively support victim-survivors. The following sections will therefore discuss the theoretical concepts of racialisation, culture and intersectionality as these concepts are employed throughout this research as analytical tools to situate, contextualise and explain to some extent what is enunciated by the participants.

## RACIALISATION

Racialisation is used in this study to denote the process whereby groups have been hierarchically categorised by phenotypical characteristics such as, skin colour, hair and facial features. The body became the signifier of racial differentiation signifying and creating social relationships of non-whites as inferior and white as superior from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onward<sup>1</sup>. The processes of racialisation have been deliberately divisive in order to produce and maintain categorisations of human-beings based upon corporeal difference which creates the basis for inequality between groups of people. Webster outlines racialisation as follows:

*“A systematic accentuation of certain physical attributes to allocate persons or race that are projected as real and thereby become the basis for analysing all social relations” (Webster, 1992:3).*

The above quote demonstrates how processes of racialisation served as an apparatus of social control and exploitation (Hacking, 2005; Hall, 1980, 2000; Omi & Winant, 2015). Biological difference has been employed to hierarchically position people(s) and underpin racist stereotypes of exclusion and inclusion. Equality, for Hacking (2005), rests upon essential ideas of sameness. As such the categorisation and construction of certain peoples as biologically racially different produces structures of inequality and specifically racism.

Social scientists and particularly sociologists (Omi & Winant, 2015) have recently argued that ‘race’ is a social construct. However, constructionist theorists recognised that even ‘imagined categories’ held practical consequences for the (re)production of real groups (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). The association between the corporeal and the ‘race’ is not self-evident according to Fassin (2011). Yet racial oppression is still enduring (Guillaumin, 1995) even within postmodernity where race has been argued

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<sup>1</sup> In 1684 Francois Bernier the French physician divided mankind into four races: Europeans, Africans, Orientals, and Lapp. The racial classification of ‘black’ denoting those peoples of sub-Saharan African descent come into effect the following year, 1685 for the purposes of the transatlantic slave trade (see Hacking, p.110).

to be a construction. Therefore, just as natural science approaches have been critiqued as having no biological basis (Census, 2000; also see Hacking, 2005), so too have constructionist concepts of racialisation as argued by Omi and Winant (2015).. Murji & Solomos (2005) have critiqued constructionist theories for being dependent upon historic overt manifestations of racial oppression including slavery and colonialism.

Where present day more nuanced forms of racialisation/racist oppressions continue to impact and exclude people traditionally associated with colour, constructionist theories such as that proffered by Omi and Winant, (2015) have the potential to dismiss the legacy of racialisation within the present and the lived experiences of people associated with colour (Brah, 1996; Feagin, 2006; Morrison, 1988). Brah (1996) succinctly outlines the consequences of disregarding the residual impact of racialisation within social relationships in the present: *"Although 'race' has been exposed as vacuous it still serves as an 'ineradicable marker of social difference' (p. 95 see also Morrison, 1988). Consequently, you do not have to treat people equally, if they are sufficiently different (Hacking, 2005: 104).*

Therefore, it is crucial to this study to explore, how notions of race as a cultural signifier, affects African-Caribbean British women's sense of belonging and citizenship. How race and culture influence their everyday material lived experiences in regard to agency, opportunities and embodiments of race as a means of self-identification.

For many the reality of embodied subjectivity is drawn from these socially recognised categories, which serve to inform and reproduce meaning via the internalisation of notions of what it means to be 'black', female, heterosexual, Caribbean or British etc. Racialisation is therefore critical to this study in investigating how African-Caribbean British victim-survivors have gained, and continue to gain meaning of the 'self' through discourses and cultural practices and traditions which connote notions of 'belonging' to a specific group. Culture is a key aspect of racialisation for both Miles (1989) and Fanon (2001). Interrogating race is crucial if we are to understand a group's investment around culture, identity

and community (Brah, 1996). Thus culture and identity will be discussed briefly below as a means of establishing how these concepts affect victim-survivors ability to speak of CSA within their lives both inside and outside of African-Caribbean British communities.

## CULTURE

The term culture has no single static definition. Kroeber and Kluckholm (1952) identified approximately 164 definitions for the term. Yet although difficult to define, culture has been viewed as an embodiment chronicling a group's history (Brah, 1996). Joanne Nagel's (1994) definition below illustrates the (re)production of culture demonstrating the active transformative processes involved in its creation and the links to ethnicity and self-identification.

*Culture - namely the creation of collective meaning, the construction of community through mythology and history, and the creation of symbolic bases for ethnic mobilization (Nagel, 1994: 152).*

This definition clearly emphasises the active process of a group (re)creating itself from a shared history, in order to preserve a sense of coherence for the future. Her definition like Brah (1996), hints at the necessity of being part of a collective community/culture, and that a sense of culture/community being one which is invoked. As such it raises questions as to why it is necessary for groups to feel a sense of belonging with those of similar histories and lived experiences.

Benedict Anderson has argued that all communities are imagined because you cannot personally know all members within a community. Yet each member of a community/cultural group there is a sense of belonging, an imagined supposed collective understanding of heritage and history (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

Nagel (1994) expands on Barth's (1969) 'shopping trolley' analogy for examining the construction of ethnic culture. For Nagel (1994) ethnic culture is composed of the things we add to the trolley: art, music, food, customs etc. For her culture is not an historical legacy, at her she and other theorists (Brah, 1996, Yuval-Davis, 2011) urge us to understand that within the construction of ethnic culture

there is an active selection by individuals and groups of what is chosen or added to the trolley. Consequently, cultures are not fixed; they are endlessly involved in exchanges with different cultures and hence are complicated processes of blends, reinvention and reinterpretation and transformation.

If ethnic culture is continuously involved in reinventing and inter-cultural exchange, what purpose does it serve to individuals and groups who self-identify with in it? Hobsbawm (1983) suggests that (re)invented traditions serve to symbolise social cohesion or group membership; establish or legitimise institutions and status, and authority relations; to socialise or inculcate beliefs, values or behaviours. However, Erikson (1968) provides useful insight into why an individual may align or self-identify with a particular ethnic cultural group. He argues that identity formation on the whole is unconscious, except where inner conditions and outer circumstances combine to provoke '*painful or elated*' identity consciousness (ibid, p.24). Acknowledging the impact of *pain* ensued by personal and collective experiences of racial abuse and exclusion in the UK, by African-Caribbean British communities may explain the continued self-identification by African-Caribbean British with the collective term black.

Reinventing culture enables ethnic boundaries to be reinstated and thus provides individuals and groups with a sense of self-identification and safety. In so doing ethnic cultures can often mobilize as a collective in order to demand political change to end oppressive racist practices on individuals and structurally.

Therefore, identity is entwined with culture producing a sense 'belonging'. Whilst Yuval-Davis (2011) analysed this as emotional *attachment; feeling at home* (p.4), she makes a distinction between attachment and political belonging. Political belonging she argues separates and creates boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. Political cultural boundaries of belonging are dialogical, as they involve negotiations which determine eligibilities of belonging for those who wish to remain members of a specific group, in order to continue to feel a sense of belonging. When viewed through this lens eligibility of belonging to a particular cultural group may involve adhering to certain codes of conduct.

Silence may act as a determinant of political belonging and thus may explain to some degree the continued self-induced muteness on CSA amongst African-Caribbean British victim-survivors. Culture, ethnicity and belonging therefore are critical to analysing how agency is negotiated for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of sexual abuse.

The following section will discuss briefly the theory of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) and the significance of this theory in enabling understandings of how African-Caribbean British victim-survivors are socially situated as racially gendered and classed subjects within UK society.

## INTERSECTIONALITY

Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, expanded on from such predecessors of black feminism as bell hooks (1982) and Patricia Hill-Collins (1991) will be employed throughout this study. Intersectionality differs as a framework from mutually exclusive claims for equality such as gender and race. As such it is a significant tool for feminist scholars enabling the complexities of how race, gender and class are enmeshed to be articulated; a departure from previously additive concepts of lived inequalities (Thiara & Gill, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2011). Crenshaw's intersectionality therefore demonstrates that women's experiences of violence can often be fashioned by different facets of their identities simultaneously; socially constitutive of each other through social processes, racialising structures and representation (Crenshaw, 1991). Therefore, the experiences of women of African descent are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism, socio-disadvantage and exclusion. However, intersectional identities are often polarised and thus women associated with colour<sup>2</sup>, are often invisibilised within discourses aimed at achieving equality for differing social identities they occupy and

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<sup>2</sup> It is customary for the term 'people, or women of colour' to be used to describe those who are not white. This study acknowledges that white is a colour, although it occupies a normative position as such the term 'associated with colour' will be used as a means of including whiteness within the process of racialisation.

thus requires a response to one or the other. The usefulness of such a theory for African Caribbean British victim-survivors in the UK will be explored throughout this study.

### AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH

The choice to work with the category African-Caribbean British reflects the fluidity of identification by recognising the influence of trans-cultural heritage and drawing on the works of cultural studies and post-colonial scholars (Hall, 1990, 1991; Bhabha, 1993). In the U.K., the term Caribbean tends to refer to those of 'black Caribbean', and is an official racial-ethnic category (Owen, 1997; Goulbourne, 2002; Reynolds, 2005; Office of National Statistics, 2011), used to classify people originating from Caribbean ethnic backgrounds. The term African-Caribbean refers to peoples' whose origins and heritage consists of both these ethnicities, who make up the largest and most recognisable Caribbean migrant community in the U.K. (Goulbourne, 2002).

African-Caribbean British people are not a homogeneous group being comprised of a diverse array of people(s) from differing Caribbean islands, all with distinct cultural beliefs and practices. However, many similarities exist within African-Caribbean British communities, possibly due to the geographical proximity of Caribbean islands and the sharing of the same slave and (post) colonial and migration histories with Britain.

The added British component reflects the present stage of our diasporic journeys combined with both a geographical acknowledgement of our present, and hopefully, incorporating our sense of citizenship, acculturation and belonging. Therefore, as a means of articulating the specific lived experiences of African-Caribbean British survivors I will employ this term throughout when addressing the specifics of this subgroup. At the same time, the women in this study often use the term black and this has not been changed.

The thesis will acknowledge the cultural histories and traditions involved in the identification process of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors and thus enable some form of clarification in regards to how

plural/hybrid culture(s) inform, enhance and conflict upon the individual and the choices, expectations and daily realities they face (Bhabha, 1993; Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1996), in order to better understand how social positionings which locate African-Caribbean British victim-survivors as insider/outside affect questions of agency, especially in regard to approaching existing support provision.

### CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The main aim of this study is to explore the experiences of African-Caribbean British women and build on existing knowledge(s) on childhood sexual abuse. The lack of understanding regarding how culture and racism, perceived or real, situate victim-survivors from this sub-group has implications for existing and future service provision. Additional themes to be examined are questions of belonging, citizenship and identity. The intent is to better understand how African-Caribbean British female victim-survivors positioning as both insider/outsider, and how African-Caribbean British 'communities' influence agency and meaning regarding past histories of sexual and racial victimisation.

The subject of coping or living with CSA will be explored in order to ascertain if racialised and cultural prescriptives have any bearing on strategies employed by African-Caribbean British women and how they negotiate sexually abusive pasts from childhood to adulthood. Understanding how culture and racialisation is embodied and lived within those who have experienced CSA may provide the tools by which common myths and assumptions surrounding black women and CSA are both propagated and internalised. Melba Wilson (1993) outlines in the following statement commonly held views regarding black women and child sexual abuse.

*Myths abound in relation to black women and sexual abuse - we either wanted it, or can handle it, or are educated by it (Wilson, 1993, p. 6).*

In order to understand whether the myths as outlined by Wilson (ibid) above impact how African-Caribbean British women live with experiences of CSA, the study will explore, in addition to black British

feminist activism on CSA, the influence of culture and racialisation on both victim-survivors decisions to disclose CSA and the response of family and friends after disclosure.

The methodology reflects this need (see Chapter 3) and thus this study combines auto-ethnography, a Black feminist standpoint and in depth interviews with experts and survivors: (hooks, 1984 ; Hill-Collins, 1991; Frith, 1997; Carby, 1997; Purvis, 1995). By utilising a subjective mode of interpretation the study not only diminishes positivist assumptions regarding the lives of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors, but rather centralises and inserts African-Caribbean British female lived experiences of CSA at the core of the investigation. In this sense I use 'we', 'us' and 'our' to illustrate my own location within the research process when outlining conditions, practices, beliefs specific to African-Caribbean British women.

## STRUCTURE OF THESIS

Following this introduction **Chapter Two** combines a review of key literature on CSA and black feminism. The chapter does not attempt an exhaustive review of CSA literature, but provides a brief historical overview of relevant historical feminist approaches on CSA from the 1970s leading into the more focussed exposition of the significance of race/racism and culture. However, literature which addressed CSA, race and culture from a British perspective was practically non-existent.

Where literature acknowledged the intersections of race, culture and child sexual abuse it tended to have originated from a US, Canadian, Australian and Eastern Caribbean perspective with the exception of one conference piece written by an African-Caribbean British woman and another by an African American living in the UK. In attempting to understand how, or if, the differing cultural components which make up hybrid identities such as African-Caribbean British informed attitudes and coping strategies to sexual abuse an exposition of post-colonial, critical race and cultural theories were reviewed and juxtaposed with recent research conducted in the Caribbean on the subject of CSA.

The review of literature on black feminism, especially black British feminism was undertaken to contextualise the expert's accounts (Chapter 4) and to understand whether the social and political climate influenced or shaped the activism of black British feminists and to a lesser extent black and third world feminists' campaigns of the 1980s- mid 1990s.

An exploration of racialisation via historic practices such as slavery, colonialism, migration and acculturation was undertaken as a means of understanding the significance of belonging and citizenship as a precursor to feelings of entitlement in regard to victim-survivors accessing existing sexual violence support provision in the UK. Finally, a brief discussion of the bricolage (Denzin & Lincoln, 1999; Kincheloe, 2001) theoretical approach which sets the foundation for this thesis is discussed.

**Chapter 3** describes the methodological approach, beginning from the premise that in any exploration of the social world the researcher must ensure a linking of the research question to the "philosophical or methodological position whilst simultaneously appropriating data generating methods" (Mason, 1996, p. 7). This chapter describes the research methods employed and how the challenges faced in researching CSA and racialisation using in-depth interviews and an on-line survey shaped that final methodological approach: reflective, collaborative and dialogic by engaging with a variety of texts which explore the embodiments of race. The epistemologies were black feminist and auto-ethnographic.

**Chapter 4** explores the supposed 'activism' on CSA by black British feminist groups during the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. Five expert participants outline the priorities for black British feminists during that period and what constituted the 'personal is political' for black British feminists. The chapter explores why there was so little public discussion of CSA within African-Caribbean British communities and the reflections of these women on the implications of this for African-Caribbean British survivors and for black feminism.

**Chapter 5** This chapter addresses the themes of identity, citizenship and belonging for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors, exploring how feelings of belonging to African-Caribbean British communities, and or the dominant white community, impact on victim-survivors' agency. Additionally, it questions what is gained or lost for victim-survivors who locate themselves solely within 'blackness'. It attempts to understand whether race and culture were significant to how the women gained meaning regarding histories of CSA, or to phrase it differently why women of African descent continue to actively locate themselves within discursive representations of 'black woman', and how this affects whether women speak out or seek help.

**Chapter 6** This second data chapter examines how race and culture impact or influence the disclosure process for African-Caribbean British female victim-survivors. Within this the function and reproduction of the racial stereotype of the 'strong black woman' is explored. I suggest that the women's mimicry of strong black woman (Taussig, 1993), or as Johnson (2003) and Turner (2014) have termed it and the appropriation of blackness, is a possible coping strategy during the post abuse period.

**Chapter 7** presents findings from the survey with Rape Crisis Centres (RCCs) regarding provision of support for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors – both whether there is specific provision and whether RCCs acknowledge culture and race as factors which may compound experiences of CSA. The chapter concludes by suggesting possible routes to expanding access to support for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors and proposes a multi-layered framework to encourage dialogues of difference within existing provision.

**Chapter 8** brings together the themes which have emerged throughout the thesis culminating in some concluding thoughts on the functions of silence and silencing. Here I develop Hazel Carby's (1982) call for white women to listen, by highlighting the need for black women to speak; pointing to the possibilities for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors to voice the personal.

## CHAPTER 2 'WORKING WITH THE NEGATIVES MAKES FOR BETTER PICTURES'<sup>3</sup> WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT CHILD SEXUAL AND RACE AND CULTURE

This chapter will review the existing key literature on women's experiences of childhood sexual abuse (CSA). More specifically it asks whether research has sufficiently addressed the particularities of race and culture and CSA for women of African descent. By reviewing existing research which acknowledges race and culture as an everyday lived experience for women with histories of CSA the aim is to both contextualise this study, identify where the gaps in existing knowledge(s) on CSA are located and the implications for policy on and support provision for victim-survivors. Additionally, the chapter will briefly explore the contribution of feminism to debates on CSA, including black British/Black feminist agendas and theorising.

Whilst an abundance of literature exists on the subject of CSA with research spanning a spectrum of enquiry from the sociological through psychological impacts to the responses of social welfare and criminal justice agencies, experiential accounts and theoretical perspectives, little to date has explored how racialization or culture and migration (Korbin, 1980; Pierce & Pierce, 1982; hooks, 1984; Wyatt, 1985; Conte, 1994; Tyagi, 2001; Alaggia, 2004) affect the agency of victim-survivors from an African-Caribbean British perspective. Consequently, this literature review extended to African-Caribbean British women and domestic violence, and depends heavily on literature from outside of the UK with the exception of three texts from African-Caribbean British scholars (Bogle, 1987; Wilson, 1993; Bernard, 1997).

Although leading anthropological scholars (Korbin, 1981) have argued from the 1980s onwards that child abuse and neglect should be addressed cross-culturally this has not been the case in the UK. Therefore, our understanding in regards how CSA is understood experientially and defined at a community level via differing cultural standpoints, cultural references and practices is limited, including

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<sup>3</sup> Drake, (2012), HYFR: Take Care, [Drake Performer & Little Wayne, Conductor], Canada & U.S.

the question of whether there are shared definitions, with implications for incidence and prevalence rates (Korbin, 1981; Agathonos-Georgopoulos, 1992; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009).

The reasons behind the scarcity of literature from an African-Caribbean British perspective are unclear, and explaining this is beyond the scope of this study. What the chapter can do is identify where the gaps in our knowledge exist regarding how African-Caribbean British victim-survivors make sense of their experiences, who they perceive as supportive, coping strategies and what role if any race and culture play in these. The first section explores the important contribution made by feminists on the subject of child sexual abuse.

#### THE ROLE OF FEMINISM IN UNVEILING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Florence Rush's (1974) determination to bring to light and expose prevailing myths around the subject of sexual abuse in the early 1970s was to have profound implications for public policy, child protection and research on thereafter. Rush's observations of adolescent girls in her care enabled her to refute dominant ideas at the time which located female victim-survivors in the position of seductress of adults, or as somehow complicit in their own victimisation for being either passive or sexually dangerous in relation to men (see also Gavey, 2005). The accounts of sexual abuse disclosed to Rush, and her own experiences of sexual violence both in her childhood and as an adult enabled her to reconceptualise CSA within a framework based upon power relationships between adult men and female children (Rush, 1974; Herman, 1981).

Rush disputed psychoanalytical thinking dating back to Freud which dismissed women's and girls' claims of sexual abuse and incest as mere erotic even masochistic fantasies; an "*unconscious 'rape-wish'*" (Weis & Borges, 1973, p. 79) propagated by the notion of women's culturally subdued wanton sexuality. Rush (1974) argued these ideas served a political and psychological climate to maintain the oppression and subordination of women and girls. As such her employment of the experiential accounts of women and girls refuted an array of myths associated with female sexuality (see also Gavey, 2005

and Weis and Borges, *ibid*). Therefore for Rush CSA was part of a silent socialising apparatus which moulded women and girls to be subservient to men, and to hold themselves responsible leading to the well documented feelings of guilt, shame and fear (Rush, 1974).

The 'woman as property ideology' associated with wives and girl-children identified by first wave feminists such as Frances Power Cobbe rendered women's experiences of sexual violation invalid. For if a woman belonged to either a husband or father, rather than being seen as a person in her own right, it was impossible to rape her as her body and self were not hers to control; Susan Estrich termed this 'marital impunity' (Estrich, 1987). Subsequently, like Power Cobbe before her, Rush and second wave feminists analysed violence against women not as a pathological behaviour of a few 'sick' men, rather they argued it was the extension of a system of practices and laws which sanctioned men's right to regard women as their property and a means by which to keep them under control (Maynard & Winn, 1997, pp. 175-6).

Yet African-American (hooks, 1984; Hill-Collins, 1991; Hammond, 1999) and Caribbean feminist scholars (Kempadoo, 2004) have equated the 'property' aspect highlighted by Frances Power Cobbe as having a continued bearing on how women of African descent have been positioned in regard to rape and CSA both historically and in the present due to legacies of slavery and colonialism. Therefore in regards to the African enslaved body, rape and sexual violence have according to Hill-Collins "*acted as a form of social control*" (1991, p. 176) both historically and in the present.

How rape is defined and understood has been an issue of much debate and contention. However, consciousness-raising (CR) groups enabled non-consensual sex in the lives of women to be named, analysed from the experiential and reconfigured. Therefore it is significant to this study to understand the impact of CR in this respect.

## CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING (CR) AND THE QUESTION OF SEX AND VIOLENCE IN THE LIVES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

From the late 1960s, second wave feminists encouraged and enabled women to vocalise and expose men's violence by testifying to their own experiences of sexual abuse by fathers, brothers, uncles during their childhoods in consciousness-raising groups (CR). As more and more women came forward to speak of their experiences of sexual violence, both as children and adults, a clearer picture began to emerge regarding the extent and impact of sexual violence upon their sense of autonomy and agency (Maynard & Winn, 1997).

What was becoming apparent was that most perpetrators did not fit the image propagated by 'stranger danger', rather they were just ordinary men usually found within the supposed safety and familiarity of the family, home and neighbourhood. These realisations enabled feminists to challenge the many assumptions associated with rape, and other forms of sexual violence. Rape and sexual violence were now shown to be not merely a deviant sexual act, but an act of violence committed by ordinary men (Griffin, 1971; Brownmiller, 1976) and thus a subject which required rigorous political activism. Feminist scholars (Levett & Lachman, 1991) have raised similar, but more indepth, critiques about recent research on CSA in Africa. Levett (2003) argues that studies have tended to ignore the cultural diversity within the continent and reinforced notions of 'stranger danger' over the realities of intrafamilial abuse, and further imported assumptions and power structures from developed countries to understand sexual abuse within these regions (Sullivan, 1992). It could be argued that the gains in understanding of rape/ CSA as an oppressive force garnered by women in CR groups in the West were not transferred or recognised for women of African decent both in the continent of Africa or in the lives of women living in western societies.

Yet expanding on the new more complex understandings of rape, as acts of violence to control and subordinate women, Catherine Mackinnon (1987; 1989) warned against just understanding rape as

violence. Rather she proposed that sex should not be omitted from the equation, since this underpinned men's sense of entitlement to women's bodies through the practice of heterosexuality and the socio-cultural constructs attached to femininity (passive) and masculinity (active). For Mackinnon: "*violence is sex when it is practiced as sex*" (1989, p. 323), and she argued that "*politically I call it rape whenever a woman has sex and feels violated*" (1987, p. 82). Her reconceptualisation does not obscure sex within men's power and domination over women: on the contrary it challenged understandings of the relationship between heterosexuality, sex and violence.

Muehlenhard, Danoff-Burg, & Powch, (1993) have suggested that the reconfigurations of rape as neither sex or violence but 'sexual violence' allowed for further insights "*into situations in which women have sex due to economic pressure, fear of being raped if they refuse or other sorts of pressure*" (p. 125). These new understandings of rape as violence are best illustrated by the systematic rape of African women in slavery which served as processes of subordination. However, the continued exclusion of women of African descent from prominent discourses on sexual violence within the present could further be viewed as a continuation of racially gendered violence. African feminist scholars have argued that such violences committed against women of African descent in the present have been erased from debates around sexual violence and consequently have sanctioned and 'legitimised' sexual violence against black women in a manner that would not be condoned or unlegitimised and excused for women not traditionally associated with colour (Hill-Collins, 1991; Davis, 1982).

Adding to the debate, Nicola Gavey (1992) argued that the heterosexual positioning of women as passive not only encouraged women to conform to men's sexual advances and deny their own through what she termed "*technologies of heterosexual coercion*" (p. 325) produced through discursive processes which normalise heterosexual power relations between men and women. As such women tend to adhere to what is deemed 'normal' sexual behaviour within that particular society. For Gavey, these technologies of coercion have the ability to cloak sexual coercion from both the coerced and the coercer (ibid, p. 347).

These observations by Muehlenhard, Danoff-Burg & Powch (1993) and Gavey (1992) on the reconceptualisation of rape as sexual violence and the mechanics of its functionality are particularly useful when applied to CSA and victim-survivors of African descent. From slavery, sexual violence, domination and control has been a white male heterosexual tool by which to control and reproduce labour and structures of white male supremacy over African bodies and possibly by default, white female bodies.

White men have said over and over – and we have believed them because it was repeated so often - that not only was there no such thing as a chaste Negro woman –but that a Negro woman could not be assaulted, that it was never against her will (Jesse Daniel Ames 1936, quoted in Gavey, 2005: 46).

The devalued status of the African female body is clearly outlined in the quote above.

The emergence of consciousness-raising groups from the 1970s enabled women's experiences of rape and CSA to be reconfigured and understood as not just random acts by husbands and fathers, but as processes of sexual violence with a clear intention to control and regulate female sexuality. Yet while CR groups enabled political activism by women, for women with the first Rape Crisis Centre opening in the United States in 1971, the lack of cultural awareness within many such agencies has not always encouraged women associated with colour to attend (Crenshaw, 1991; Lucea, et al., 2013; see also Chapter 7). However, according to Kelly (1988) as a result of the actions by feminists, the issue of violence against women became an important focus for feminist theory and action. Nancy Whittier (2009) further highlights the important contribution and influence that feminist activists during the second wave had in shaping future legislative, criminal, welfare and child protection provision, and therapeutic services provided by the state for the family.

Whittier (ibid) stresses the collaborative nature of these gains, highlighting the role played by judicial visibility, pressure from physicians and the burgeoning cultural and political changes wrought by various

movements of the 1960s and 1970s which all coalesced along with the feminist survivors' movement to produce new policies on CSA (ibid, p. 70).

## THEORISING VIOLENCE

Kelly's (1988) theory of the 'continuum' enables supposed lesser forms of sexual violence for example sexual harassment and stalking, which occur within the social to be acknowledged as sexual violence therein creating the space in which these types of violence may be analysed and understood for the impact that they cause to women who experience them. Kelly's concept usefulness is in its ability to draw connections between the crimes of violence which are enshrined within the law and everyday implicit acts of violence which are viewed as 'harmless bits of fun' and therefore omitted from legal recourse (Ibid, pp. 76-77).

Extending Kelly's continuum to race we may begin to understand how everyday encounters of racism especially those most implicit and nuanced, thus seen as 'harmless' and not outlawed, maintain and reinforce racial and gendered differences which culminate in the mistrust of white communities by African-Caribbean British women which further entrenches and justifies silence, invisibility and isolation in regard to CSA (see also Kincheloe, 1999, p. 13; Herman, 2001; O'Neil & Morgan, 2010, p. 4; Mahon, 2011). Extending the continuum of violence in this way not only acknowledges more everyday forms of violence, but also points to connections between gender and race and how they contribute to and reinforce the subordinate and unequal status of women associated with colour.

Kempadoo (2004) suggests that in regards to the Caribbean, sexuality was a modality through which race was and is (re)produced and transformed in very particular ways. For Kempadoo (ibid) sex was central to the construction of 'otherness' and therefore employed as an identifying indicator of inferiority for the coloniser, and thus could be employed to enforce gender norms. Sexual abuse, rape and other acts of sexual violence were justified by the coloniser as indicative of the uncivilised nature of the colonised.

These sexual 'qualities' placed the Other beyond the boundaries of civilisation as defined in Western European Christian society, making them degenerate, barbaric, savage and inhuman and became through the eighteenth-century scientific invention of race, embedded in theories of racial difference and primitiveness (ibid, p. 30).

The depiction of the African body as sexually deviant still circulates both within African communities and within the western social psyche and thus may be a factor in the continued silence by African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA.

Legal theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1991) theory of 'intersectionality' has much in common with Kelly's (1988) continuum in that she demonstrates and makes visible the implicit characteristics of racially gendered and classist practices on African- American victim-survivors' agency within the judiciary and support agencies in the U.S. Her concept, however, in seeking to centre the experiences of black women, enables everyday inequalities to become visible and less abstract.

In attempting to tackle the inequalities faced by African-American victim-survivors Crenshaw (1991) outlined how race, gender and class inequalities intersect in the lives of African-American and other victim-survivors of domestic violence associated with colour in the US. She argued this concept brought into focus the ways in which discrimination and exclusion were produced when such intersecting forces of inequalities were not recognised in interventions. Although differences with regard to geography, culture and levels of politicisation exist between African-Caribbean British and African-American communities, commonalities are also possible with respect to embodiments of race and possibly processes of racism and how we are situated.

Intersectionality has a commonality with the continuum with its ability to identify that women's experiences of violence can often be fashioned by different facets of their identities, but that these cannot easily be separated (Crenshaw, 1991). However, intersectional identities tend to be polarised within political arenas. Women associated with colour are often invisibilised within discourses aimed at

achieving equality for the differing social identities they occupy, as they require a response to one or the other. This often results in African-American women experiencing intersecting effects of racism, sexism and socio-disadvantage and exclusion simultaneously.

The concept of intersectionality does not, albeit without such intention of its maker, enable the articulation or the actualities of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors hybridised lived experiences of 'messiness' to surface. The widespread appeal of the concept, therefore, could be seen as eclipsing enquiries regarding the particularities of British societies and how race/racialisation, citizenship, belonging and questions of difference are addressed in the UK (Lewis, 2009) for African-Caribbean British women and girls. For example, it could be argued that African-Caribbean British people's experiences of racism are more nuanced and implicit than that of African-Americans which appear less covert and subtle. At the same time intersectionality is useful as an initial heuristic tool of enquiry (Lewis, 2009) by which policy makers may begin dialogues with disenfranchised groups. Many (see for example Verloo, 2006; Walby, Armstrong, & Strid, 2009) have questioned the capacity of intersectionality to address issues of inequality consolidation: the tension being that it is often seen as equating all forms of inequality as equal or the same.

However, other theorists (Stark, 1988) have identified and thus support Crenshaw's understanding of how systems of inequality, specifically gender inequality, have supported violence against women in the West. Evan Stark (2007) argues that intimate partner violence is not about discrete incidents of physical or sexual abuse, but rather an ongoing pattern of coercion and control, which includes degradation and isolation, located within social inequality between women and men. Intimidation, threats and constant demeaning reduces confidence, leads to self-blame and serves to keep the domestic abuse a secret, most importantly the victim-survivor comes to see herself through the eyes of the abuser, accept the contentions that no one will believe her or that she can never escape and be safe. What eventually transpires is a fundamental diminishment of what Stark terms 'liberty rights'. Denying a victim-survivor the right to approach a support service or the police is not only a violation of personhood according to

Stark but further a denial of political rights that 'free people' take for granted (Stark, 2007). Thus he argues that the basic offence is the deprivation of rights and resources which are critical to personhood (Stark, 2007, p. 5).

For Eva Lundgren (1998; 2004) both women and men's experiences of, and perspectives on, violence are intertwined and (re)produce heterosexual gender norms of based upon corporeal inscriptions. Lundgren argues that the body is the "*bearer of intentions, interpretation and symbols, and as such should not be disavowed or eclipsed by gender*" (Lundgren, 1998, p. 170). Therefore, within this context our understanding of sexual violence is not limited to just gender, or gender inequality but incorporates interactions which are related to both the social and cultural frameworks in which we mediate our lives. These interactions are present and multiple, and further serve as power coded frameworks (Lundgren, 1998, p. 170). By understanding the body as social, Lundgren is able to demonstrate that gender is constantly being reproduced; we learn what it means to be a woman or a man in new and changing cultural contexts. The body for Lundgren is central to this process of living gender.

The process of violence is an active process of (re)creating gender by "*total destruction*" (2004, p.7) invoking deep rooted representations of gender along with established explanations and justifications for that violence. 'Destruction' for Lundgren does not imply the literal death of the abused; rather it is the symbolic 'reining in' to restrictive gendered boundaries. For Lundgren the 'normalisation of violence' is connected with the construction of gender through violence. The more frequently that a woman is 'corrected' by her abuser the more her agency diminishes as she regulates her behaviour in an effort to prevent further abuse. Thus abuse curtails her actions to both seek support and her right to live violence free (Lundgren, 2004). Kelly et al, 2014, expanding on Lundgren, have termed this narrowing of options for women who experience domestic violence a restriction of 'space for action' (Kelly et al, 2014).

Lundgren (1998; 2004) and Coy and Kelly's (2011) frameworks are helpful in understanding violence within relationships, but they do not address processes of racialisation and how these intersect with sexual violence for women of African descent. There is potential, however, in developing themes which explore racial violence and inequality and how the inscription of race onto the corporeal regulates agency, subjecthood and citizenship. These themes will be explored in the following chapters.

Processes of racialisation have been given credence by historical 'scientific' discourses of racial difference (Kincheloe, 1999; Stoddart, 2007), in a similar manner to the ways that gender differences have been used to legitimise the inferior positioning and regulating of women. The positioning of non-white peoples as inferior (see also Kincheloe, 1999; Hacking, 2005) may be implicated in perpetuating the silence of victim-survivors of African descent.

#### STATE INTERVENTION ON CSA: RACE OFF THE AGENDA?

During the 1990s, the subject of rape, and specifically CSA, was much less evident in both the state and feminist agendas. The issues which served to mobilise first and second wave ideological and activist concerns were still evident, yet buried in public discourse under a barrage of anti-feminist rhetoric. Sue Lees (1996) locates this 'backlash' within a prevailing climate of political correctness, which denounced excesses of feminism (Lees, 1996 ; Mann & Roseneil, 1999, p. 108).

Frost (1990) succinctly warns against notions of a monolithic unified state system pulling in one direction, for the gains of any one particular social class of people, or in pursuit of one agenda. Rather he argues that there is seldom alignment of all parts of the state at any one time. He applies the concept of 'state forms' to the child sexual abuse crisis in Cleveland in the late 1980s, where there were public and bitter conflicts involving doctors, social workers, the police and the courts; all of whom were employed by the 'state'. Furthermore, Frost also notes the pluralities, diversities and complexities of 'households' which do not adhere to the socially rewarded heterosexual two-parent format (Frost, 1990,

pp. 26-27): an important observation in regard to African-Caribbean British communities where many households are headed by lone mothers (Bernard & Turner, 2011).

The 1980s and 90s also witnessed a moral panic surrounding lone parenting, or 'fatherless families' which targeted lesbian, black and working class women and households who accessed state benefits, due to underemployment or unemployment. Emerging out of the right wing political rhetoric, this crisis of the 'family' saw the invention of a new class: the 'underclass' (di Leonardo, 1997, pp. 56-58; Jagger & Wright, 1999). The creation of the 'underclass' enabled the state to scrutinise and problematise those who do not fit the traditional archetypal model of the heterosexual, two parent family: White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant (Frost, 1990, p. 35). Jagger and Wright (1999) describe the neo-liberal preoccupation with the 'family' during this period as "structured inequality" – combining racism, classism, patriarchal power relations and gender-based inequality.

It is unclear why so little social work research (see Bernard & Gupta, 2008 for an exception) has been undertaken regarding CSA and the intersections of race, class, and economic status in the UK. Previous research through a feminist lens and on state responses has not reflected the specificities of racialisation and culture and how they impact the lives of African-Caribbean British adult victim-survivors in the UK. The next section examines key literature through the lenses of class, race, and culture.

#### KEY RESEARCH STUDIES ON CSA

At this point is important to define what is meant by the terms child sexual abuse, prevalence and incidence, before examining studies which draw on these concepts.

Drawing on several studies, child sexual abuse may or may not involve actual physical contact and includes penetrative acts (rape), fondling of breasts and genitalia, oral sex; non-penetrative and non-contact activities (including making children watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in

sexually explicit ways and exposing them to inappropriate sexual material): it also includes prostituting children and taking child abuse images (Finkelhor et al, 1986; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009).

Prevalence refers to attempts to estimate the percentage of girls/women who were victimised by CSA or incest at some point in their lives. Incidence refers to the number or rate of cases that occurred within a specific period of time, usually one year (Russell, 1986, p. 59 ; Finkelhor et al, 1986, p.16 ). Four US prevalence studies are explored in the next section.

### **ARE PREVALENCE STUDIES CULTURALLY AWARE?**

Unlike the first contemporary prevalence study by Finkelhor (1979), that by Pierce and Pierce (1982) urged that culture and race be acknowledged in respect to CSA. Wyatt's impetus for her study rested on the premise, derived from the then available empirical data, that African-American women were more frequently victims of sexual abuse than white American women (Katz & Mazur, 1979 ; Wyatt, 1985). The study by Diana Russell (1986) aimed to create a representative sample in a single city. Although the sample reflected the demographic profile of San Francisco in 1980 in regards to African-American and 'other' ethnicities, there were proportionally more white women compared to Asian and Latino women.

Finkelhor had a sample of 796 of whom 530 were female and 266 males: he explained the lack of diversity on the sample being drawn from small college towns. The use of the racial category black is taken as referring to people whom we now term African-American. Analysis showed that 1.5 per cent of women had experienced sexual abuse from their father and 5 per cent had experienced intra-familial abuse. He found that approximately 75 percent of women knew their abusers, with almost half being a family member. (Finkelhor, 1979, p. 144). Wyatt (1985), in a sample of 248 African-American and white women, found that 62 per cent reported at least one experience of sexual abuse before the age of 18 years. Wyatt argues that the disparity in prevalence findings could be explained by Finkelhor using a

more restrictive definition of sexual abuse; having a less diverse sample, and using a survey method rather than a more comprehensive interview process.

Wyatt's (1985) findings show that 57 per cent of African-American women and 67 per cent of white-American females had been abused, with four out of 10 African-American women experiencing some form of contact abuse, as did over half of white women (Wyatt, 1985). Russell (1986) also found a higher prevalence rate than Finkelhor: of 930 'culturally diverse' women, 16 per cent had experienced intrafamilial abuse before the age of 18 years, with 4.5 percent having been abused by a step-father. According to Russell, if we extrapolate to the population at large; *"160,000 women per million in the U.S. may have been incestuously abused before the age of 18 years, and 450,000 per million may have been victimised by their father"* (1986, p. 10).

The findings on the onset of CSA for age and race are contradictory. The Pierce & Pierce (1982) study examined referrals to child protection services in the U.S, and found significant variations relating to black and white children: sexually abused black children were significantly younger than their white counterparts (the average age for black children was 8.7 years, compared with 11.1 for white children). Wyatt's (1985) findings on the age, from a sample where most was not reported, found that white women experienced significantly more abuse when aged 6-8 years whereas African-American women were more likely to report abuse during the pre-adolescent period of 9-12 years. Russell (1986) did not explore ethnicity and the age for the onset of CSA.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO ABUSER**

In regards to the relationship of the abuser to African-American girls, Wyatt (1985) found that abusers tended to be part of the nuclear family or an extended family member, a finding consistent with Pierce and Pierce's (1982) observations on kinship characteristics within African-American households. In reported cases black children were less likely to be living with their biological fathers (30% compared to 55% for white children). Furthermore, whilst data determined that black children were less likely to

be abused by their fathers, 'uncles' appeared as major perpetrators, Pierce and Pierce (1982) note caution with regard to the category 'uncle', since it can refer to close family friends as well as blood relatives (p. 11). It is customary for those of West African descent (Caribbean and African American) to use the terms 'uncle' or 'aunty' as mark of respect, especially for elders.

Wyatt identified that non-contact abuse of black women predominantly occurred in neighbourhoods and was perpetrated by white males. White men were further identified as the perpetrators of non-contact abuse outside of the home for the white interviewees. White women were more at risk from white males in regards to contact abuse, which occurred during early childhood and pre-school years (Wyatt, 1985).

Although Wyatt's findings support Finkelhor's with respect to the prominence of step-fathers as perpetrators she draws further reflections on family formations, noting more black women lived in families with step-fathers, uncles and cousins during childhood or adolescence, compared to white women (Wyatt, 1985). Russell (1986) also identified 'uncles' as the major perpetrators involved in incestuous abuse, constituting 25 per cent, one percent more than fathers. However like Finkelhor, Russell does not determine whether this category involves cultural kinship associations with the term 'uncle', as identified by Pierce and Pierce in regard to black families.

### **TRAUMA, RACE AND CULTURE**

In regards to trauma experienced by victim-survivors Russell (1986) reports statistically significant differences when race and ethnicity were analysed. White participants were more likely to report experiences of abuse they viewed "*as least severe*" than African-American, Latino and Asian women (p.193). Russell concluded that intra-familial sexual abuse may carry a greater social stigma in certain racial and ethnic groups, adding to the trauma of the experience for non-white women. Finkelhor (1979), in a less diverse sample, reports that more mature victim-survivors, those who experienced more force, and were abused by fathers reported more severe impacts. Russell (1986) suggests that the more often "*stressful*" living conditions of minority women may compound and intensify trauma for

women associated with colour. She proposes that for African-American victim-survivors, present circumstances may influence how the recall of past experiences was interpreted in the present as more traumatic. Whilst childhood may shield from the significance of what children experience, understanding the meanings attached to CSA in later life may cause trauma to manifest or re-surface: Wyatt's African-American interviewees reported being "*less trustful and more cautious*" (1985, p. 17) as a result of their CSA experiences than did white women.

Wyatt's (ibid) study revealed subtle differences in the circumstances in which CSA for white and African American women took place, and the importance of understanding the role of culture and racism in the lives of victim-survivors. Russell (1986) enabled insight into how racially disadvantaged black women and 'other' minority women gain meaning in the present for past experiences of CSA. These meanings will be explored and developed in later chapters.

#### UK RESEARCH ON PREVALENCE

Recent UK research has estimated the prevalence of CSA is between 13 percent to 21 per cent (Oaksford & Frude, 2001; May-Chahal & Cawson, 2005). A study by Cawson (2000) was the first to explore all forms of child maltreatment (physical, sexual and emotional) with a representative sample of young people aged 19-24. Placing the research within a "continuum" (Kelly, 1988; Gough, 1996) of maltreatment, findings found 'overlapping' of forms of maltreatment. Kelly's (1988) concept allowed for the analysis of sexual violence from across a spectrum, inclusive of the most extreme to lesser acts. However, Kelly stressed that the concept should not be employed to create a hierarchy of abuse. It linked every day, mundane, and more common forms of abuse to those defined as crimes within the law (Kelly, 1988). This premise according to the report authors was invaluable as a tool illustrating the connectedness of violence experienced, yet rendered quantifying the prevalence of child abuse, specifically CSA, problematic (Cawson, Wattam, Kelly, & Brooker, 2000).

The method of data collection took full advantage of new technological advancement thereby enabling participants to enter their response straight onto a laptop, thus alleviating pressure to discuss sensitive and distressing abusive experiences. Unfortunately, this research approach has not taken full advantage of technological demographic tools, which could have created a more representational perspective of British society: focusing on areas with a more ethnic diversity composition, and in enabling traditionally 'silenced' groups in within British society to disclose incidents of sexual abuse.

The sample was generated through random postcode allocations across the UK, with the vast majority (92%) reporting their ethnicity as white, and eight per cent recording ethnicity as Asian or another minority ethnic group. Unfortunately, for this research, the findings report little on culture and ethnicity.

There are, however, some smaller scale studies which address the impact of culture and race on victim-survivors of CSA.

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RACE AND CULTURE: FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH

Stereotypical myths surrounding black womanhood may play a significant role in both the silencing of non-white women through a process of internalisation or locating the self in 'blackness' by the women themselves; thus, dissuading African-Caribbean British women from seeking help, or disclosing childhood experiences of CSA (Bogle, 1987). Research from the US has pointed to the importance of the notion that African American women are uniquely able to cope with and overcome abuse and trauma (see, for example, Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009). Furthermore, it has been well documented in research conducted in the U.S. on violence against women and CSA that black women often avoid seeking formal help due to prior negative experiences and an anticipation of racist responses (Harvey, 1986 ; hooks, 1989; Wyatt, 1994; Crenshaw ,1991).

Exploring prevalence and incidence of CSA culturally has historically been problematic due to differing cultural definitional variants of what constitutes child neglect and abuse (Korbin, 1980; 1987). However, the impact or influence of culture and race is now emerging as a key factor in how particular

communities perceive, understand, and address CSA. There is an emerging literature which explores how victim-survivors themselves live with or make sense of their childhood experiences of sexual abuse through the prism of race/ culture (Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009; Marable, 1995; Tyagi, 2001; Ullman & Filipas, 2005; White, 2001). These new perspectives enable cultural differences to emerge which can shape support provision for victim-survivors.

### A CULTURAL LENS?

Korbin (1979) urged that all acts of child abuse be explored through a cultural lens in order to explore variations in what is considered to constitute abuse: for Korbin it is the cultural context, not the act itself that defines abuse. That said, child sexual abuse was the exception with anthropological studies (Korbin, 1979), since no culture or society sanctions or approves of acts of sexual victimisation between children and adults. Therefore, we may also assume that in regard to the sexual abuse of children a 'sameness' exists in regard to emotions of shame and stigma which are associated with this particular form of abuse for victim-survivors and families.

However, socio-economic factors may complicate, alter or disguise the 'sameness' of CSA on a micro, median and macro level. Obikeze (1999) presents a macro to micro model on CSA and child abuse within West African communities: a framework that demands an understanding of sexual violence at global, community and individual levels. This permits the specifics of the everyday lived experiences of women's lives to be contextualised within, and understood through, not only a specific historical prism, but also to make visible the actualities of intersections of social divisions of inequalities (racism, sexism, class) (Crenshaw, 1991) on a personal, societal, and global level.

Korbin (1979) proffered that cultural conditions were significant on three levels: (1) practices accepted by one culture but viewed as abusive or unacceptable by another; (2) idiosyncratic departures from cultural norms and values; (3) societal abuse and neglect, for example poverty and malnutrition. Recent explorations of CSA have acknowledged and incorporated the significance of taking culture into

consideration (e.g. Agathonos-Georgopoulos, 1992; Itzin, 2001; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009; Pasura, et al., 2012).

Placing Korbin's (1979) premise at the fore of their investigation, Jones & Trotman Jemmott (2009) conducted a UNICEF funded study in the Eastern Caribbean aimed at understanding the particularities of culture in regard to sexual abuse within the region. The Caribbean has the earliest age of sexual "debut" with the exception of Africa (World Bank, 2003) a finding which prompted the study.

The research involved 1,400 participants: 120 attended stakeholder consultation sessions; 859 completed the community survey; 300 people participated in 35 focus groups; 110 interviews were carried out with policymakers, practitioners and clinicians, ranging from the police, nursing, judiciary, education law and social services and the church. Where the report is most striking is in the response rate of face to face narrative interviews with victim-survivors. The study involved seven Eastern Caribbean countries, yet the victim-survivor interview rate was only 11. This perhaps has echoes with Wyatt's (1985) "*less trustful*" findings of African-American victim-survivors and also Finkelhor's (1979) finding that the effects or stigma of CSA often only surfaces as the child grows older and begins to make sense of what they have experienced.

There was a clear conceptual understanding of what constituted CSA with nearly three quarters of the sample across the region agreeing that it was never acceptable, regardless of circumstance, for sexual activity to take place between an adult and a minor. However, over a quarter felt that there were circumstances where sexual activity between adults and children was permissible (UNICEF, 2009, p. 9). The UNICEF study explained this deviation as pertaining to the specific conditions of the region.

Life circumstance(s) also altered what was considered sexual abuse ('consenting' transactional abuse) between a young girl and an older male and characteristics (gender) often produced differing interpretations (2009, p. 77). Perceptions and definitions of child abuse were found to be socially constructed, whereby meaning is historically produced and specifically located within a social and

cultural context (UNICEF, 2009). Additionally Jones and Trotman Jemmott's findings regarding circumstance altering interpretations of CSA for victim-survivors is reminiscent of Russell's (1986) premise that African-American victim-survivors' reflections of their experiences of CSA were influenced by their present and often challenging circumstances.

What constituted a legitimate sexual partner differed from western norms and thus impacted the question of consent. The majority gave 16 years as a legitimate age of consent; however, a significant number cited 13 year olds as having capacity to consent. Pregnancy also ended childhood for young girls. There was no understanding that sexual abuse would have preceded the pregnancy for such a young child, the authors found. Similar questions regarding the legitimacy of sexual partners in regards to age and consent and ethnicity are beginning to emerge in regard to child sexual exploitation in the UK (see also Lowe & Pearce, 2006; Ward & Patel, 2006).

Females were the most likely to report abuse, with abusers being predominantly male whomever the victim (Finkelhor, 1979; Wyatt, 1985; Russell, 1986). A disparity existed between countries with higher reporting rates than others. The authors suggested that this was related to the small sample available within each country and the various methods used to recruit samples: the average percentage of people reporting an experience of CSA was 13.2 per cent.

Adult perpetrators were defined as including abusing and non-abusing, the latter being those who "*through silence, denial, and a failure to take appropriate action*" were complicit in the practice of CSA (UNICEF, 2009, p. 9). This finding chimes with previous studies which have implicated other family members, especially mothers (Sauzier, 1989; Summit, 1983; Roesler & Weissman Winn, 1994; Alaggia, 2004 ; Fontes & Plummer, 2010). However, it was not clear whether the perception of complicity of non-offending adults referred to in Caribbean study was aimed solely at mothers or adults in general.

Women's disempowerment was cited as an inadvertent contributor to the practice of CSA, by failing to protect minors, even when they were aware that the abuse was occurring. Over half of the respondents agreed with the following statement: "*women sometimes turn a blind eye when partners have sex with children in their families*" (UNICEF, 2009, p. 9). Recent research on child sexual exploitation (CSE) in the Caribbean has correlated sex tourism/ transactional sexual abuse, 'parent pimping' to be located within the definitional bounds of CSE (Pasura, et al., 2012). Although research has acknowledged the relevance of poverty in the global South (Obikeze, 1999; Richter & Higson-Smith, 2004; Kempadoo, 2004; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009) the correlation of racism and poverty in the experiences of African-Caribbean British communities and victim-survivors in the UK is scant (Davis, 1982; Bernard & Turner, 2011). Findings on the complicity of mothers are not unique to the Caribbean study (see also Chapter 6).

Parents were the most likely perpetrators, with the majority citing stepfather abuse as the most common or perceived as the most likely to abuse. Trusted adults - teachers, priests and coaches - were also thought to be more likely abusers over strangers. These perceptions concur with previous research findings from the US (Finkelhor, 1979; Finkelhor, Browne, 1986; Pierce & Pierce, 1982; Wyatt, 1985; Russell, 1986), yet contrast with research conducted in Africa where 'stranger danger' was still a dominant theme (Levett & Lachman, 1991; Levett, 2003).

The study, uniquely, explored patriarchy as an explanatory factor, linked to culture and race. The authors note negative perceptions regarding women's capabilities as responsible mothers. This view of 'mothering' may be particular to this geographical region, and would need further research to establish what has produced such a sense of mistrust within Caribbean 'mothering' practices. However, this finding reflects West African attitudes which also place full responsibility for children's negative or positive outcome as adults on mothers (see also Hill-Collins, 1991; Levett, 2003; Spirasi, 2006). This factor may indicate the transfer of West African socialisation practices carried over to the Caribbean from slavery into the present. However, previous scholars (Bortalaia Silva, 1996) have argued:

...that motherhood has been associated with women in the context of persistent male domination of society. In discussion of the degradation of mothering this generally linked to two major concerns: men's increasing capacity to control mothering, and the progressive devaluation of mothering (Bortalaia Silva, 1996, p. 13).

Survey responses to attitudinal questions were revealing. Over half of the respondents did not agree that men felt a sense of entitlement to children's bodies, with just under half agreeing and under a quarter stating that they were unsure: more men disagreed (64%) than women (56%). The suggestion that a man's capacity as 'breadwinner' entitled him to have sex with his children also garnered a high negative response, with over three quarters of respondents disagreeing. In contrast, over half the respondents agreed that women's refusal to sleep with their partners justified a man sleeping with children in the household: the largest support for this statement came from Dominica and Grenada. Surprisingly, younger respondents (aged 18-30) were more likely to agree with the perception that CSA was linked to women refusing sex to their partners (Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009, p. 80; see also Kempadoo, 2004).

Over half believed there was a correlation between being abused as a child and going on to abuse as an adult. Older females attributed more blame especially if the abuse was intrafamilial (Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009) and the adolescent girl was deemed to have provoked her abuser by her style of dress or behaviour. Support for many of the statements suggests that respondents saw men as having a biologically driven sexuality, thus easily tempted (Jones & Trotman Jemmott 2009, p. 81). The findings have links with other research on blame (Ford, Schindler, & Medway, 2001; Ford et al. 2001).

The Caribbean is not a homogeneous region' being compiled of populations of differing cultures, histories of slavery, indentured labour and colonialism. However, there are many commonalities between island populations for example our West African heritage. Furthermore, the participants in this study have either migrated from this region or have parents who were born in the Eastern region of the

Caribbean and still adhere to this region's cultural traditions and beliefs and socialization processes. However although the Jones & Trotman Jemmott (2009) study explored sexual abuse from an Eastern Caribbean perspective, it differs from this study as it does not address migration, citizenship and belonging or racism.

The authors recommended two additional concepts in order to counter the limiting aspects of child sexual abuse: "harmful sexual behaviour" and "behaviour which contributes to the sexual harming of children" (Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009, p. 9). In taking into account the socio-economic characteristics of the region the authors proposed a localised (non-legal) definition of child sexual abuse which takes into consideration the lived experiences of the region's populations. The relevance of the themes from the study to African-Caribbean British communities in the U.K. will be explored in later chapters.

#### STUDIES OF CSA AND RACE IN THE UK

Melba Wilson's (1993) book *Crossing the Boundary: Black Women Survive Incest* is the first, and to date the only, autobiographical text which explores the impact of race and racism on African-Caribbean British women who has experienced CSA to a British context. Her intent was two-fold: to aid her own recovery and to assist other "black" women who have similar experiences to be able to do the same (p. 1). She acknowledges the fear that the impact that her disclosure and book may have on the black British community.

I worry that this book will be misconstrued and misinterpreted by many in the black communities. Some may feel that I have breached an even bigger taboo, crossed a bigger boundary (in their eyes) than incest (p. 1).

The taboo Wilson refers to is also referenced in work on domestic violence from both the US and Canada (Crenshaw, 1991; White, 2001; Tyagi, 2001; Alaggia, 2004). Wilson articulates how African-Caribbean British women may feel traitorous when disclosing experiences of CSA and sexual violence. The “don’t wash your dirty linen in public” attitude is bolstered, according to Wilson, by family and community alike: it is only in rare circumstances (e.g. especially brutal occurrences of child sexual abuse) that tacit approval is given to not keeping CSA in black communities under wraps.

Wilson (1993) clearly articulates and encourages African-Caribbean British women to move beyond the abuse, shame and stigma by dispelling myths regarding the experiences of abuse within our communities. The book is priceless in its efforts to articulate the lived experiences of African-Caribbean British survivors and noting the harm done to African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA by their exclusion from dominant discourses on sexual abuse. The book raises the question of whether African-Caribbean British women can legitimately be viewed as victims.

Additionally, Wilson’s understanding of the difficulties involved for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors to speak of their experiences within our communities contradicts later research, albeit on domestic violence (Thiara & Gill, 2012) which found that African-Caribbean British victim-survivors often turned to friends and family for support. Therefore, more research is needed which specifically addresses the support needs of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA.

A subsequent study (Kelly, Burton & Regan, 1998) set out to explore in the ways in which gender and age of the victim and abuser affect the meaning and impact of CSA. The non-clinical sample involved 136 women and 25 men and established that the consequences of CSA were “profoundly” enmeshed with gender and sexuality (ibid, p.3), with “over simplistic” definitions of the terms: ‘victim’/‘survivor’ was viewed as irrelevant by the majority of participants. A third of the sample defined themselves as black or belonging to an ethnic minority group. As the study did not address how race or culture may complicate or impact understandings of histories of sexual abuse, this is not addressed in the findings.

However, the findings in regards to how the abused gain meaning in regards to gendered positions offer an analytical framework through which the racially constituted subject can be explored. This provides an avenue for this study to analyse whether abused African-Caribbean British/black British victims of CSA are constituted through racialised discourses which promote representations of the 'strong and resilient', and how dominant stereotypes affect meaning and self-determination for African-Caribbean British women, how they negotiate CSA and the coping strategies employed to by them.

Thiara & Gill (2012) built a sample of fifteen African-Caribbean British and thirty South Asian mothers who had experienced domestic violence, and were involved in child contact disputes with ex-partners. In addition, 71 professions and statutory bodies were included in the process: legal professionals, courts and judiciary, CAFCASS and child contact centres. Although the focus was domestic violence, the findings in regard to barriers faced by women associated with race in the UK are significant. Many women were isolated, especially when they did not have support networks of family and friends in the UK. For South Asian women, the added fear of separation from their children was highlighted, and a lack of information regarding their rights was also another key barrier.

The study found that African-Caribbean British women tended to turn to family and friends, whereas South Asian women tended to leave quicker. African-Caribbean British women sought to deal with the abuse informally, thus protect black men from criminal sanctions (see also Wilson, 1993, Chigwada-Bailey, 1997; Bernard, 2001; Reynolds, 2005). Both groups of women feared reprisals from ex-partners/families. Thiara & Gill (2012) conclude that a range of stereotypes still served to inform the professionals. Common assumptions were that South Asian men wanted to be part of their children's lives, unlike fathers of African-Caribbean British heritage. Worryingly, some professionals accepted the view of women and children in South Asian communities as the property of fathers and families. Thus 'culture' overrode gender considerations, regarding decisions on child contact.

The findings are relevant to this study with respect to our understanding of support provision for women associated with race in the UK: that stereotypical depiction of South Asian and African-Caribbean British lives are still reproduced in professional discourses and practices. Further research is needed in regards of African-Caribbean British CSA victim-survivors', their perceptions of support services and how support services perceive their needs.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW) AND WOMEN OF BLACK/ AFRICAN DESCENT

This section will briefly examine the activism of black British feminists on child sexual abuse within both the U.S. and Britain. Therefore this section will briefly consider black/ black British feminist response to the reconceptualisations of rape and CSA. Additionally, the section will touch upon racism, citizenship and belonging in regard to CSA and to determine whether liminal identities which position African-Caribbean British victim-survivors both within and outside of British culture have any bearing on how we live with and make sense of experiences of CSA and previous and present barriers to disclosing CSA.

### THE RESPONSE TO RECONFIGURATION OF RAPE

The new conceptualisations of rape by radical feminists (Rush, 1974; Brownmiller, 1976; Mackinnon, 1982) were one outcome of feminist movements during the early 1970s. However, this period was one of great social and civil movements and unrest. An explanation of sexual violence against women and girls, couched within radical feminist theories of patriarchy and male power was viewed by many, at the time and subsequently, as too simplistic. As people of African descent began to contest the universalism of patriarchy, highlighting the hierarchies which exist within the concept of patriarchy itself, the radical explanation was left wanting and unrepresentative of the lived experiences of women traditionally associated by race as outlined by Carby (1982); see also Combahee River Collective, 1978).

When white feminists emphasize patriarchy alone, we want to redefine the term and make it a more complex concept. Racism ensures that black men do not have the same relations to patriarchal/capitalist hierarchies as white men (Carby, 1982, p. 46).

Responding to these and other criticisms Connell (1995) deploys Gramsci's theory of hegemony with respect to masculinity. The concept of hegemony refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life. Although this dominant group may not all be the most powerful, there is a hegemonic "*idea*" culturally and institutionally (Connell, 1995, p. 77). Connell recognises alternative forms of masculinity, that are themselves in a hierarchy with hegemonic masculinity. The relations between the various forms of masculinity are based on the relational dynamics of alliance, dominance and subordination. Constructed through practices that exclude and include, intimidate and exploit, it is crucial to recognise that there are also inequalities within masculinities (ibid).

Within masculinities, class, sexuality and race play a fundamental role in the positioning of men upon the hierarchical ladder. In the US and the UK black men are marginalised due to racism and thus are disadvantaged with respect to the hegemonic status of white males (Pleck, 1981). White supremacist notions of racial inferiority appear to have produced a situation whereby patriarchal practices of control and violence experienced by black women became invisible, almost justified, as a means of enabling black masculinities to be bolstered and reaffirmed. This racialised context and how it serves to silence women of African descent has been noted in a number of commentaries (Wallace, 1990; Crenshaw, 1991; hooks, 1984; White, 2001). The only visibly acceptable representation of a black female rape victim-survivor appears within historical discourses which focus on the raping of black women by white men during slavery (White, 2001). This in turn has served the supposed unifying political collective of 'blackness', thereby securing black female silence in regard to black on black sexual violence and CSA.

White's (2001) examination of attitudes toward black on black rape amongst African-American anti-rape activists found that rape problematised and compromised cultural solidarity. Her use of the African proverb, "*I am because we are*", demonstrates the patriarchal privilege afforded the black male when notions of racial/cultural solidarity are evoked. A consequence of this supposed unifying connection is that women and communities of African descent in the West remain silent regarding CSA and sexual violence, promoting an implicit sense of impunity regarding such acts, consistent with Jones and Trotman Jemmott's (2009) findings in the Caribbean.

According to White (2001) this supposed racial/cultural unity undermines social justice both within and outside the African-American community. She further argues that the same proverb could be employed to hold black men accountable for their displaced anger and aggression regarding their assumed sense of entitlement to black women's bodies. Research on CSA in both Africa and the Caribbean has identified patriarchal power as contributing to and normalising sexual abuse, justifying such practices as 'something that men do' (Levett, 2003; Kempadoo, 2004; Richter & Higson-Smith, 2004; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009). These findings are also significant for women of African descent in the West, where inter-personal and structural racism has obscured patriarchal abuses. Emergent narratives of sexual abuse within African/ African Caribbean contexts may better enable identification and contestation of patriarchal power within the lives of African-Caribbean British women and girls.

In regards to race equality politics, women of African descent in the West hold a subordinate almost invisible position to that of our men (see Painter, 1993; White, 2001). Because black men have historically been portrayed as sexual predators of white women, if a black woman discloses sexual abuse or rape she tends to be recast as a race traitor, disloyal to blackness.

White (2001) has termed this 'race loyalty', born out of the struggle for racial equality for all people of African descent. By this she means that the concerns of black/African-Caribbean British women are tied with those of the black/African-Caribbean British male and thus gender becomes a secondary, almost

privileged concern. Therefore, where Fanon (2008) has argued that the *“black man wants to be white”*, the *black woman needs him to remain black*<sup>4</sup> in order for her to remain coherent and intelligible and access the gains of race equality via him.

This is not a choice. The collective of blackness has worked from slavery onward as a means of personal and political survival for people of African descent in the face of white racism. African-American feminists have argued, *“that the line separating the black community from the white community served as a more accurate boundary delineating public and private spheres for African-Americans”* (see also Hill-Collins, 1991, p.49). Although differences exist in regard to history, modalities of colonisation and oppression between African-Americans and African-Caribbean British communities unification for people of African descent is still necessary whilst racism remains intact at both a structural and individual level. In this regard it could be argued that racialisation/ racism has denied black women the autonomy and agency to self-determine (Song, 2003) where and with whom they wish to belong and identify. Consequently, they are faced with the hypocrisy of gains (belonging) and losses (of self/agency). Hill-Collins (1991) outlines the realities of gains and losses for African-American and African-Caribbean British victim-survivors women who feel powerless to act on black on black rape/CSA because of the reliance upon the collective of blackness.

Far too many African-American women live with the untenable position of putting up with abusive black men in the defense of an elusive black unity...Thus understanding the contemporary dynamics of the sexual politics of black womanhood in order to empower African-American women requires investigating how social structural factors infuse the private domain of black women’s relationships (Hill-Collins, 1991, p. 179).

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<sup>4</sup> Italic emphasis mine.

## CONCLUSION

The scarcity of literature which focussed on the African-Caribbean British attitudes and experiences of sexual abuse necessitated an analytical process of investigation of literature from an array of disciplines. Yet having to work with the 'negatives' in regards to the paucity of literature on African-Caribbean British victim-survivor experiences produced a mixed theoretical framework consisting of: black feminist/ emminist, critical race, intersectionality, and post-colonial theory. Subsequently, although interpreting the available data from mixed theoretical framework was challenging, eventually this multi-disciplined method enabled a more deeply rich analysis to emerge; creating a 'better picture' of barriers which may have contributed to the omission of a specific African-Caribbean British voice emerging.

Therefore, the reasons for the exclusion of African-Caribbean British women from research and dominant discourses on sexual violence and CSA are not clear. The social barriers of exclusion which may have obstructed their participation became more visible by the employment of a mixed theoretical approach. Jones and Trotman Jemmott's (2009) work is a clear example of working inter-discipline to achieve a greater understanding the everyday lived experiences of victim-survivors from diverse cultures. Employing an anthropological perspective (Korbin, 1979; 1987a) to their investigation in the Eastern Caribbean enabled them to understand attitudes, help-seeking behaviours, and the role of patriarchy within a specific Eastern Caribbean perspective and thus give voice to victim-survivors in that region.

Similarly, black feminist and critical race interpretations especially in regard to African-American women's experiences of CSA and rape provide insight into how the political impact the personal agency of women traditionally associated with race (Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 1982; Hill-Collins, 1991; White, 2001). In regards to African-Caribbean British perspectives on these issues Bogle, (1987), and Wilson (1993) have attempted to address the gaps in our understanding in respect to African-Caribbean British

women and CSA. However, although invaluable their work is eclipsed within British discourse on CSA which are 'white normative' (Cawson, Wattam, Kelly, & Brooker, 2000).

Additionally, the critique of patriarchy as the sole explanation of violence and oppression for women may have reinforced a climate whereby white feminist scholars became wary of investigating CSA from differing cultural standpoints, for fear of being labelled universalist even imperialist. Furthermore, black British feminist scholars may have been aware that focusing on such a contentious subject could lead to further negative scrutiny of African-Caribbean British communities who were already feeling a sense of precariousness in the UK.

The limited knowledge of African-Caribbean British perspectives on, and experiences of, CSA persists. This thesis is a contribution to filling some of the gaps. The study aims to explore barriers to disclosing CSA experiences and histories for African Caribbean British women. Parental responses to such disclosures of sexual abuse, attitudes to CSA within African-Caribbean British communities, the influence of racialisation/racism and positions of intersectionalities of race, gender and class on how female victim-survivors understand and employ agency in regard to seeking support for CSA histories.

## CHAPTER 3: “UNSPEAKABLE THINGS UNSPOKEN”<sup>5</sup>: RESEARCHING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE WITH AFRICAN CARIBBEAN VICTIM-SURVIVORS

### INTRODUCTION

Women of African descent are implicitly assumed to be both accustomed to CSA due to their sexuality, yet somehow remain invisible within discourses which address the subject of sexual abuse, especially in the UK (see also Wilson, 1993; Kempadoo, 2004). In contrast, African-American feminist scholars have employed genealogical research to link and explain the impact of racialisation on notions of deviant sexuality for both male and female Africans from the enlightenment to the present ( see also hooks, 1984; Gilman, 1985; Hill-Collins, 1991; Hammond, 1999). Little investigation has either explored the legacies of slavery or colonialist discourses of oppression on the sexuality of African-Caribbean British communities in the UK. Consequently, where researchers of CSA have identified cultural differences in how women rationalise and live with CSA experiences from a North American perspective there has been no such investigation in the UK (Wyatt, 1985; Russell, 1986).

Child sexual abuse has been deemed the most ‘unspeakable of things’ regardless of culture and race. But within the UK race/racism also appears to be an ‘unspeakable thing unspoken’ (Morrison, 1988). With postmodernism discrediting the legitimacy of biological race, seeing it as a mere construct for political processes of classification, requests for the acknowledgement everyday difference(s) to steer support services for black/African-Caribbean British victim-survivors appear to have become diluted (Gilroy, 2000; Gunaratnam, 2003) in a context of policy to promote a veneer of social cohesion (see also Hickman, Crowley, & Mai, 2008). Whilst race may be a social construct, the legacy of pseudo-scientific claims of biological superiority arguably still shapes and colours the experiential for people of African descent living in the UK. Ironically the very tools required to dismantle stereotypes of racial

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<sup>5</sup> Morrison, T. (1988) *Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American in Literature Speech*, The Tanner Lectures in Human Values, Delivered at the University of Michigan.

difference - that is the recognition of race/ racism - is now presented as detrimental to the harmony and safety of British society (see also Morrison, 1988 and Racialisation Section in Chapter 1 ).

Consequently, the reluctance of African-Caribbean British communities to break the silence on CSA becomes understandable when a racialised context is taken into consideration. However, during the Child Abuse Studies Unit conference in 1987 (MacLeod & Saraga, 1987) black British feminists called for the creation of specialised services which acknowledged the everyday lived experiences of race/racism on the agency of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors (Bogle, 1987).

### **AIMS OF STUDY**

The aim in the first instance was to establish whether any progress within existing support service provision had occurred since the conference. Secondly, to explore the invisibility of African-Caribbean British women from discourses which focus on child sexual abuse from a British perspective. Ultimately, the research sought to give a voice to African-Caribbean British victim-survivors. Therefore, a literature review was primarily embarked upon in order to establish who, and what, was being addressed in terms of literature on both CSA and CSA and women of African-Caribbean British from the mid-1980s to the present in the UK.

The search for literature revealed that race, culture and ethnicity was either missing or 'tagged on' for the majority of studies which explored CSA from a British standpoint. This was the case for feminist, psychological, health and social policy literature. Where culture and race was acknowledged investigations of sexual abuse often came from Black Minority Ethnic (BME)/ Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) slant which did not demarcate or specify any information pertaining to African-Caribbean British culture or African-Caribbean British female victim-survivors'. Only one major text addressed CSA from the perspective of diasporic African women's experiences of CSA in the UK (Wilson, 1993). Additional texts addressed the implications for African-Caribbean British mothers and how they were represented within prominent discourses on the subject (Bernard, 1995; 1997; 2001). Other references

to sexual abuse were briefly touched upon in literature which explored Caribbean parenting in the UK (Reynolds, 2005) and was mentioned briefly in a legal text exploring the relationship between the criminal justice system in the UK and African/ African-Caribbean British women (Chigwada-Bailey, 1997). Consequently, the literature review revealed that there was a gap in our understanding of how CSA was addressed from an African-Caribbean British cultural perspective, and more specifically from African-Caribbean British adult female victim-survivor standpoint. Therefore, an additional research aim was to address the lack of literature which placed race and culture at the heart of understanding of how African-Caribbean British women live with histories of CSA in the UK.

The absence of African-Caribbean British women from traditional British discourses and large scale studies (Cawson, 2000) on child sexual abuse appears too complex and multi-layered and thus beyond the scope of this research project. However, the tendency to produce 'white as normative' literature addressing CSA in the UK revealed by literature review set the trajectory for this research. Taking into consideration the CASU conference appeal for service provision to acknowledge race/racism in the lives of women of African descent in the UK during the mid-1980s it was perplexing as to why subsequent research had not acknowledged the feedback from the CASU conference with robust studies by academics and or public health policy makers.

As already noted, racialisation has historically erased the entitlement of women of African descent to speak through differential binaries of white and black female sexualities. As acts of resistance, women of African descent have chosen to remain silent, fearing disclosure would serve to reinforce racial stereotypes and to ward off further scrutiny from state agencies (see also Crenshaw, 1991; Hammond, 1999; Bernard, 2001). However, time and space need to be addressed in assessing whether African-Caribbean British women's' perceptions about speaking of CSA have shifted generationally.

Therefore, as the initial call for race and culture to be factored into understandings of how women live with both histories of CSA and their options for help-seeking had come from black feminists during the

mid-1980s, it made sense to begin the study by speaking with black feminists as they were at the forefront engaging with African-Caribbean British survivors, their families, and African-Caribbean British communities from the 1970s onward. Thus, their recollections would contextualise the research by providing a genealogical perspective in regards to activism on the subject of CSA. Furthermore, their experiences are invaluable in establishing historical barriers to disclosure for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors. Thus, the recollections of the Experts were sought to identify and chart any temporal shifts in attitudes to CSA by African-Caribbean British communities from the 1980s to the present. The study, therefore, investigates which factors have promoted silence in the past, and which may continue to deny African-Caribbean British women agency and opportunities to speak of histories of CSA even within the present.

## **RESEARCH APPROACH**

Answering these questions necessitated a mixed methodological approach combining qualitative interviews with black British feminists predominantly from Brixton Black Women's Group (BBWG) and seven African-Caribbean British women with histories of CSA; a survey of rape crisis centres, a literature review and a partial content analysis piece exploring British feminist literature from the 1980s to the early 1990s.

The approach is deductive in that it seeks to explore the complexities of histories of racialisation and migration for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors and connect this to the enduring silence on CSA for African-Caribbean British women and communities. Identifying culturally-aware viewpoints and challenges for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors is also linked to gaps in existing literature and support provision for women from this group and other migrant women, new and old, traditionally associated with race (see also Hickman, Crowley, & Mai, 2008) or religion. As such the study intends to follow in the tradition of transformative research ( see also Humphries, Mertens, & Truman, 2000). By enabling African-Caribbean British victim-survivors to have the opportunity to add their voices to

existing knowledges on CSA where previously that voice has been non-existent. This small study aims to be transformative albeit in a minute manner to both the women, and to our understanding of the dynamics of race and culture on African-Caribbean British victim-survivors sense of autonomy and agency.

This chapter outlines the journey of the research, outlining some of the hurdles involved in attempting to explore questions of CSA within embodiments of race and culture in the lives of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors in the UK. Before discussing how the interview data was analysed the following section will outline the epistemological framework which informed this research project.

## EPISTEMOLOGY

The research project is framed from a Black Feminist and to a lesser extent an auto-ethnographic standpoint. Therefore, the epistemological stance of this project is couched within an emancipatory research framework which according to Humphries, Merten and Truman (2000) aims to:

*Question[s] the meaning of 'objectivity' and 'elimination of bias', but which has an explicit concern with ending inequality and with taking the side of the oppressed and marginalised groups (2000, p. 3).*

Cameron et al. (1992), view emancipatory research as ethical research, advocacy research, with a focus for and with empowerment. According to Humphries et al. (2000) the 'with' represents the interactive and bridging aspect of this mode of research which is achieved through the rejection of supposed objectivity, positivist practices and implicit relations of power. Therefore, my methodological approach falls under a framework which is participatory, collaborative and empowerment research (Kelly, Burton, & Regan, 1994).

## BLACK FEMINIST FRAMEWORK

Black feminist thought with its roots in West African traditions of passing knowledge orally (Haring, 1994), and feminist qualitative in-depth methodological research methods (Graham, 1983; Hill-Collins,

1991; hooks, 1984), have successfully redefined what can be classed as legitimate in regards to knowledge. The shift away from a positivist supposedly objective analysis occurred by invoking what Smith called “the standpoint of women” (1987, p. 105) within the research process. With an emphasis upon subjective interpretations, how subjects interpret and make sense of their own experiences, this has enabled both the reinsertion of women’s voices within discursive practices and the deconstruction of white male dominated histories and knowledges especially in regard to women who have been marginalised through processes of racialisation (hooks, 1984 ; Hill-Collins, 1991; Frith, 1997; Carby, 1997; Purvis, 1995).

Therefore, in order to challenge supposed validated discourses (re)produced historically within male dominated academies, feminist scholars and women who do not necessarily identify as feminist but who were advocates of reclaiming women’s voices, began the task of redefining how knowledge was in the first instance produced. The second stage was validating previously excluded (Frith, 1997) knowledges, making visible newly emergent standpoints in an effort to obtain knowledge(s) regarding the realities of existence for women of African descent and other marginalised groups.

Newly emergent methodological practices have been invaluable to black feminist theories of intersections of race, class and gender. It has enabled frameworks to emerge which allow black women to ask, and, “begin to answer interesting and important questions” (Stanley, 1997, p. 198) which had previously been obscured by positivist notions of objectivity, and the dominance of white male scholarship. Therefore, a black feminist standpoint reflects according to Hill-Collins (1991) the interests and standpoints of its creator (p. 201).

By couching this research project within a black feminist framework, the everyday lived experiences of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA could be brought to the fore. The employment of this specific epistemological approach provides the means for this traditionally marginalised group to re-constitute and self-define through our uniquely subjective lived experiences in the UK and from within

African-Caribbean British communities themselves. This particular research mode readdresses the absences and silences of the African-Caribbean British female voice, albeit on a small scale.

While the validity of experience as a means of 'knowing' has been critiqued by established epistemological standpoints (Mohanty, 1992; Scott, 1992), its usage has still been invaluable when placed within a framework which addresses genealogically the category of the subject and how subjects have been constituted throughout time. Scott (1992) and Mohanty (1992) suggest that individual 'experience' must be problematised; via a relocation to the realm of the historically constituted subject. There is a need to locate 'experience' temporally, in order to assess the meanings attached to gender, race, class and age specific historical moments (Mohanty, 1992). For Scott it is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience (1992).

Similarly Kum Kum Bhavnani (1997) warns against the polarising and oppositional effects which are often produced when 'experience' is employed as a means illustrating 'truthful' knowledge(s). For Bhavnani (1997) 'experience' has been an invaluable tool for feminists to evaluate and process subjugated knowledges, especially between 'white' and 'black' women and as such have questioned the universalism of 'woman' (p. 43). Yet to privilege 'experience' as a means of understanding racial oppression and exploitation can produce silence(s) between women where debate is crucial to a greater reconceptualisation of the positioning of women.

*I can feel intimidated in white-only contexts, and white women could claim they feel intimidated when women of colour discuss racism for many hours, and make white women feel guilty (Bhavnani, 1997, p. 43).*

Therefore, although 'experience' may be a tool by which traditional knowledges can be provoked, experience alone does not allow for an understanding of how temporal ideologies, privileges and power dynamics shift and constitute personhood, unless it is analysed through a genealogical lens. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly for women of all ethnicities, if experience has the ability, similar to methodologies which are deemed 'objective', to stifle and halt debate and discussion it

becomes just as detrimental to any notion of 'sisterhood' located within empathetic difference and "*has the potential to become ideologically hegemonic*" (Alonso, 1988, p. 37).

A black feminist epistemological framework by itself felt inadequate for this project. I felt that it could not accommodate the differences of experiences in regard to slave history, colonialism, and the more implicit nature and practice of racism in the UK. Consequently, I combined a black feminist standpoint with an slight auto-ethnographic framework in order to bring the hybridity of identification and experience to the fore in the hope of reducing any homogeneous understandings of the experiences of victim-survivors of African descent in the West (see below for discussion of auto-ethnography).

Additionally, being aware of my 'insider', 'outsider' position as researcher, as African-Caribbean British victim-survivor/ non-'expert', I occupied a liminal position along with the participants in the study. As such I could not always relate or see experiences which were representative of African-Caribbean Britishness within existing knowledges which were often derived from African-American discourses on race and gender and sexual abuse. This betwixt position was one of discussion and articulation; with both participant and myself attempting to articulate and bring into coherence the 'unspeakable things' buried within embodiments of gender and race and community loyalty. I termed this methodology Intersectional Liminality (see section on Intersectional Liminality in Chapter 7).

Similarly, I took the decision to replace the racial categorisation black, with the more encompassing term of African-Caribbean British as means of demonstrating the fluidity, albeit not definitive, of identification. The variety of possibilities enabled by relinquishing such a monolithic term as black; is both inclusive and enables a charting of the diasporic journey of women of African-Caribbean British descent. Additionally, it provides a glimpse into the various cultural influences upon African-Caribbean British identity over time.

If, as Bhavnani argues, 'experience' becomes the only claim to truth (Bhavnani, 1997, p. 44) then we are once again heading in the direction whereby only those who are privileged to speak are heard.

Black feminist theory alone, albeit an important epistemological foundation, has to some extent both diminished discussions of 'sameness' between women only to reinvent an homogeneous voice; an African American feminist one. This in turn has downplayed the important role of difference within the lives of women of African descent located outside of the US. Thus "*partial objectives in feminism*" are according to Haraway "*privileged ones, because "objectivity is about limited locations and situated knowledge"*" (Haraway, 1988, p. 583) meaning the knowledge/power dynamic remains unchallenged (Bhavnani, 1997).

The Foucauldian concept of 'subjugated knowledge' (Foucault, 1977; 1981) sets up and frames the knowledge of the participants, due to the concept's ability to couch and examine the issue of the subject within a genealogical perspective. It is used in this study to insist on acknowledging the relational aspect of power upon the historically constituted and marginalised African-Caribbean British subject. Although Foucault did not examine questions of either race or gender, foregrounding the subjugated voice has been employed successfully by marginalised scholars- feminist, postcolonial/neo-postcolonial to deconstruct knowledges which organise social relations of power and oppression (Fanon, 1952; Hill-Collins, 1991; Mohanty, 1992; Bhabha, 1993).

Michel Foucault's theory of power (Foucault, 1981) and the interaction of power upon, and through, the body-subject, allows for an acknowledgement of relations of power, and supposedly, mechanisms of resistance to that power, by the body-subject. Black feminists have critiqued the universalism of second wave feminists' standpoints for tending to rely upon oppressor/oppressed theories of power in the lives of women (see also Chapter 2). They further argued that some men were also marginalised because of race and sexuality (Combahee River Collective, 1978; Connell, 1987; 1995; Carby, 1997).

When white feminists emphasize patriarchy alone, we want to redefine the term and make it a more complex concept. Racism ensures that black men do not have the same relations to patriarchal/capitalist hierarchies as white men (Carby, 1997, p. 46).

Foucauldian theory allows for critical analyses of discourses, which constitute our subjectivity through material practices that shape our bodies as well as our minds, in combination with relations of power (Weedon, 2003). Foucault's model of power (as opposed to sovereign power) is non-authoritarian, non-conspiratorial, and indeed non-orchestrated; '*yet it produces and normalises bodies to serve prevailing relations of dominance and subordination*' (Bordo, 1993, p. 252). Power within his theoretical framework is subtler, manifesting and operating through surveillance, a sense of scrutiny, evaluation and hence the internalisation of prescribed ways of being.

Yet, Foucault presents challenges for those who wish to apply his concepts to men's violence against women. Foucault does not allow for the acknowledgement of the multiple modes that women employ to access agency through the current binaries of gender. Where the everyday lived experiences of women as epistemology has been central to illustrating, and dismantling universal notions of women as passive and thus essentially victims.

*Foucault's is a world in which things move, rather than people, a world in which subjects become obliterated or, rather, recreated as passive object, a world in which passivity or refusal represent the only possible choices. (Hartsock, 1990b, p. 167)*

Bourdieu's (1980) concept of habitus explains power not as ubiquitous, beyond agency and structure as proffered by Foucault, but rather as culturally and symbolically produced and continuously re-legitimised through the interplay of agency and structure. Expanding on Husserl, Bourdieu argued that social norms, 'habitus', are embedded within the embodied self, and guide behaviours and thinking (Navarro, 2006) in ways which are not immutable, but which shift in context and temporally.

The experiences of African-Caribbean British women can be analysed and viewed as subjugated knowledges, attempting to articulate and voice their experiences of CSA, which have been omitted by dominant hegemonic practices and discourses of exclusion. By centralising the African-Caribbean British female experience of CSA we begin a process of inclusion which aims to acknowledge the

specificities of racialisation, gender, colonialism, migration and hybridisation upon African-Caribbean British victim-survivors sense of agency.

As such locating the research within a black feminist framework, the inability to demonstrate how temporal shifts of belonging and citizenship were negotiated from a British standpoint becomes apparent. The everyday concerns of Black British feminists during the 1970s and 1980s had more in common with women of differing cultural backgrounds living in the UK (hence the cross-cultural composition of black British feminism during 70s and 80s) than with those of our African-American sisters. I do not mention the dominance of African American feminist scholars as a critique, rather the monopoly of African- American representations of women of African descent everyday lives within western cultures tends to exclude heterogeneous realities of being African-Caribbean British. In this regard the questions as to why African-Caribbean British victim-survivors remain silent were addressed from a standpoint which is not specific to their everyday lives in the UK. Consequently UK public policy and support agency responses may not be tailored to the needs of African-Caribbean British women in the UK if they are informed by discourses which have not originated from an African-Caribbean British standpoint.

Where the particularities of being female and African-Caribbean British has tended to be explored or represented from the starting point of the "Struggle" for race equality, or around issues of identity and social cohesion (see also chapter 4) the subject of sexual violence within our lives appears to have been invibilised by these equally pressing concerns. Although relevant as part of the histories of African-Caribbean British people in the UK, these accounts failed (or refused) to address the personal within the political. Temporal personal considerations and shifts were lost somehow within an homogenous reproduced narrative highlighting such occurrences as the 'Windrush generation', 'Sin Bins' or 'SUS'. Although these subjects were and are very important to the history of this country, they somehow had the effect of overshadowing other forms of oppression and victimisation in the everyday lives of African-Caribbean British women during that period.

As a result of what I deem to be an homogenisation of African-Caribbean British life experience, auto-ethnography (see below) provided the tools by which I could write my own personal experiences of being born and brought up British. Accessing all of the supposed privileges that this nationalist status afforded me whilst simultaneously being situated as an 'other' and identifying with and socialised to 'blackness' thus juxtaposing my Britishness, gendered violence was often obscured and located in between my British privilege and my desire to belong to the collective of blackness. By locating the research within a hybridised or liminal standpoint, my personal experience could be employed as a form of reference, a contextual tool by which to establish what needed to be explored, whilst further enabling a kind of separation of my own experiences from that of my participants by acknowledging where I stood within the research.

### **(AUTO)-ETHNOGRAPHY**

The auto-ethnographic framework enabled generational differences to come to the fore in terms of acculturation, belonging and citizenship and temporal shifts in societal and cultural awareness and understandings of CSA. I chose to include an auto-ethnographic framework to the research which I hoped could conceptualize the research from a more subjective angle whilst enabling a dialogue of difference to begin which would not alienate or become oppositional in nature; but seek discussion, whilst further charting changes in attitudes to CSA within the African-Caribbean British communities in regards to feelings of belonging and citizenship.

Auto-ethnography was born out of the need to counter the primitivism/naturalism of the research method ethnography. Ethnography is a research method whereby a researcher observes by conducting fieldwork through participating to varying degrees with a culture different from the researcher's own (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Based within the discipline of anthropology, ethnography has traditionally been employed to illustrate and justify the differences between people(s) of non-European descent. As such many have argued that ethnography has produced and reinforced notions of the

'Other', reproducing colonial discourses to construct the 'primitive' through a hierarchy of cultures (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000).

Additionally, many have critiqued ethnography as a research tool, arguing that it fails to take into account that the very process of observing, analysing, and reporting of the data is subjective: informed by the researcher's own cultural locations. Fardon argued that ethnography has served to interpellate non-Europeans and as such not only served colonialism, but was its twin (Fardon, 1990).

However, by the 1970s Heider introduced the term auto-ethnographer to refer to the informant self, thereby illustrating how the Dani people understood their own cultural accounts of themselves (Heider, 1975). By 1979 the term was employed to supposedly study "*one's own people*" (Hayano, 1979 ; Wolcott, 2004, p. 98).

Autoethnography according to Ellis can be described as a form of ethnography which overlaps art and science. It is part '*auto- or self and part ethno-or culture*' (Ellis, 2004, p. 31). Auto-ethnography addresses both the process as well as what is produced by the method itself, and as such '*connects the personal to the cultural*' (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739).

Lyn Thomas' response to Avtar Brah's 'Scent of Memory' (Brah, 1996; Thomas, 2012), is a profoundly compelling example of how auto-ethnography enables dialogue by removing binaries of true /untrue, valid/ invalid, by replacing oppositional knowledges with knowledges of differing perspectives. This shift in perspective demands a response, and hopefully debate, as all can be present and contribute.

On listening to Thomas' recollections of a bus journey, and her understanding of her constituted subjectivity as normative, does not encourage chastisement. Rather it encourages and illuminates an understanding of how at an early age, subjectivity is temporally and politically produced. Like Thomas, I also would board a bus with my mother and my sister in the West Midlands, and overhear not only young children question my existence, but also their parents and grandparents. I recall white people refusing to sit next to me, even if that seat was the only one available on the entire bus. What is

interesting is not their actions towards me, but my reaction and response over time to this type of rejection. By employing an auto-ethnographic framework I, like Thomas, began to understand how I as an African-Caribbean British young girl had already been constituted and situated as 'Other' from outside. Just as Thomas is constructed in the binaries of racialised opposition to 'blackness', African-Caribbean British women were also interpellated by binary opposites of 'whiteness'.

Thomas' auto-ethnographic piece speaks of her history of subjectivity. Her account of her childhood is not apologetic, rather it is a genuine exploration and examination of how hegemonic powers constitute and relationally situate peoples. The question of validity is addressed in the supposed 'other(s)' response to her 'scent of memory', for it does not differ, but is responded to from a different perspective of similar situations, albeit from a different perspective. An auto-ethnographic framework therefore, is integral to my research where it is employed as it enables a glimpse of the multiple standpoints which are simultaneously occupied during a given temporal moment by a diverse range of women.

However, this is only one possible explanation and therefore, must not be employed as a universalism. By choosing to employ a framework which encompasses both a black feminist/ to a lesser extent auto-ethnographic methodology, the opportunity of allowing difference to become visible is heightened. However, auto-ethnographic observations both serve as reference to some extent, especially as there is no existing research material that explores the issue of CSA and the role of culture and racialisation upon subjectivity, coping and decisions to disclose from a African-Caribbean British perspective. Additionally, it enables me as the researcher to locate my self within the research process.

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

How African-Caribbean British women live with, and negotiate, histories of CSA as racialised subjects, being deemed as 'other' within western climes, has created a gap in our understanding of how best to address the intersections of both histories of racial oppression and sexual victimisation.

The methodology employed both qualitative and quantitative forms of enquiry. Face to face in-depth interviews with African-Caribbean British victim-survivors were chosen as the best method of gaining a richer and more nuance understanding of how intersections of race, class and gender constituted their subjectivity and thus situated and informed coping strategies.

### METHODS USED FOR COLLECTION OF DATA

The reasoning behind using a qualitative face to face interview method for both the experts and the victim-survivors was based on previous research which explored the everyday lives of women and people from African-Caribbean British communities. Additionally, with the sample being relatively small I was able to accommodate a more intimate and face to face approach. Previous experience had further demonstrated that research participants' seemed to prefer the interactive process with the researcher over more distant methods: journals, written narratives, especially when the subject was sensitive. Additionally, as the aim of the research was to understand which factors might influence African-Caribbean British victim-survivors agency in regards to speaking of CSA, a qualitative method which took into account what Ritchie and Lewis (2003) have termed a 'participants' frames of reference' was adopted. Having this reference qualified my understandings of the final interpretative process of analysing the '*messiness*' of everyday lives (Ritchie & Lewis, *ibid*, p. 202) described in the interviews of the women.

Employing a qualitative method for the victim-survivors and the experts interviews enabled findings to emerge of the participants' social world which could not have been done were the method employed quantitative or statistical (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

However, a survey method for the Rape Crisis Centres (RCCs) was aimed at reaching a sample which was nationwide, and the information sought was a mixture of brief open ended questions pertaining to service, with a small statistical element.

The content analysis was employed to understand previous feminist/ black British feminist engagement on CSA within periodicals (feminist magazines) from the 1980s onward. Counting the number of times CSA was mentioned, and where in the magazine enabled a contextualisation of the importance placed on the subject CSA temporally.

In-depth face to face interviews were also conducted with black British feminists who were active from the 1970s in London. Semi- structured interviews with both the experts and the victim-survivors provided deep rich data contributing significantly to the overall findings of the research. In addition, a survey with Rape Crisis Centres (RCCs) in England and Scotland sought to assess whether the intersections of race and gender were understood and addressed within current provision.

It was important to understand how the feminist mantra of the “personal is political” was articulated in activism by black feminists throughout the 1970s and 80s in the UK. The interviews with black British feminists enabled the thesis to explore whether the experiences of child sexual abuse of women and girls ever became a black British feminist priority. Furthermore, these testimonies enable charting the political activism of black British women from a temporal perspective.

Early in the research content analysis, exploring representation of CSA and ethnicity from a textual perspective in ‘Spare Rib’ and ‘Outwrite’ magazine was embarked upon to establish how or if, British feminist periodicals addressed the issue in the first instance and to ascertain whether black British feminists were engaged. However, this endeavour was discontinued and not completed, since prior to the 1980s, CSA was not featured or represented in any great detail for either white or ethnically diverse women (See Appendix 11 for a partial representation of content analysis).

## DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH METHODS

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The paucity of literature and knowledge which addressed the complexities of the life experiences of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors (see previous chapter) necessitated a process of diffraction or what Law and Urry have termed a “messy method” or “ontological politics” (Law & Urry, 2005, p. 2), whereby re-enacting the complexities of social relations within racially gendered binaries present us with the possibility of positive transformations and understanding of experiences of CSA not only for African-Caribbean British women but for all victim-survivors. Unsurprisingly, the study encountered many challenges which are presented in the limitations section later in the chapter.

A literature review of key texts addressing various aspects relating to child sexual abuse in the first instance, and race and CSA in the second was the first research method embarked upon. The purpose of these reviews was to become familiar with theorists, theories, and to gain a greater understanding of existing knowledges, terminologies and perspectives on the subject of child sexual abuse/ CSA race and culture from the 1970s to the present. An additional review sought to understand black British feminist’s activism on CSA during the same period.

The on-line search for literature on CSA produced an abundance of texts from across disciplines for example, psychology, social sciences, public health and anthropology (see Chapter 2). The three main texts (Finkelhor, 1979, Russell, 1986, Wyatt, 1985) which I was initially directed to review came from the United States. From these texts, I was then able to tailor subsequent searches and find more relevant literature which suited my area of interest. Although the three key pieces (ibid) were produced during the late 1970s to the mid-1980s certain findings outlined influenced my research direction. For example, Russell (1986) suggested that the African-American participants in her study recalled their experiences as ‘*more traumatic*’ than their white counterparts because of the harshness of their lives (See Chapter 5).

The key texts reviewed (Cawson, 2001, Finkelhor, 1979, Pierce & Pierce, 1982, Russell, 1986, Wyatt, 1985) provided an understanding, of previous studies which explored prevalence and incidence of sexual abuse in the United States and to a lesser extent in Britain. The literature from the U.S. examined race as a factor in how women understood their experiences, abuse characteristics, age at onset of abuse, relationship to abusers, and family formation of both black and white victim-survivors. Interestingly, the US studies from the late 1970s onward acknowledged race, at points even justifying or attempting to explain the ratio of African-American to white participants (Finkelhor, 1979). The rebuke of a 'colour blind' (Pierce and Pierce, 1982) approach to understanding race and culture and how these social identities impacted a victim-survivor's well-being in the post- abuse period was missing from more current large scale studies conducted in the UK in the Twenty-first century (Cawson, 2001).

Literature which explored race, culture, religion, migration and acculturation and how these factors impacted the experiences of victim-survivors came predominantly from the US and Canada. Anthropological appeals from the late 1970s to locate sexual abuse within a cultural context (Korbin, 1979) was a key finding which set the tone especially in regards to future support provision (see Chapter 7) for African- Caribbean British and women from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. On-line searches for race, culture, black, religion, migration and CSA from a British perspective yielded almost no literature with the exception of those reviewed in the literature review (See Chapter 2).

Where the few British studies did engage with race, ethnicity, culture etc. it was explored from a domestic violence context. Furthermore, these pieces tended to employ the racial classification of black or black British as a means of identifying the participants involved. This universal racial classification obscured the possibility of identifying even understanding any particularities of African-Caribbean British attitudes to domestic violence. Therefore, the scantiness of literature which examined African-Caribbean British victim-survivor perspectives of CSA necessitated a review of literature from a variety of geographical locations: African-American, Canadian, and Caribbean, where research on CSA

experiences of diasporic African women in the West was in greater abundance. This was also the case for discourses which addressed intersections of class and racially gendered standpoints on sexual violence/domestic violence and state, voluntary support provision for victim-survivors (Crenshaw, 1991).

The review of literature for black British feminism was more forthcoming in regards to obtaining literature which explored the activism of black feminist during the 1970s onward. Both journal articles and books written by prominent activists from British black feminist movement was useful in contextualising the priorities for political activism during that period. Additionally, many of the issues which were identified in the review were supported to some extent by the articles found in the content analysis conducted on *'Spare Rib'* (See Appendix 11).

Yet in regard to black British feminist activism on CSA only two pieces of literature Bogle's (1987) journal article and Wilson's *'Crossing the Boundaries'* (1993). The review of literature on black British feminist activism demonstrated that CSA was not on the political agenda during the 1970s and onward in the UK. The review outlined that everyday acts of person, societal and structural racism were the main priorities during that period. Furthermore, the literature review revealed that CSA and sexual violence were often shied away from by black British feminists. Domestic violence appeared to be the exception, yet much of the activism tended to be focussed on this particular type of violence in the lives of South Asian British women.

A question of identity and racial essentialism was another area which was covered extensively within the literature on black British feminists. Much of the literature addressed the challenges faced by post-colonial communities in the 'Motherland'. For women of African descent questions of 'authentic' blackness appeared to both unify and create a global collective, whilst further splitting and distancing women closer to home on the grounds of being of dual- heritage descent, or black women entering into relationships with men from different cultures, ethnicities and colour (See also Racialisation Section in Chapter 1).

The literature review enabled a deductive process to occur whereby the lack of a particular voice and standpoint from existing discourses on CSA enabled categories and theories to emerge. Questions arose regarding which factors prevented African-Caribbean British women from addressing and speaking out publicly regarding sexual abuse and even domestic violence. Additionally, the review brought up questions around how identity and identification was not only negotiated within African-Caribbean British communities, but also why this racialised social identity was felt to be needed as both a tool of inclusion and in excluding others. Consequently, this enquiry led onto how a sense of 'belonging' to a particular group could hinder or enable agency and 'spaces to speak' of CSA. This process resembled what Richie & Lewis (2003) has termed interpretive analysis.

### **CONTENT ANALYSIS**

The content analysis initially intended to include two British feminist periodicals which were still popular during the 1980s: '*Spare Rib*', '*Outwrite*' and the U.S based '*Off Our Backs*'. The inclusion of a U.S based magazine was proposed as a means to compare the representation of African-American victim-survivors in U.S. magazines with those of African-Caribbean British women in similar magazines in the UK. Analysis was aimed to cover the period 1980-1995 for '*Spare Rib*', and '*Off Our Backs*'; and 1982-1995 for '*Outwrite*'.

The content analysis was conducted in the Women's Library in Aldgate as the library held an extensive archive of all three magazines. Using an excel spreadsheet each periodical was listed by date, issue number, title, etc. from 1980 onwards (see Appendix 11). The arrangement of data was ordered onto a thematic structural chart with each column headed from left to right as follows: Issue number, Year, Month, Title, Child maltreatment, CSA, Rape, Domestic violence, Colour (race), Racism, Ethnicity, Where in journal, Location, Context, Page number.

The analytical process involved examining each page in each issue and searching for references, features, editorials etc. pertaining to each of the various headings and then adding a tick if any of the

above categories were mentioned in the issue. If for example CSA was mentioned in the issue, the location of where it came was noted for example, where it came in relation to the front cover (number of pages in), whether it was a story or in the Ads section and the context in which it was mentioned: i.e. advertisement for women to join a CSA victim-survivors group (see Appendix 11).

The content analysis process was extremely time consuming and laborious. The initial premise of reviewing all of the volumes of the three journals for content pertaining to race and CSA would have been invaluable. However, on reflection the magnitude of such a task was unrealistic for a doctoral project. It was felt that continuing would be too time consuming especially with the other three data collection methods commencing: literature review, in-depth interviews and survey of Rape Crisis Centres. It was a research project in its own right and thus could not be adequately addressed in this study. Although the content analysis was not completed the analysis of '*Spare Rib*' provided some quantitative findings which were later supported by the account of one expert in the study. Additionally, it contextualised the omission of not only an African-Caribbean British victim-survivor voice on the subject of CSA, but also the temporal omission or invisibility of *all* victim-survivor voices on CSA during a particular temporal moment in the UK.

## SAMPLING AND RECRUITMENT

### SAMPLING FOR VICTIM-SURVIVORS

I hoped to attract specifically African-Caribbean British women from 18 years onwards with histories of child sexual abuse. The extensive age range was intended to provide a generational analysis on shifting attitudes and sense of agency to approach support services for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA. The final sample was aged between 24- 51 years.

The research aimed to explore the experienced of victim-survivors with an ethnic and cultural background from the Caribbean who in the UK are racially categorised as Black Caribbean/ Black British. The requirements in regard to culture and ethnicity was purposefully exclusive in order to attract

women specifically from an African-Caribbean British cultural background(s) as these women were missing from or reduced within existing BME/BAME discourses on CSA in the UK. However, where historically in the UK a variety of women of West African descent/ dual-heritage background have self-identified as Caribbean, rather than black, the study chose to acknowledge and include them as eligible to take part. Two participants fitted this model: one dual-heritage (Gambian/ Jersey) and another from Sierra Leone. Both these women grew up within predominantly African- Caribbean British communities and such expressed that they felt a true affinity with being and had often identified as African-Caribbean Britain especially in previous years.

### **RECRUITING VICTIM-SURVIVORS**

Building the sample of victim-survivors was extremely challenging. Posters (see Appendix 8) outlining the study along with my contact details were distributed and displayed across university campuses. One of the drawbacks of using a poster was the realisation that if women were seen taking down the contact details on the poster that they would, essentially be disclosing, to those who had witnessed her interest the poster. The more generalised term sexual violence, rather than CSA, was used on the poster to limit this, but this meant that when women contacted me, or when I gave them the poster, I had to clarify that I was seeking women with experiences of CSA.

Furthermore, the ambiguous nature of the image on the poster worked both to pull in potential participants, as many remarked on how beautiful the image was and wanted to retain the poster for this purpose; it may have alienated or been dismissed by many as they could not see themselves depicted in the image.

In order, not to expose potential participants the poster was designed with tear off strips with my contact details and the details of the study website: <http://jow031.wix.com/coconutmilk-tales>. A separate mobile telephone was also used for the study. This was to ensure a clear demarcation between the study and my own personal life.

By relocating the posters to women's toilets on the backs of cubicle doors women could read the poster whilst in privacy and discreetly tear off contact slips without being seen. Additionally, posters were handed out and displayed in areas of London with a high African-Caribbean British demographic. Posters were displayed in hair salons and nightclub toilets and were sent to local radio stations which catered for African-Caribbean British communities in Greater London. On a one to one basis, women were much more willing to open up and speak of their abuse outside nightclubs yet they were unwilling to 'formally' disclose in an interview. Being a smoker at the time, I had such a conversation with a young woman who was close to tears in response to the possibility of being able to tell her story. Therefore, the main issue which confronted the collection of data was the silence, and what appeared to be fear on the part of African-Caribbean British women to speak of sexual violence with someone they could not see. In order to overcome this mistrust, it became necessary to actually go to certain areas where African-Caribbean British populations were present to hand-out the posters, allowing potential participants to see who was actually conducting the research. It seemed once the women were aware that the researcher looked like them and could converse with them, in a culturally specific language, they appeared to be more at ease.

Yet the most productive means of acquiring participants was 'snowballing'. This method worked best, as once one woman had completed an interview they were willing to put me touch with other women they knew of who had had a similar experience. Seven women finally took part in the victim-survivor interviews.

### **SAMPLING EXPERTS**

The qualifying criteria for being deemed an 'expert' was that the interviewee had to have been active or involved in the black British feminist scene/ group from the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, their expertise lay in their recollections of activism, agenda and priorities for black British feminists of that period. An additional yet lesser requirement was some form of activism or career which involved some form of

work with CSA and African- Caribbean British girls and women, either in the past or as was the case with one 'expert' in an academic/ policy capacity in the present. However, they are not deemed 'experts' in the sense of possessing any 'superior' knowledge over that of the victim-survivors in the study, who possessed experiential knowledge and understandings of living with histories of CSA. The five expert interviews were recruited through recommendations from the study supervisors and then by snowballing.

### **RECRUITING EXPERTS**

The experts were initially contacted via telephone at which point the study was outlined and they were invited to contribute. This was followed by a flyer about the study (see Appendix 1) and an information sheet (see Appendix 2) via email. Potential participants were also asked to share the information with other black British feminists who might be interested and or who might fit the criteria outlined. Rapport was built over a matter of weeks via telephone and email correspondence. I also sent out a request for participants via Twitter. No participants came forward from Twitter or via posters handed out at black British feminist meetings. The following sections will outline how the expert and victim-survivors interviews were conducted and the methods used.

### **EXPERT INTERVIEWS**

Immediately prior to interview the participant was asked to give initial consent via a consent sheet (see Appendix 3) to their words being used in the study and the interview being audio recorded. All participants were guaranteed anonymity and were informed that they could stop the interview at any stage without explanation. Two participants wanted to be identified, yet this may have posed an ethical issue for those who chose the opposite; consequently, none of the participants are identified in the study.

Interviews were arranged at the convenience of the interviewee. Venues varied from places of work, homes to public cafés. Interviewees were greeted on arrival and offered a beverage. At this initial stage

of the process the emphasis was on relaxing the participant and building on prior rapport. Furthermore, any questions regarding the study could be again clarified and consent confirmed.

On meeting the experts, I became aware of a phenomenon whereby I felt positioned as both insider and outsider. Based upon an assumed familiarity which is common amongst African-Caribbean British people due to an assumed sameness I was deemed an insider. However, on first meeting each interviewee I was aware of a tangible hesitancy and distancing of over politeness. It felt that they were assessing me to establish whether they could trust me. Was I the type of 'sister' that would objectify them for my own social mobility; sell them out, or did I have a vested interest in my research topic? The element of mistrust resurfaced in the data from the victim-survivors (see also Chapter 5).

Building rapport between interviewee and interviewer based on trust was, according to all the literature researching sensitive subjects (Renzetti & Lee, 1993), crucial to the well-being, confidentiality and the quality of data collection. However, this 'evoking of familiarity' continuously shifted my position as researcher. They were the experts on CSA and black British feminism, yet I often felt that they had anticipated my arrival for me to inform them, not on feminism, but on the subject of CSA from an African-Caribbean British perspective. It felt as if I had provided them the opportunity to speak openly of personal and non-personal experiences of sexual abuse.

The original interview guide was semi structured (see Appendix 4), and most lasted between 1-2 hours in duration. Subsequent guides were much longer as the guidelines were revised after the first interview and the women expressed many recollections about the activism of black British feminists. However, the relaxed yet structured guidelines provided me with the flexibility to build rapport especially after their initial hesitancy.

Some interviews were more conversational, especially where the expert recollected and questioned deep rooted attitudes, or behaviours to disclosures of CSA by women who came to projects they had worked in. The complexity of the subject often produced an interactive flow between myself and the

interviewee which could be deemed exploratory, explanatory and clarifying in nature. These interactions were invaluable for achieving what Ritchie & Lewis (2003) have termed 'breadth' of coverage and 'depth' of coverage, enabling the interviewees' perspective to become more articulated and widened.

The initial two interviews were key in shaping both the subsequent interview direction and the methodological framework and ultimately the direction the study would eventually take. For example, the first question for the victim-survivors asked why the women wanted to take part in the study. This question was conceived from the knowledge gained from the expert interviews. The experts had stressed how difficult it was for African-Caribbean British women to speak of their experiences of CSA, and thus it became important to enquire what had prompted the victim-survivor to participate. This also allowed for a gauging of temporal shifts in how African-Caribbean British victim-survivors think about the act of speaking, whether they felt entitled to do so.

That two participants had some previous involvement in a professional capacity, their recollections regarding the lack of activism on CSA by black British feminists were unique and challenging to the initial research questions (see earlier section). What they outlined enabled me to redirect and incorporate into my research literature which explored the impacts of racialisation upon the corporeal and how this particular inscription was embodied and personified within the everyday for CSA victim-survivors. These first two interviews informed and corrected previous assumptions regarding a supposed black British feminist agenda on CSA.

The second had eight sections: demographic and personal details, and current work role; women's opinions on black British feminist autonomy and collaborations; how the 'personal is political' did or did not feature in their activism; CSA and Black British feminists; the impact of racialisation and CSA/racially gendered stereotypes and CSA and coping; racism as a compounding factor for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors; the role of fiction and African-Caribbean British victim-survivors

of/representations of CSA; the role of belonging in facilitating disclosures of CSA. The final question probed the demise of black British feminism. Prior to asking this question I would inform the participant that the interview was drawing to a close. Once the interview had been completed and the participant was thanked, the women tended to want to carry on speaking. This period was immensely fruitful, usually being the point at which they would recommend or ask for posters to distribute to friends or colleagues. Additionally, it was during this period where they would recall some other relevant piece of information, such as a book. This information was recorded in a research diary.

### **VICTIM-SURVIVOR INTERVIEWS**

Seven women took part in this phase of the study. The oldest was aged 51 years with the youngest stating her age as 24. Their educational attainment ranged from no formal qualifications to MA level. Three of the women were unemployed; one was a student and three were employed as social worker, a retail manager and a nursery nurse respectively. Six of the women had dependants, with two in a relationship and five single at the time of interview. All seven were in contact with their siblings and family members, even when these relationships had been, or were, tested by histories of CSA. The ethnicity question on the interview guide was left open as means of allowing the interviewee to define their own ethnicity.

An information pack was prepared (see Appendix 5). The first section outlined the study objectives, and definitions of abuse, and the expected length of the interview. The documentation also advised that women could withdraw from the study or interview at any stage without having to provide an explanation.

The women were asked prior to the interview to choose a name by which they would be referred to throughout the interview and in the study. Although they were informed that their details would only be known to myself and that all identifiable information would be anonymised this added request was intended to reinforce confidentiality. Prior to the interview commencing they were asked to sign a

consent sheet (see Appendix 7) agreeing to the interview being audio recorded, and further consenting to the use

of their words to be used in the thesis. All the women were happy to sign and I countersigned in their presence. At this point I asked if they were ready to begin. These interviews tended to last longer than those with the experts, most were 2-3 hours.

The interview guide was semi-structured (see Appendix 6) with eleven sections including CSA and their childhood, relationship to feminism (toward the middle of the interview) and inequality (toward the end). The demographic and personal details were situated at the end of the interview acting as a type of grounding to ensure the interviewee was aware they were in the present and safe at the close of interview.

The first question enquired why the women chose to participate in the study. The answers to this question were exceptionally fruitful in that the women tended to give deep and rich descriptive accounts of their experiences relevant to understanding how culture/ racialisation could silence African-Caribbean British victim-survivors. One participant spent the majority of the interview answering this question, but the flexible style did enable me to cover the main questions including the Likert scale on the effect of CSA on her life.

The women were alerted when the section on CSA was reached. At this point their well-being was once again assessed and they were asked if they were willing to continue. All of the women answered in the affirmative. Five minutes prior to the end of the interview the women were informed that the interview would be coming to a close. The women were asked if they had anything they wanted to add before we turned to personal and demographic details. At this point I attempted to shift the tone of the conversation by asking a situating question for example, regarding the bus routes I could take back to the station or what time they had to pick up children from school.

All of the women received an information sheet outlining relevant support agencies on completion of the interview (see Appendix 9). This was intended to offer support to anyone who needed it in the post interview period. I spent a few minutes going through the sheet with the women. They were further advised that they would receive a follow-up call the day after the interview just to check on their well-being. Six women were contacted the following day at the time they had requested which best suited their timetable. One participant was more difficult to contact as she would not answer her telephone. After a week, I did speak with her.

She informed me that she had needed a little time to process some of the things which had emerged throughout the interview. However, she felt that on the whole she had benefitted from taking part and felt the whole experience had 'changed' her somehow. The other six women expressed similar views regarding their participation in the research.

#### SURVEY OF RAPE CRISIS CENTRES

The purpose of incorporating a survey into the study was to establish current support provision for African-Caribbean British adult women with histories of CSA. The CASU conference (MacLeod & Saraga, 1987) had discussed the need for culturally-aware services for African-Caribbean British women. Although the survey questions did not directly address the recommendations of the CASU conference I was interested in exploring whether any RCC had services which reflected the recommendations for practice outlined by Marlene Bogle's (1987) conference speech in the 1980s. Bogle argued that racism be recognised by support services, as a factor in how African-Caribbean British women and children gained meaning regarding their experiences of CSA (ibid). The focus on Rape Crisis Centres further recognised the feminist legacy for supporting women with experiences of CSA, complementing the investigation of feminist activism with the expert interviews. The survey was distributed by the Rape Crisis Network England and Wales and Rape Crisis Scotland, which together

comprise 51 centres: no centre in Wales completed the survey and thirteen RCCs responded from England and Scotland.

The survey was composed of an introduction which explained who I was and the reason for the survey. It further outlined the institution to which I belonged and the name and contact details of my Director of Studies. Approval by the London Metropolitan University Ethics board was also outlined in the introduction.

The survey contained a mixture of 20 closed and open questions. The questions offered the respondents the opportunity to employ their expertise of offering service provision to shaping future provision for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors within RCCs. Once questions were refined they were transferred to Survey Monkey software (see Appendix 10). Six sections covered: the organisation, role of who was completing it and years worked at organisation; location of organisation and area(s) covered; types of services offered; BME/BAME services provided; views on specialised Services for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors; barriers and future possibilities for service development.

The original draft was formulated as a series of questions originally seeking to understand whether the intersections of race and racism and CSA were addressed or implemented in current service provision. However, this form of questioning was thought to be potentially alienating to prospective participants. Consequently, an iterative process began whereby the focus shifted to explore existing service provision including centres which offered BME/BAME services. An example of the adaptations is presented below.

15. Are the traumas of CSA and racism in the lives of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors addressed within in your organisation for example within talking therapies?

To

15. In your opinion are there any additional issues that African-Caribbean British survivors' of CSA might encounter? Yes (please go to Q16)

No

Don't Know

#### 16. Please outline in box below

Having to phrase this major line of enquiry within an indirect manner left many of the questions on how support agencies support African-Caribbean British victim-survivors lived realities of intersections of race and gender lacking. Yet the reflexive component of the methodology enabled me to see that rephrasing or enquiring what the respondents believed were important as the one outlined above (second example) produced useful information in regards to how intersections of inequality in the lives of African-Caribbean British women were understood (or not) by support agencies. Furthermore, the open-ended questions in general produced more depth in responses. In contrast, the inability to gain clarification for some of the more interesting responses by the survey participants posed an interpretative issue and demonstrated a drawback of the survey format. The data generated was then analysed and reviewed along with the findings from the victim-survivor interviews (see Chapter 7).

### DATA ANALYSIS

The initial aim being to add their experiences of CSA to existing knowledges, the first stage of analysis began during the interviews with the women where common themes began to emerge. Notes in the research diary were used to capture any salient observations during and after interviews. After one interview I wrote a reflective piece about a mimetic experience with one woman as I found her actions both intriguing, unsettling and flattering (see Porsha in Liminality section below) . Additionally, I observed how one other participant had begun to tidy her hair toward the end of the interview where at the beginning of the session she had stated that she had never been able to 'manage' her hair. I felt that an implicit exchange had occurred somehow separate from the garnering of spoken data. I observed that her physical demeanour looked more upright, lighter as if she had lost and gained something throughout the interrelational process of the interview. As the interviews were audio recorded the use of fieldnotes enabled me to employ a reflexive approach of interpretative analysis in the post interview period (see also Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Wolfinger (2002) has argued that researchers "*tacit knowledge and expectations often play a major role in deciding which observations*

*are worthy of annotation*" (p,85). Observations taken from fieldnotes therefore steered later concepts (e.g. intersectional liminality) and thus the themes which were deemed relevant during the analysis stage.

Similarly, with the expert interviews, the focus for the expert interviews had been formulated to explore the activism on CSA by black British feminists. However, the experts revealed no such public activism existed. Therefore, the focus shifted to explore the reasons for the silence on the subject. The data collection and analysis processes were iterative feeding into and directing emergent themes, with the final concepts formulated through a deductive process which used the data '*as evidence in support of conclusions*' as described by Ritchie & Lewis (2003, p. 16). Whilst being underpinned epistemologically by a black feminist/auto-ethnographic framework the processes of reflexivity not only acknowledged my standpoint and positionality in the research process but also the liminal positioning of interviewees during exchanges of enquiry. I called this methodological framework intersectional liminality (see Chapter 7 and Conclusion).

The data was organised through what Lewis and Ritchie (2003) have termed an analytical hierarchy. The first stage involved managing the data in order that it could be sorted prior to the second stage of drawing meaning and interpretation. Therefore the practical act of transcribing audio recordings was the first point which enabled a reflective re-immersive space whereby the practicalities of building rapport, and actively listening which occurred during the interviews could be ruminated upon and analysed. The transcripts were then read over several times in order to gain a fuller understanding of what each interviewee recounted.

Interviewees names were developed, with a classification code for experts of EID, 1, 2 3 etc (E= expert; I=in-depth; then the order the interviews were conducted in 1= interview one). The pseudonyms of the victim-survivors were agreed upon prior to interviews taking place by the participants themselves.

A process of thematic analysis was undertaken with the two sets of interviews to organise and code the interview such that sections were transferred into individual pages of Microsoft Excel, with page and line numbers from the each transcript alongside each of the participants' names.

In the next grid section I added my interpretive comments. At this point, the second stage of the analysis process commenced. By reading across each sheet it was possible to confirm common links within the quotes in the grid. However, at times it was necessary to refer back to the interview transcripts in order to reaffirm, recontextualise or create new codes which unfolded as a deeper meaning from the sections of text became clarified.

Approaching analysis in stages made it easier to organise and structure the research data and minimise the potential overwhelming aspect of engaging with such dense qualitative narratives. Discussions with colleagues, supervisors and close friends throughout all stages of analysis further assisted in clarifying and contextualising emergent themes and concepts.

The survey analysis followed a similar pattern. The on-line survey centres were coded by the region of the country and then the order in which the survey was completed on-line. For example ERRC1=English, RapeCrisis Centre, number 1 or SRCC2= Scottish Rape Crisis Centre, number 2. Once the survey was closed the responses to closed and open questions were printed off for further analysis: the latter analysed to identify any recurring patterns or themes. The quantitative responses and open ended responses were then compared. For example if a respondent had answered 'yes' to the question, "Does the area you serve have an African-Caribbean British community?" and 'no' to the question; "Does 'your' organisation offer specific services for African-Caribbean British women?" it was possible to find links as to why services were or were not available for African-Caribbean British women.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Four of the five expert interviews were conducted at venues which were conducive to in-depth face to face interviews; being quiet private spaces which were perfect for interacting and the recording. However, one particular interview conducted in a busy café presented challenges to the interview process. The expert had chosen the café because she was accustomed to attending during its quieter time of mid-morning. Yet as we had arranged to meet at 11am the interview ran for three hours and thus the café became extremely busy during lunch time. This affected both our ability to hear each other over the noise of the other patrons and at times the sensitive nature of the subject could have caused the interviewee to feel more vulnerable in such a public place. I suggested to the expert that we could relocate to a more private location if one could be found, or reschedule the interview. However, she asserted that the location was fine and that she felt comfortable to continue. It felt as though she had waited a long time to speak. My suggestion to reschedule or move the interview seemed to irritate her. So we continued.

Additionally, three of the experts disclosed personal experiences of CSA during their interviews. As they were not being interviewed as victim-survivors a decision about whether to use their personal experiences was not anticipated. Although informed consent (information sheet/consent sheet) was sought prior to the interview, the conversation style of the interviews enabled more personally sensitive information to emerge. As the experts were contributing their 'expertise' personal accounts of such a sensitive nature presented an ethical question. After the first disclosure in an attempt to resolve and clarify that consent was voluntarily given for me to use this 'type' of information I would ask interviewees at the close of the interview if they gave consent for me to use this information in the study. I ensured that this was audio recorded. With the first expert who had disclosed I telephoned and received consent the day after the interview. This was then confirmed by email. One expert used her interview to inform a family member whom she had brought to the interview of her history of CSA. Again, consent was sought and given by the expert to commence the interview with three of us in attendance.

## DO NO MORE HARM

The 'do no more harm' ethical foundation (Craig, Corden, & Thornton, 2000; British Sociological Association, 2003; Social Research Ethical Guidelines, 2003) required that I not accept three potential victim-survivor participants. The first had contacted me via a poster located in one of the lavatories at the university. She sent me a very compelling poem describing her rape experiences with her elder brother. She described in the poem the challenges and disruption that the discovery of her sexual abuse had caused her family. She agreed that the poem could be used in some way in the research study.

She was sent an information pack via email and agreed to be interviewed. On the day of the interview I did the overview of the study again and enquired if it as to whether she still wished to proceed. She agreed to be interviewed and signed the consent sheet. About an hour into the interview, she stated that her allegations were false, and that she had never experienced CSA. She proceeded to explain that she had an intense interest in the subject and so wished to take part and have her poem included in the study. Although Summit (1983) identified that victim-survivors often recant disclosures of CSA, I was forced to stop and discount the interview for fear that prompting her to continue may cause her more harm.

The second woman was a temporary member of staff at the university. We had struck up a conversation in the photocopy room. She enquired into my research and after hearing the topic disclosed to me her own experience of CSA, and how her family had basically ostracised her for disclosing her incestuous abuse by her brother. She was extremely angry about the way she had been treated, yet desperately wanted to participate in the research. I gave her the information pack, and we arranged for the interview to be conducted in an office on a Saturday when the university would be extremely quiet, thereby minimising the possibility of her being seen by other staff members.

Two days before the interview date I saw her in the corridor whereby she disclosed to me that she was going through a personal crisis. She was extremely agitated and slightly hyper-active, yet still insisted that she wished to take part in the research. The following day she called me to her office whereby she proceeded to tell me about an incident which had occurred between her and her work colleagues, which she perceived to be racist in nature and how her present situation had reminded her of how her family had let her down after discovering the sexual abuse. She became extremely distressed and began to swear and cry. At this point I made the decision that her participation in the research at that present time could be potentially harmful to her, and advised her that we should postpone her contribution until she was in a better place.

The third woman arrived extremely late on the day of the interview. She explained to me that she had been beaten up by her son's father the evening before. She showed me the bruising of her ordeal; at which point I felt her participation at that stage could potentially harm her further or compound her more immediate situation. I gave her the details of agencies which dealt with domestic violence and assured her that she could participate at a later stage, once she had made arrangements for her and her young son and they were settled in a place of safety.

One particular victim-survivor disclosed that she was still being sexually abused by her father and mother. The ethical position here was complex. She was an adult but she was still being abused by her parents. I gave her the referral sheet and urged her to contact the agencies after the interview.

On meeting the women it was important to add to the rapport which had been built via previous correspondence. Putting the women at ease was paramount and as such the women were asked again if they had any queries regarding their participation in the study. Five of the interviews took place in the women's homes with two others taking place in an office in the university. Being aware of the power dynamic, and certain African-Caribbean British cultural codes of conduct regarding hospitality, whenever refreshment was offered I accepted. For those interviews, which took place in the university,

the office was cleaned and tidied to promote a comfortable atmosphere for the participants. The women were offered hot/cold beverages prior to the interview at which time we chatted informally which helped to further build rapport and put them at ease. A small box of tissues was also discreetly located in viewpoint just in case they were needed.

The questions on CSA were located toward the middle of the interview guide, on reflection this could have come earlier in the interview. Many participants seemed impatient to speak of their experiences. Where I had believed that putting this section in the middle of the interview would have put the women at ease, in two cases it appeared that anticipating of when we would broach the subject may have caused more anxiety.

Due to the in-depth reflective nature of the interviews and the one to one context of researcher/participant there were some similarities with talking therapy practices. I was aware that the women could 'linger' on past memories of their CSA experience. Therefore the demographic questions were strategically located at the end of the interview to relocate them back into the present therein minimising the potential of causing any further harm. Additionally, built into the interview guidelines were prompts to check on the participant thereby ensuring that the woman's well-being was prioritised and consent was an ongoing process ( The British Psychological Society, 2010).

One major issue of this study was the great responsibility I felt toward causing no further harm to African-Caribbean British communities and our standing within British society. Therefore, in order not to reinforce or perpetuate any further negative racial or cultural stereotypes, it was important to use the participant's words in a responsible, respectful manner. Both the words of the women and the cultural context in which they were set were scrutinised by myself and my supervisors in order that this study be robust, transparent and cause no more harm or marginalisation to groups who are already vulnerable within British society (Craig, Corden, & Thornton , 2000; Hugman, Pittaway, & Bartolomei, 2011).

## RESEARCHER SAFETY

On one occasion, I had stopped to speak with two African-Caribbean British women, and was not aware that I had ended up on the Peckham front-line (particular area where drugs dealers sell their products to users). I approached the women and began to explain the study, whilst gradually becoming aware that the women were becoming more and more uneasy. After a few minutes a tall man approached and demanded to know why I had stopped and spoken with the women. He was very menacing and I quickly began to understand that I had placed the women and myself in some kind of danger. I gave him a poster, and outlined the study to him, and asked him to pass it on to any women who he might know who had experienced of CSA. He reluctantly took it from me, but continued to watch me all the time I stayed in the square. Even being out on the streets, where women appeared to be just going about their everyday tasks, gatekeepers existed.

Although I was not alone on this occasion following safety guidelines (Craig, Corden, & Thornton , 2000), and being accompanied by a fellow research student we were both aware that we had trespassed into a situation that could have been potentially dangerous for ourselves and the women in the square. Possessing the ability to relate culturally to the man in the square by engaging him in conversation and in essence asking him for assistance gave the women the opportunity to distance themselves from me, and myself the time to re-assess the situation and leave the area. I believe that my cultural familiarity (an active performance on our part) and the aloofness of professionalism (another active performance) enabled a diffusing of a potentially dangerous situation.

The research project was derived from both personal experience and from contact that I had had with other African-Caribbean British women who had chosen to disclose their own experiences of CSA. However, I was unaware of how being immersed in the CSA literature would affect my ability to consistently produce and engage in the research process. Obscure and informative rather than emotive pieces of text would stop me dead in my tracks, and force me to seek some form of safety and comfort.

I was not prepared for this, expecting the more descriptive and emotive texts to produce such a reaction in myself. The race equality literature, especially those historical pieces which outlined the overt racism faced by African-Caribbean British people of my parents' generation, and the accounts given by the women in this study still seem somewhat overwhelming. Such close scrutiny of sexual and racial abuse has changed me.

Previous studies on sexual violence against women and girls had highlighted the importance of interviewers being appropriately trained for their work, especially if the methodological approach is qualitative, although quantitative studies also benefits in regards to victimology studies (see also Wyatt, 1985; Russell, 1986; Campbell, Adams, Wasco, Ahrens, & Sefl, 2009). I attended a seminar in the university conducted by a woman who works with and supports women who have experienced sexual violence from childhood to adulthood. This seminar enabled me to understand my positioning and that of the participants I wished to interview. By outlining how best to support women with experiences of CSA I was empowered to understand my own capabilities and responsibilities to the participants. This seminar was invaluable in safeguarding my well-being as a researcher and thus is consistent with previous studies (Wyatt, 1985; Russell, 1986; see also reflections section below) which have advocated the merits of sufficient training for researchers in the violence against women field.

In order to support myself I arranged ongoing counselling sessions with the university counselling service. I am extremely aware that if I had not received the support by the specialist trauma counsellor that I would have experienced more harm than I did. This woman supported me throughout the whole research process which enabled me to continue with the research. The fact she was African-Caribbean British was significant in that I did not have to explain racial/cultural restraints on my agency. Rather her understanding enabled me to feel supported enough to provoke, contest and deconstruct supposed innate racialised ways of being in order to keep me safe and continue with the study.

## CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF METHODS/OLOGY

Two epistemological and one practical challenge are discussed in this section: defining CSA; hybrid identities; and changing the focus of the research questions.

Differences in definitions of CSA date back to the first prevalence studies (Finkelhor, 1979; Wyatt, 1985; Russell, 1986) and continue to be seen as being one of the primary reasons for inconsistent estimates, even within more recent studies conducted in the UK (Radford, Corral, Bradley, & Fisher, 2013). This study chose to adhere to the definitions of CSA used within studies which incorporated a wider definition and of both contact and non-contact forms of CSA (Wyatt, 1985; Russell, 1986; Kelly, Burton, & Regan, 1998; Cawson, Wattam, Brooker, & Kelly, 2000; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009).

Although the research involved adult victim-survivors the following definition from the Department of Health was used in this study to define CSA.

*Child sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways (Dept. of Health and Dept. of Education & Employment, 1999).*

### HYBRID IDENTITIES

Mary Hickman (2003) and Stuart Hall (1991) have studied both Irish and Caribbean migration to the former colonising powers of England and Scotland. Being from a postcolonial background may be significant in attitudes to 'entitlement' in regard to speaking out and calling for support services which recognise the importance of intersections of racialisation for victim-survivors of CSA. Both theorists argue that the myth of 'community' (Anderson, 1991) is forced upon migrants within diasporas in order to locate, belong and survive as 'other' and, according to Hall, resolve issues of intra-community and inter-community difference (Hall, 1991). In attempting to minimise perceptions of cultural difference

African-Caribbean British victim-survivors and communities may promote a stance of silence in order not to draw any negative attention from the public world. Therefore so called community differences may have some bearing on the continued public silence on CSA (see Chapter 5) by African-Caribbean British victim-survivors.

Examining cultural hybridity raises the question of whether specific cultural appropriation(s) or heritage(s), (West African/ British) had any impact on victim-survivors' understanding of their experiences and their sense of agency and entitlement, especially in regards to approaching support services. Although this may have been possible with the diversity of women who identified as black, the constant reconfiguration of racial classifications especially within governmental classifications: for example Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic (BAME) (Richardson, 2006) , and within different communities self-identification, was beyond the scope of such a small investigation.

Whilst there was no explicit intent to reject potential participants who identified as black/ politically black, since for many people 'blackness' had created a sense of safety, coherence and belonging (see Hill-Collins, 1991; Marable, 1995), at the same time I was aware that cultural parameters had to be set in order for the specific voice and traditions of African-Caribbean British lives to be at the centre of this investigation. Furthermore, being aware that identifying as 'black' especially black and female often (re)produced a type of performance or mimicry especially with other African-Caribbean British women I sought to enable women to speak of their own personal experiences of CSA and coping strategies without feeling they had to conform to some racialised parody of a strong black woman for me (see reflections section below).

However, the term black could not be eliminated from the study. In order to find literature on African-Caribbean British peoples I had to search under this racialised category especially where the provenance of the research was British as there was no alternative form of identity. In addition 'black'

also remains because some of the women participants chose the term 'black' as a means of identification.

The sample, therefore, comprised of victim-survivors who identified as black with a cultural heritage deriving from the Caribbean or African-Caribbean dual heritage.

### **CHANGING DIRECTION**

The initial research aims were to:

- reclaim and analyse activism by Black women on the issue of CSA;
- explain the decline in attention, service provision and research from a cultural perspective in regards to African-Caribbean British CSA survivors;
- discover how African-Caribbean British survivors cope and make sense of their experiences;
- outline unmet needs with respect to service provision and examine the extent to which BME/BAME provision acknowledges the intersectional concerns of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors.

The first two aims had to be revised after the initial interviews with the experts made clear that there was minimal public activism on CSA by African-Caribbean British feminists; the initial supposition that the nature of black British feminist activism during the 1970s and 1980s on CSA had changed was challenged by the interview data. The exchange with the two initial experts enabled a two way process of research to become tangible, enabling differences to emerge and hence rebuking heterogeneous realities by re-enacting realities. By giving life to the very things that were discovered (Law & Urry, 2005), there was "no innocence" (Haraway, 1992). The iterative process with knowledge informing and redirecting the research process enabled the actuality of black British feminist activism during that specific temporal moment to be recognised and shape the research process thereafter.

With all five of the experts expressing that there was no organised black British feminist agenda or public campaign on CSA from a black feminist perspective the original research focus was shifted to incorporate this new understanding. As such a diffracted mode of investigation was a useful research praxis accomodating the shifting pluralities of the participants social realities. The research aims and questions were revised in light of this.

- To understand why black British feminists, victim-survivors and communities were publicly silent on the subject on CSA. How was the ‘personal is political’ addressed for black British feminists of the 1980s – mid 1990s?
- To explore if race/racism, migration and belonging compounded CSA for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors.
- To investigate how African-Caribbean British victim-survivors lived with histories of CSA, especially within communities and families which turned a ‘blind eye’.
- To discover whether intersections of race and gender are employed as a coping strategy, and if this was the case, how is it achieved?
- To discover the extent of specialist service provision for African-Caribbean British women and establish whether the intersectional needs were recognised by Rape Crisis Centres.

## REFLECTIONS

### LIMINALITY

Over time a kind of re-positioning of myself began to emerge. I had somehow entered the liminal (Turner, 1969) the ‘in-between’ space of research. As Parkin observed in relation to fieldwork; that the reality of fieldwork is a liminal phase for both subject and object, in which the distinction between them is dissolved, at alternating points in the discourse subject and object take on complimentary positions of

the 'namer and the named' (1982, pp. xi-1i). Hill- Collins illustrates the 'betwixt and between' state of black feminist thought.

I consulted established bodies of academic research. But I also searched my own experiences and those of African American women I know for themes we thought were important. My use of language signals a different relationship to my material than that which currently prevails in social science literature. For example, I often use the pronoun "our" instead of their when referring to African American women, a choice that embeds me in the group I am studying instead of distancing me from it (Hill-Collins, 1991, p. 202).

Hill-Collins articulates one of the major issues that initially confronted the research project. That of where I located myself within the research project? The question needed to be addressed on two fronts in order to establish the standpoint of the research (Humphries, 2007). Firstly, as a woman of African-Caribbean British descent, and secondly as a woman who had personal experiences of CSA; on both fronts there seemed to be a 'knowing' in regards to complexities of how racialisation/CSA had skewed my own sense of agency and subjectivity. This liminal position both informed and enabled the research project to confront and unsettle, certain established knowledges. Additionally, my standpoint informed the depth of participation required from the sample in order that their contribution would cause the minimum of harm both to themselves and African-Caribbean British communities (Beresford, 2000; 2003).

The lack of alternative forms of identity for African-Caribbean British people in the literature search further informed the study in regard to questions of belonging, agency and coping strategies. It became necessary to read literature which addressed race equality from a black British male perspective. In regards to sexual violence, CSA and gender equality, the literature again tended to explore these subjects from either a white British/ American or African-American perspective where concepts on CSA and intersections of race, class and gender were in abundance. Attempting to gain an understanding of

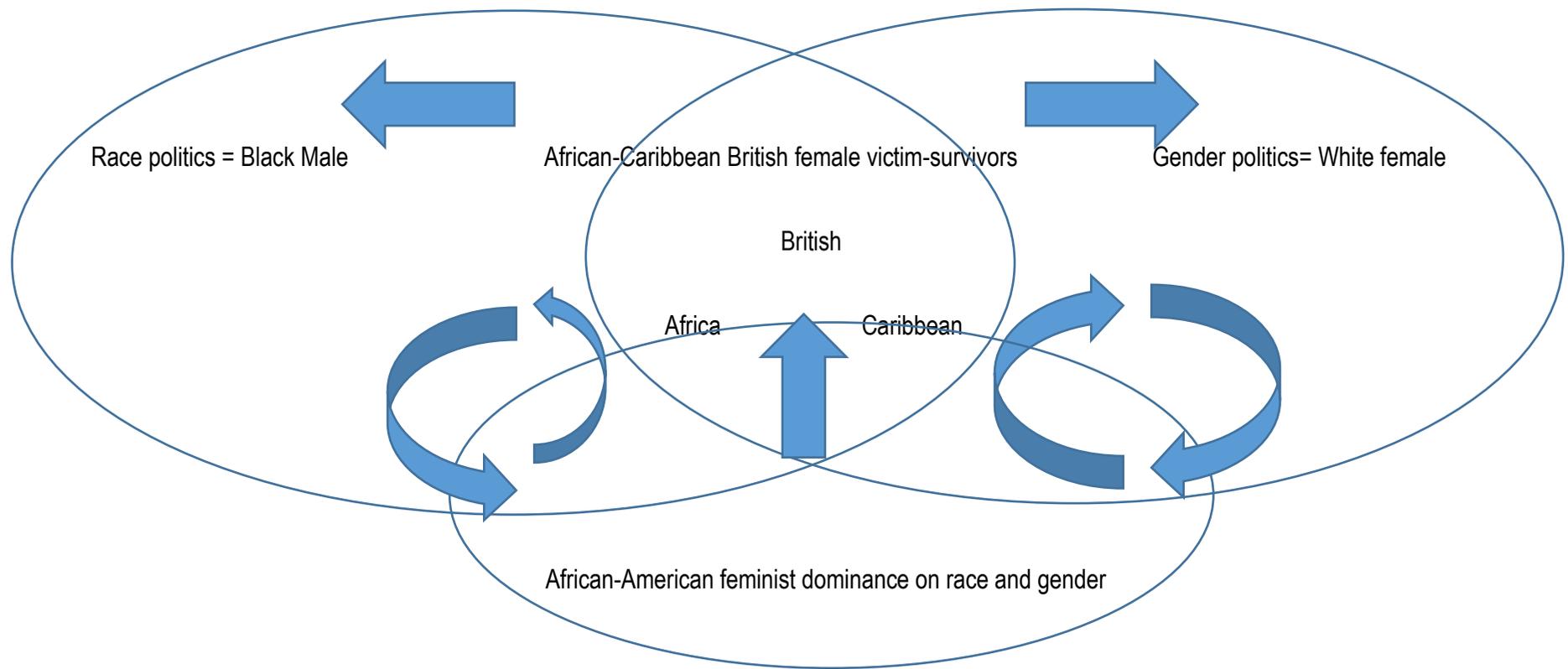
how CSA had previously been understood by survivors' of African-Caribbean British descent for the literature review, only served to demonstrate the lack of an African-Caribbean British female victim-survivor voice. If we are created externally through representation as Hall (1990) suggested the lack of identifiable forms of representation for African-Caribbean British people in the UK other than 'black' further steered the study's investigation of African-Caribbean British women as liminally positioned, being represented by African-Caribbean British men and white and African-American scholars. We are emergent located in the gaps of literature between gender and race. Our inextricable links with these social identities have disadvantaged African-Caribbean British victim-survivors by invisibilising, yet representing us through voids of particularities which illustrate our lived experiences. However as emergent subjects we are also advantageously situated to create more inclusive possibilities of being (see also Bhabha 1993).

The hybridised location of liminality or contested sites, enables inter-determinacy, self-reflexivity and eclecticism, fragmentation which provokes epistemological certainties regarding who to trust, what to believe and why something is true or not. For Hill-Collins, this specialised thought taps the fundamental question of which versions of truth will prevail and shape thought and action (Hill-Collins, 1991; Broadhurst, 1999). Yet traditional modes of research denied my insider voice as an African-Caribbean British survivor of CSA locating my experiences onto the peripheries of existing established standpoints and knowledges on race and sexual abuse, where it was impossible to illustrate the merging of these pluralistic oppressions on African-Caribbean British female subjectivity and agency.

Being positioned as both an insider and outsider within the research process enabled me to occupy a standpoint where I was participatory within the research process with both good and bad experiences. From an auto-ethnographic actively emergent position (Bhabha, 1993) I attempted to identify where gaps existed within existing knowledges on CSA, and why they continued to exist.

For example one participant, Porsha, appeared to mirror my every action and gesture throughout the interview. She awaited my cues to assess if it was appropriate to laugh or express sadness. She mimicked my physical actions; crossing her legs, leaning forward as I did. Porsha's actions seem to suggest that unconsciously she wanted to 'please' or bridge any differences between us. Not possessing the relevant psychological tools to understand her actions this particular interview was unnerving, but was suggestive of Taussig's (1993) theories on mimicry and alterity. For Taussig (ibid) mimicry is a means by which one can be healed, cured or '*protected from evil spirits by portraying them*' (p.13). The act of 'becoming' the other by embodying their qualities reduces alterity and fear of the other.

Fig. 1. Liminal Positioning of AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women in political discourses on race and gender



Porsha's mimicry or embodiment of myself was suggestive of her inability to claim her own experience because of the negative response from her family after her rape, especially her father's response which denied her the right to just be herself. She described in her interview how she felt that 'others' had informed her of what had occurred to her. As such she was informed from outside of her own understanding regarding her sexual abuse, and feared being isolated from her family if she did not accept their understandings of her abuse. Porsha's actions were pivotal for my conceptualisation of maternal mimesis (see Chapter 6) and in enabling me to progress through the research process.

Additionally, her response enabled me to glimpse how self-identification is as Hall argued constituted within representation. My preferred use of the term African-Caribbean British during interviews initially required many of the participants to pause before responding to an enquiry. This was especially the case with the victim-survivors, with two asking me to explain the term. Only one victim-survivor responded without hesitation to African-Caribbean British (Porsha). However, once they had processed or asked for clarification they all used the term interchangeably with black. The experts were more accepting of the African Caribbean, with the only contention being the added British component.

The initial tentative state in regards to the literature gradually subsided as I immersed myself in the research. As my grasp of the subject of sexual abuse became more comprehensive, the personal became impersonal somehow: the theoretical informed the experiential and the analysis. I became aware of the emerging role, requirements and responsibilities of a researcher.

## CONCLUSION

The initial data from the experts shifted the direction of the research to explore why black British feminists were publicly silent on the CSA from the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s. Although the study intended to explore the issues of racialisation/ racism the data from the experts suggested that a more rigorous examination of how migration, belonging and racism compounded not only black British

feminist collaborations but also the autonomy and agency of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors' 'space to speak' of CSA (see also Chapter 6).

The core methodological framework placed the lived experiences of African-Caribbean British women at its core and therefore the methods used were in-depth interviews with both experts and victim-survivors. The data from the experts influenced not only the revised focus of the overall study but also many of the questions for the victim-survivor interviews. Interestingly, where the experts had outlined the difficulties for African-Caribbean British women to speak of CSA during the 1970s and 1980s, the fact that seven women had agreed to take part in the victim-survivor phase, albeit a small number, suggested that maybe something had shifted for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors in the present. This shift in response prompted the investigation into acculturation, belonging and citizenship and whether these factors compounded agency for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors.

Additionally, the enthusiastic response by the victim-survivors to the question asking why they had agreed to take part was further used in the formulation of the survey questions and the exploration of outreach to African-Caribbean British communities. Sharon's response to this question where she spoke at length for over an hour revealed two things: the importance of the role of researcher in directing the flow and timing of an interview to ensure that all relevant areas are covered. Secondly, the enthusiasm of the victim-survivors to this question suggested the enduring silence of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors could have been cut short if their views had been sought earlier. Although Sharon had spoken at length, the remaining six women also spoke fluently from this initial question. The enthusiasm of the victim-survivors helped to formulate the study's premise on 'multiple tellings' and the need of victim-survivors to receive an appropriate response from those to whom they disclose their experiences of CSA (see also Chapter 6).

The survey response was low yet the information given by the respondents was extremely useful in determining the awareness of RCCs of the everyday concerns of African-Caribbean British victim-

survivors. However, the survey method did not allow for interesting responses by the participants to be explored or clarified in more depth (see also Chapter 7). Fortunately, this was not the case for the experts and thus the following chapter will explore the experts' accounts of how the personal is political engaged with child sexual abuse within African-Caribbean British communities.

Table. 1. Demographics of Victim-Survivors.

Name	Ethnicity	Age	Sexual orientation	Dependants	Relationship status	Highest level of education	Current employment
Sar	Mixed race	38	heterosexual	3	Single	Degree	Unemployed family support worker
Bianca	Afro-Caribbean	51	heterosexual	3	Divorced	None	Retail Manager
Maria	Refused	48	heterosexual	4	Single	A' levels	Unemployed Court presenting Officer
Ciara	Jamaican/ Barbadian	26	heterosexual	3	In relationship	None	Unemployed
Porsha	Black Caribbean	24	heterosexual	1	In relationship	Access to Social Work Student	Full time student
Angel	Afro-Caribbean	39	heterosexual	1	Single	NVQ level 4	Nursery Worker
Sharon	African-Sierra Leonean	41	heterosexual	0	Single	Masters Level	Social Worker

Table. 2. Demographic Details of Experts

	Ethnicity	Age	Member of BBWG	Employed in some capacity with CSA
EID1	African- American	60 years	Yes	No
EID2	African- Caribbean	50 years	Yes	No
EID3	West- African	53 years	Yes	No
EID4	African- Caribbean	56 years	No	Yes
EID5	African- Caribbean/Dual heritage	60 years	Yes	No

## CHAPTER 4: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND BLACK BRITISH FEMINISM: 'IT WAS A MOVEMENT, NOT AN ORGANISATION SO THERE WERE MANY FACTIONS' (EID5)<sup>6</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter will explore the activism of black British feminists on child sexual abuse (CSA) within the African-Caribbean British communities during the 1970s to mid-1980s. Two initial research questions were relevant here: (1) Why CSA activism by African-Caribbean British feminists seemed to diminish by the mid-1980s (2) If African-Caribbean British women who had been active on the subject of CSA continued to engage in activism in the present? The interviews, however, produced something unexpected. This chapter is reframed to explore the barriers that prevented black British feminists from visibly campaigning on child sexual abuse.

Five women participated in this part of the study. Four had been active in some capacity within groups like Brixton Black Women's Group (BBWG) and/or the Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent (OWAAD). The fifth had not attended any specific black women's group, but had been active within trade union women's and black groups. All the expert's identified as feminists previously and in the present.

Four core themes are discussed in this chapter which emerged from the analysis of the interviews: (1) an 'enduring silence' in regards to CSA/sexuality whereby the political informed the personal; (2) the desire for an autonomous black feminism; (3) the political becomes personal; (4) promoting a positive image of African-Caribbean British communities. To begin responses to the original research questions are explored.

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<sup>6</sup> EID will be used to identify individual Experts in this study. E=Expert; ID=In-depth interview followed by a number denoting the individual interviewees. EID5 therefore stands for Expert In-depth Interview number 5.

## BLACK BRITISH FEMINIST ACTIVISM ON CSA

Three of the experts were aware of some form of public activism for example the CASU Conference which took place in 1987 (MacLeod & Saraga, 1987). They were more aware of African-American literature which had explored CSA from an African American perspective; see for example (Walker, 1982; Angelou, 1984). Three were aware of one book which explored the subject from a British perspective (Wilson, 1993). When I asked, what had happened to the burgeoning activism on CSA for African-Caribbean British women I was confronted with the most unexpected response: that in their view there was no real tangible activism on CSA from a black British feminism standpoint.

*Interestingly, it wasn't an issue that surfaced through the black women's group, because it was just too hot. Too much of a hot potato really, and we were dealing with loads of hot potatoes. We weren't dealing with the personal... I had also been having conversations with other black women and it was like, "Yeah but we can't talk about this, we can't air our dirty linen in public" and you know in the black community, that's a real big thing, full stop. But also, because issues around racism you know? To talk about all that stuff going on in the black communities was highly dangerous, and left it open to misinterpretation (EID1).*

EID1 argues that to raise an issue such as CSA during that time would have been too contentious because of the racism that African-Caribbean British communities were already experiencing. Furthermore, victim-survivors were unable to speak of CSA within African-Caribbean British communities because they feared further condemnation from family and community.

Another supported this view, noting also that CSA only emerged as a secondary concern for the women who attended the centre.

*You know we were looking at the racism in schools; why the children were not getting on; and it just snowballed. They would come in and wanted to see what you were doing here; and 'Wha a gwaan'<sup>7</sup> and all this opened a can of worms (EID2).*

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<sup>7</sup> Jamaican patois for 'What's happening'; 'How are you?' Used as a greeting.

Women using the BBWG centre came first out of curiosity; for some this transformed into seeking assistance with respect to the inequalities that they and their families were experiencing. The racism encountered in regards to their children's education, social housing and restrictive immigration policies<sup>8</sup> led them to seek solidarity and support from those whom they believed could understand the issues they faced on a day to day basis. The subject of child sexual abuse emerged within this context.

Initially a lot of people were sceptical about coming in because of the rumours they had heard about the centre; they are all lesbians in there [laughs] so straight black women who were out there in the community trying to make a living, trying to work, bring their family felt a way about coming in. Once they came in and could see we didn't bite and jump into bed with them [laughs] they were alright. So that's how the whole issue of abuse came in (EID2).

Although, the accounts by EID1 and EID2 established the lack of any collective public activism on sexual abuse by black British feminists, EID2 recalled that individual women received some semblance of support.

*I started a health group but there were other groups. Women were coming in wanting someone to talk to because of the abuse they were suffering. Coming in wanting to know, "I was abused as a child, how do I protect my daughters from their fathers, brothers, uncles?" And that was coming in more and more... women were coming in but I didn't know how to deal with it so they sent me off to do a counselling course (EID2).*

This recollection is significant because it suggests that although there was a genuine demand for support services to address CSA in their lives the women had not approached existing services in the area. Rather they attended the various different groups at BBWG in the first instance which eventually led them to discuss CSA.

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<sup>8</sup> The 1962 Immigration Act signalled the British government's first attempt to restrict immigration from former Caribbean colonies of what was called the 'British' Commonwealth countries.

Addressing racism whether as a parent or as a victim-survivor, in which the onus is on the victim to prove that an injustice has occurred, may connect to previous feelings of powerlessness similar to those of a child experiencing CSA.

The five experts were asked “When did you last attend a conference or event that addressed VAW, incest or CSA in regards to African-Caribbean British women?” Apart from the CASU conference during the 1980s, no participant had attended a conference which addressed CSA and the intersections of race in the UK.

However, one explained that she was a member of an informal group of women who disclosed their experiences to each other.

*I say probably because I'm not certain when it was but for a while I was a member of a semi - it wasn't actually say a support group it was a discussion group. It was a black woman's discussion group around sexual abuse survival. It grew up quite organically because I was talking with some friends, I can't remember how many of us were in the room, maybe about eight and every single one of us had at some point or another experienced something that we considered to be sexual abuse. And we were saying, 'its (CSA)', wild you know! We kind of knew that it was that extensive but to have it that stark. So that group lasted for about a year, monthly for about a year (EID3).*

This illustrates the informal systems that a few African-Caribbean British victim-survivors employed. Interestingly, they came together to discuss not their childhood experiences of abuse but rather how to survive such experiences. This recollection runs contrary to stereotypes that suggest that women of African descent are more resilient, somehow endowed with an innate strength not possessed by non-black victim-survivors (see Chapter 2). EID3's words do not overtly rebuke the resilience myth but they do disrupt and provoke notions of the universal 'strong black woman'. Additionally, her words demonstrate that in order to name their past experiences they continued to come together, shifting the emphasis of what appeared to be a general discussion group to the exploration of CSA.

The fact that there was some uncertainty regarding what is deemed sexual abuse is revealing: “every single one of us had at some point or another experienced something that we considered to be sexual abuse”. This suggests that CSA has not, and may not be clearly understood or defined within society as a whole (May-Chahal & Cawson, 2005) let alone within communities such as African-Caribbean British where matters of a sexual nature are rarely spoken of openly (Reynolds, 2005). The served a purpose in that it gave meaning to, even naming of, the experiences that the women had experienced in their childhood.

EID4 had not attended a conference on CSA and African-Caribbean British women but had participated in a conference on the issue of sexual abuse and feminism in the Caribbean.

*Yes I have, yes I have! This year for the first time; in M. I picked up a caution when I was talking about a clear feminist perspective, looking at gender based violence. I presented some of my research about sexual abuse... I'd already had a bit of an argument with the guy when he was chairing my panel [laughs loudly] he was kind of just letting the men talk, dominate and run over, and it was just men talking, talking and it was just like, I can't be sitting here, just listening to these guys delivering this sermon... The men talk and pontificate and you must listen and when you intervene or say you've had enough of this [laughs] you then get into a bit of a [laughs louder]! And you are thinking, "hello!" [still laughing]. So when you start with this feminist thing you can see him squirming a little bit [laughing] and you can see he is uncomfortable... But there are groups of women, small groups, in the Caribbean who are addressing sexual abuse in that region (EID4).*

Although the conference outlined took place in the Caribbean what EID4 recounts could be seen as being demonstrative of Caribbean patriarchal attitudes towards feminist ideas and the possible encroachment on masculine entitlement and sense of superiority. The extent to which they attempt to control and limit the time she has to present could be seen as representative of the dominance of AC male voices in regard to who they presume is best to 'speak' in their communities.

Addressing CSA within African-Caribbean British communities has yet to be undertaken in a similar manner to that in the Caribbean. EID4 speculates on why this below.

*I think my view is that because black families, black people get such a negative press the last thing you want to be writing is about those awful things that happen in families, and particularly black families, so writing tends to more likely theorise the black family, that's my view. You write about the good things about black families, you don't write about the violence and abuse that goes on in black families because it's an opportunity for racists to grab it and say, "We were right all along. Black families are just dysfunctional". So I think there's an avoidance (EID4).*

EID4's views on why African-Caribbean British scholars are averse to engaging with subjects like CSA is due to our positioning as 'other' within both the public domain and within traditional discourses which depict black families as dysfunctional. These factors may have influenced the experts' participation or activism on CSA previously and in the present.

#### ACTIVISM ON CSA TODAY

Only one expert worked in some capacity on CSA and she was engaged with child protection rather than adult victim-survivors. However, two further participants offered insights on the demise of black feminist activism since the 1980s.

*I think people got tired, people moved on. Things that were important to them didn't seem so important. Some of them were at university got their degree but they wanted their PhD whatever, our needs changed. People left the country, people went to different cultures, Gambia, Zimbabwe was up and coming at the time and a lot of people went there and it opened their eyes to a different struggle to what they thought was happening here. They went there and it was magnified, it was just horrific for some of them. So I think that disillusioned a lot of people. Well what we fighting for here was no big thing. People in Africa, or part of the Caribbean, wherever these women went to, were having some different struggles because the racism element wasn't there, it was another thing colonialism or whatever other isms you want to put on it they had a different struggle as black women. The abuse that was there, the female mutilation, that was more important to them (EID2).*

Her reasoning for the demise suggests that they became disillusioned "*I think people got tired, people moved on*" even defeated by the relentless struggle to end race inequality in the UK. Her words further suggest that the everyday lives of African and Caribbean women put the struggles of African-Caribbean

British communities in the UK on a lower level of priority to the anti-colonial struggles in Africa and the Caribbean. Her remarks suggest that travel afforded these women the opportunity to view their positions as racialised people through a relational lens that suggested a level of privilege for African-Caribbean British women in the UK compared to their sisters in Africa and the Caribbean.

Furthermore her remarks suggest that for the individual black British activist educational attainment may have been a pathway to developing the self and may in fact demonstrate the influence and cultural exchange of feminist ideas of empowerment between women and minority groups during this particular period (Stacey, 1987). This view is consistent with the views of ex-members of BBWG and OWWAD who attended a Black Feminist Network meeting in 2011<sup>9</sup>. The women argued that personal ambitions became of greater importance than activism during the mid-1980s. In addition many groups were closing because the services they provided were co-opted by public agencies during that period.

Therefore, it could be argued that the black British feminist movement during the late 1970s-mid 1980s responded to the political needs of the international collective of blackness and the 'struggle' for race equality, and specific forms of sexual violence (FGM) at the expense of more localised sexual violence(s) experienced by African-Caribbean British women in the UK (Wilson; 1993; Wallace, 1990).

Additionally, another participant suggested that the lack of a visible public response to CSA by black British feminists may have occurred because of both the omission of CSA from definitions of child maltreatment during the 1970s, combined with the relatively short period that CSA had within the public domain compared with domestic violence.

*Although there was women beavering away in the background until the late 80s, before '87 child sexual abuse wasn't even considered or talked about much in a statutory setting. I mean there wasn't even a category in regards to child protection, you might register a child, and there wasn't even a category then. So*

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<sup>9</sup> Discussion from Black Feminist Network Meeting I attended in 2011.

*it wasn't, although domestic violence relatively received a lot more attention, but child sexual abuse didn't (EID4).*

She continues:

*I think an obvious reason was those women at that time who had the space to have the voice, who were writing, who were working in policy were; they were mainly white women. They weren't black women. And I think the black women who were active at that time on a policy level, these weren't the areas they were writing about because it's the kind of shitty area that everybody wants to pretend isn't there. You don't want to make your name [laughs aloud] writing about that. So I think those kinds of things [were] going on (EID4).*

Here institutional factors that are independent of what Hammond (1999) termed 'black' female dissemblance on all matters of sexuality are placed at the centre of an explanation, including the lack of a clear definition of what constitutes CSA, which was a tension for academics, public policy makers (Russell, 1986; Wyatt & Johnson Powell, 1988; Kelly, 1988; Hall & Lloyd, 1993; Sanderson, 1995; Kelly, Burton, & Regan, 1998 Douglas & Finkelhor, 2005) and victim-survivors themselves. African-Caribbean British women who had the capacity, both on an authoritative level within public policy and possibly on a personal level through experience, were reluctant to be the ones to address CSA within African-Caribbean British communities. However, more recent scholars of CSA and culture have argued that "policy and programmes dealing with child sexual abuse should be relevant to the cultural and social context in which the abuse occurs" (Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009, p. 6).

Little is known about how various cultures and ethnicities define and understand CSA within the UK. The CASU conference appears to have been the first occasion where an African-Caribbean British perspective outlined the realities of how intersections of racism and sexism could impact agency of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors in the UK. Marlene Bogle's (1987) address to the conference was referenced by all of the experts in this study. EID4 further outlined how, during the 1980s, there was a backlash toward feminist engagements with CSA.

*I think child sexual abuse had a very limited window. I am talking about when in terms of the public as such... child sexual*

*abuse was much shorter because I am trying to think time now. There was a time when it was getting from a feminist perspective and then the backlash came and it became about recovered memory. It seemed to dominate and then it went into the statutory kind of construction. So that might be a factor, but in all that, I don't think black women or black women's experiences were even central to these debates (EID4).*

What this participant illustrates is the need to consider both temporal and political climates in any examination of disclosures/activism by women who have experienced CSA. Whilst racial inequality could appear to be the sole reason for African-Caribbean British women's silence and lack of activism on CSA, temporal and political shifts were also instrumental in societal, cultural and state views upon the validity of claims by victim-survivors. Discourses, specifically around False Memory Syndrome, is another factor which although impacting therapeutic practitioners most, may have further deterred victim-survivors from disclosing historical cases of CSA (Sanderson, 1995).

#### AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH HOUSEHOLDS AND STATE INTERVENTION

The fear of exposing oneself, family and African-Caribbean British communities to intrusive state agencies is reflected in the words of EID2.

*You expose, so you are going to be exposed so you keep on and continue to suffer. So it was a constant battle and struggle until you pluck up and say well I throw all caution to the wind... I don't care! What is more important my sanity, my children or keeping it all closeted? ...you expose yourself because if you are going to go to the police or social services, you are going out there and telling people your business and we (African-Caribbean British community) are very private people we don't want people to know our business, but unless you do that you are not going to get the help you need (EID2).*

EID2 demonstrates the powerful deterrent of shame which may be experienced by victim-survivors when contemplating disclosing or seeking support with histories of abuse committed within African-Caribbean British communities.

Most of the experts revealed experiences of CSA during the interviews, one whilst she was being fostered, the others within the family home. EID2, below, reveals how racism intersects with CSA and impacts the agency of African-Caribbean British women's 'space to speak' or seek support.

*Q. Do you feel that is a specific choice to black women or to women in general?*

*I. It is. It is because you are exposing yourself and you are laying yourself open to a different sort of abuse by doing that. Yes it is specific to us [African-Caribbean British women]! So do you do that and get it all in the open and still keep your identity? Still keep your dignity, your character your strength, your culture? All them are wrapped up into whether you disclose or not (EID2).*

Here to seek justice for CSA requires complex negotiations for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors and African-Caribbean British mothers on discovering CSA in their families. For EID2 weighing up whether to involve public agencies was about exposure to the possibility of another form of abuse. In this sense African-Caribbean British women can be torn between seeking justice and feeling displaced and exposed, risking loss of dignity, culture, character and identity as one becomes reduced within the public white world.

Additionally, EID1 suggested that African-Caribbean British victim-survivors may also fear approaching statutory medical services with any concerns from histories of CSA for fear of a negative response.

*Some of the women in that book they are all survivors of the mental health system and a number of them are survivors of sexual abuse. One of the threads that came through is that there was no place for them to tell their stories, not only in their own communities but services. Black people don't have ready access to talking therapies yet are being sectioned under the Mental Health Act...The way in which the diagnosis which people from BME communities receive in mental health services Schizophrenia which attracts a response and intervention of medication does not lend itself to people wanting to access psychological therapies (EID1).*

This experts' words allude to the uncertainty of positioning for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors when they come into contact with certain state agencies. Crenshaw's (1991) theory of intersectionality somewhat enables the various forces of inequality, oppression and the constraints of racialisation in the

lives of women associated with colour to be recognised and understood. Thus, EID2's description resembles to some extent the everyday precariousness of realities of intersectionality produced for the African-Caribbean British when race and gender intersect with our own histories of sexual and racial violence.

That said, for women of African descent in the UK intersectionality cannot adequately speak of the complexities of British subject-hood with its many contradictions of citizenship and belonging. Relying on Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality (ibid) to speak of the lived experiences of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors has the potential of allowing both the voices and the hybridised histories and identities occupied by African-Caribbean British and other liminal communities associated with race, religion and empire in Britain to fall between the gaps of discourses derived from African-American feminists, white feminists and race politics represented by men.

*Because Britain is now so multi-cultural; I hate those sorts of words [laughs] but we've come now (African-Caribbean British). Then we were children of immigrants, now we are very much, well our children are very much part, they are black British children. They aren't children of no immigrants. They are very much part of this society and they (white society) need to start recognising, feeling and owning it. We are very much integrated, born here, your parents were born here and your Grandparents were born here. So come on now let's live in the real world and be part of this society (EID2).*

Questions of belonging and citizenship appear to be a significant factor to African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA; (not necessarily the case for African- American victim-survivors) could be lost within discourses which were not conceived to address the specifics of migration and belonging as experienced by post-colonial subjects in the UK. Jennifer Nash's (2008) analysis of Crenshaw's theory supports this view. For Nash intersectional theorisation currently fails to address the specificities of women of African descent's lived experiences in differing locations and time periods and thus has the potential to depict black women as "trans-historical" (p.7).

## ENDURING SILENCES

The embrace of 'silence' to sexual violence/CSA is not uncommon amongst victim-survivors regardless of culture and ethnicity (see, for example, Courtois & Watts, 1982; Josephson & Fong-Beyette, 1987). Explanations range from the emotional reaction to the memories of the abuse, age of the victim-survivor at the onset of abuse and abuse characteristics (Herman & Schatzow, 1987). Yet the continuance of silence within African-Caribbean British communities requires more explanation. Why were certain women who fell under the umbrella of black in the UK able to speak of such violence(s) existing in their lives and communities is yet unclear.

*So when we get into autonomous groups even then there tends to be a reluctance in the first instance; it's almost like you need someone to say it first. Who's going to say it first? That's my sense, to admit to a weakness, not that sexual abuse is a weakness we all know that it's not ours but to admit to a weakness is letting the side down (EID3).*

EID3 reasons that if a woman was to disclose that she would be admitting to being weak. For an African-Caribbean British victim-survivor to suggest that she required assistance or who could not prevent herself from speaking she could run the risk of being 'othered' or seen as lesser by her own peers.

*1. So are you saying that African-Caribbean British survivors have to juggle the abuse alongside other social factors?*

*Yes not only the sexual abuse but they have other abuses in their lives. When they go out there as black women, the way they are treated, all that's happened. So it's not as with a white woman she might just have her abuse to deal with, she doesn't have all these other issues that affect her life, as does the black woman (EID2).*

Here EID2 implies that for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors focussing solely on CSA would be a privilege, which is to some extent consistent with previous work (Wilson, 1993; Bernard, 2002) which argued that racism contributed to the maintenance of sexual abuse continuing to be seen as too sensitive an issue to be spoken of in African-Caribbean British communities. Melba Wilson (1993)

argued that the view that CSA is accepted as normal practice within African-Caribbean British communities by white societies only reproduces the need for silence from African-Caribbean British communities. This view was supported by one of the experts in this study.

*Because people think oh well black men always fuck their children anyway that sort of thing. Not recognising that we suffered sexual abuse [pause] it is bad (EID2).*

The hurt expressed by EID2 demonstrates how racist myths may inform victim-survivors that even if they do disclose or seek support for CSA that their experiences may not be seen as abuse because of these long held beliefs. Hence EID1's account of the challenges that racism presents to victim-survivors is consistent with previous work which identified that historical racist discourses regarding black sexuality may have a coercive effect which ensues silence on CSA within African-Caribbean British communities in order to diminish further stigmatisation, shame and judgement (see also Bernard, 2002; Thomas, 2000). Racism in the lives of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors, therefore, must be addressed in future research in order to understand whether subjugated knowledges as outlined by EID1 and EID2 could potentially create barriers to accessing support not only for African-Caribbean British children but for adult victim-survivors as previously identified (see also Chapter 7). The following section will explore the factors which influenced black British feminism's desire to be autonomous during the 1970s to mid-1980s.

## THE DESIRE TO BE AUTONOMOUS

Black British feminism had its own characteristics demands and history. In the UK the politicisation of African-Caribbean British communities was not, and continues to be less, established tending to be localised in character often only emerging to address a specific issue within a temporal moment.

EID2 outlines that initially the BBWG was viewed with suspicion by the local African-Caribbean British community. The main source of mistrust appeared to have focused on the fact that it was a centre which focused on the concerns of African-Caribbean British women.

*Why do we need to meet separately as black women? What for? You know you have your black man there. Yes but he don't understand us and he's the same one beating us and all these things so yes it separated us and it brought us together surprisingly (EID2).*

Her account suggests that African-Caribbean British communities believed that the black male always supported and understood the needs of black women because of their shared social identities as black people. There was no need for African-Caribbean British women to be meeting separately or being autonomous when the black men had it all in hand, even in regard to domestic violence.

The relative invisibility of black female activism in both race politics and within the feminist movement during the 1970s in the US prompted the following from the US.

*A black feminist presence has evolved most obviously in connection with the second wave of the American Women's Movement beginning in the late 1960s. Black women and other Third World and working women have been involved in the movement from its start, but both outside reactionary forces and racism and elitism within the movement itself have served to obscure our participation (Combahee River Collective, 1978; p.2).*

Although this statement clearly articulates the views and agenda for African-American feminists the fact that it originated in the US and does not mention specifically black British feminists should not be understood as having no bearing on the agenda of African-Caribbean British feminist activism in the UK during that period. The collective lived embodiment of blackness has been, and is still to some extent, global and thus is influential to all people of African descent regardless of geographical location. As racialised people there is a real sense that we are reliant upon and represent each other under the banner of blackness. If one achieves we all achieve, if one fails we all dread the fallout from that failure. This is the unique relationship produced by the collective experience and history of racial oppression (see also White, 2000; Hacking, 2005). It is a place of safety and belonging within the public. It is common for African-Caribbean British/black people to scan a room for other African-Caribbean British/black people and then sit next to them in solidarity.

However, one of the consequences of the collective of blackness appears to be that the African-American voice in regards to race equality and black on black sexual and domestic violence has become the most dominant and thus homogenises of women of African descent regardless of geography, culture and time. Even when African-American scholars speak of the 'black American' or the 'African-American' woman or man within discourses of equality or sexual violence it is this voice which is heard and thus sets support policy responses to CSA even in the UK. As such no further enquiry is sought as to the particularities of racialisation in the lives of African-Caribbean victim-survivors in the UK.

African-Caribbean British activists sought an autonomous black female space in London for their activism in the late 1970s.

*What was important was, and again that was a point of the tensions, because clearly we were a black feminist group. We didn't want to be subsumed within the white feminist movement, but we wanted and clearly there was strength in numbers and we needed to work together but we needed to organize autonomously (EID1).*

The desire not to be 'subsumed' is consistent with accounts by black British feminists who were active during that period (Parmar 1984; Quashie, 1990). An agenda which addressed gender inequality alone "sometimes seemed inconsequential" (Quashie, *ibid* p. 88) compared with the struggle for race equality. The tensions referred to by EID1, although not elaborated upon, suggest that the women of the BBWG were clearly advocates of feminism, but saw racism on a personal, communal and global level(s) as a legitimate reason to organise separately. Race and racism therefore appears to be a major factor which divided feminism. The accounts suggest that African-Caribbean British women felt that although they could understand the issues faced by women in general, that white women were often reluctant to reciprocate, and look at their own privilege both in relation to colour and for some class.

*Inequality and racism not only from the white man but from our own very white women too. You know? Although we were women together we were separated by the colour of our skin,*

*our cultural background. Culture, everything separated us. I don't think they could see where we were coming from, although we were more sympathetic to their needs they weren't to ours at all (EID2).*

*Looking at the racism within white women how inherent that is and them [white feminists] not recognising it. And the black women within their groups who didn't have a voice or who were spoken down to, that sort of thing. So that was terribly frustrating and fighting that all the time and hence these black women are so aggressive, chip on their shoulder all this [laughs] fucking crap to be honest with you!... If a black woman was in that group and speak up [pause] they ended up in tears, we're so this, and we're so that you know? [frustrated voice]. There is a lack of understanding of culture and I don't think that's something that white women addressed in their group, whereas black women addressed it in their group really (EID3).*

The disappointment of experiencing acts of inequality and racism from white sisters expressed by these participants is consistent with hooks' (1982) analysis that many of the questions that women sought to address in first wave and second wave feminism made a distinction between white males and females, but did not distinguish between the sexes when referring to blacks. Therefore, for hooks, black became synonymous with black men (1982, p. 140), excluding black women from discourses which addressed sexual inequalities within western societies (see also Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1990; Crenshaw, 1991).

Interestingly, EID3 recalled tensions surfacing between black British feminist members on the grounds of identity and supposed belonging, which further detracted from activism away from issues such as CSA.

*Seriously, that's how it was, so they couldn't have been black enough! You know what I mean? And then on the other bit here you had the women of mixed parentage who didn't think that black women saw them as black enough either, so it was - ah the battles, the battles! But within our study group it could become so passionate, the arguments and the issues who was blacker. Your skin was light all of those sorts of things, so we had our own 'isms', we were fighting within the group although we were all black women. We had our own 'isms' because of these very things that I've mentioned, black women with white men, women of mixed parentage, the lesbian, the straight woman, so you had that going on and then you had them [white people] out there too (EID3).*

Such perceptions of ethnic and cultural differences would eventually divide black British feminism with the demise of groups like OWAAD (Bryan, Dadzie, & Scafe, 1985; Mirza, 1997). Some South Asian British feminists believed that the agenda was too African-Caribbean British focussed and thus obscured the diversity of issues faced by women from different cultures (Mirza, 1997, pp. 8-9). The issue which fractured the wider feminist movement also seems to have fractured the black British feminist movement. The divisions or “isms” recalled by EID3 above suggest that where gendered issues were the focus within white feminist groups, race and ‘shade-ism’ generated much heated debate. ‘Being’ black required, for some, a certain adherence to performance of certain racialised regulatory norms, which may have impacted on African-Caribbean British women’s subjectivity and agency (see Representation section below and also Chapters 5 & 6). Questions of authenticity are central to victim-survivors’ wellbeing as they fear disbelief when they disclose experiences of CSA (Summit, 1983; Alaggia, 2004). The pressure to conform to a racialised standard of being in order to feel accepted may further compound experiences of CSA for African-Caribbean British women who may feel compelled to recant or minimize the impacts of sexual victimisation.

The following recollection by EID2 demonstrates how the personal everyday concerns of the women at BBWG were eclipsed by a racialised expectation of what should take priority in terms of activism.

*So we had our internal battles, but we realised the external one [the struggle for racial equality] was more important. We couldn't continue arguing with ourselves we would get nowhere. It stopped us from producing from being active from doing what we were supposed to be doing as black women (EID2).*

The desire of black feminists to be autonomous enabled them to interrogate amongst themselves what was of importance to them as marginalised women. Where they had often felt excluded, or experienced racism, within predominantly white feminist groups, groups like BBWG and OWAAD afforded a space to set their own agendas, gain a sense of belonging and explore what it meant to be female and black from both a historical standpoint and within that specific time period. However, the method which had aided the emergence of CSA within feminist groups - consciousness-raising - had

been rejected by black British feminism. The realities of racism within the lives of African-Caribbean British women outlined by EID1 below may explain the reluctance to use consciousness-raising: the separatist activism of black British feminists may have had less to do with a mistrust of white feminism, and more to do with addressing the immediate realities of racial discrimination and oppression.

*We organised around a number of key issues, the SUS laws which were laws which at the time young black boys were being stopped and searched a lot in Brixton. Black mothers, black sisters were saying we have got to do something about this. So we did a lot of demonstrating outside Brixton Police station and elsewhere to say this practice has got to stop; you're targeting of black children basically. So that was one of the campaigns we waged. Another one was around sin-bins to get rid of the practice of excluding black children, again black boys, from schools and sticking them in these kind of no hope institutions where very little was expected of them. We campaigned around the Police Criminal Evidence Bill. We campaigned against virginity testing at Heathrow Airport (EID1).*

The question of what to do about racism within the everyday lives of African-Caribbean British communities seems to have been a constant topic for debate within BBWG. Questions of difference in regard to sexuality, skin colouring and inter-racial dating and marriage were superseded by a focus on race inequality activism. Active members of the BBWG have confirmed that these questions were rarely addressed as they often caused intense debates amongst members (see also Quashie, 1990).

Participants attested that collaborations between white and black feminists were not unusual. However, one believed that although a commonality existed on certain gender issues, the particularities of how race discrimination impacted on black women were not understood, even contemplated, by white feminists that she knew personally or knew of.

*They didn't, they didn't! [examine race] It would never have happened. I know for a fact that they didn't. You ask any black woman who joined their groups; it wasn't seen as an important issue, whereas black women would look at race [Pause] I don't think they did. It wasn't important...Wages for Housework Come on! We were housewives [chuckles]. So it seemed insignificant it was a different struggle (EID2).*

The accounts of interviewees are consistent with hooks' (1984) analysis of second wave feminism's neglect of the everyday intersections of race, class and gender and how these impair, exclude and impact on the agency of black women. Additionally, the experts recalled a yearning to be amongst women with whom they could identify, who had similar experiences and political goals to themselves. It could be argued that they were seeking to belong in order to address and interrogate their positions as racialised subjects in the UK. It was domestic violence that was first addressed which led to the establishment of culturally specific provision for South Asian and in certain parts of the UK provision for black women and children<sup>10</sup> during that period. However as Mama (1989) argued where black women's voluntary services wished to address domestic violence, a lack of expertise and resources often required them to refer African-Caribbean British women to generic refuge services. In regards to sexual violence and CSA, no African-Caribbean British culturally aware provision existed for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors within public and voluntary services.

*There was stuff about violence against women, but it wasn't prioritised towards Caribbean women, or any minority women, in that sense. Although, obviously it did provide services for those women from those communities who would define themselves in that way. I mean it was all part of the agenda to get specificities addressed. Of course that was really led that thing about provision, this is just in terms of what was called domestic violence. That then led to specific provision; culturally specific and that was led by the Asian women in a sense and then to some extent African women directly from the continent...But certainly in the Women's Aid stuff there was beginning to emerge questions about being sensitive to racism and the ways this may impact on women's sense that they could actually go to authorities to raise these questions (EID5).*

The impetus to join a black British feminist group arose for these women from a need to understand what it meant to be black, female and British. The women's accounts suggest that race/racism and the

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<sup>10</sup> E.g. Amadudu in Liverpool

need to feel safe and belong created the impetus for self-identification and that issues such as CSA were shelved in order to address these concerns.

### REPRESENTATION AND THE EMBRACE OF 'BLACKNESS'

Two participants explored a contention that a lack of representation still existed in regards to depictions of African-Caribbean British women as victim-survivors within public discourses on sexual violence.

*That we are not like that, but we are very much like that. I think it is because when they talk about the Catholic priest and whatever, it's normally a white face you see. So again we get pushed back, it's not happening to us and because no one is speaking up for us, or speaking up for themselves. We only see white victims, white perpetrators that what's shown on the telly, where are the black victims and black perpetrators? (EID2)*

*I think it's because we are not typecast as that kind of victim in the way that white women are type casted as victims of physical abuse (EID3).*

EID3 argues here that the lack of representation of African-Caribbean British women as victim survivors of sexual violence is due to the historical oppositional position that we occupy in relation to white women. In our dualist position, we become invisible because historically we have not been written into the role of victim, that role being reserved for white women. Rather we have been located in complete contrast by systems and processes of racialisation. The lack of diverse representations of, and for, African-Caribbean British women implies that CSA and sexual violence does not occur within African-Caribbean British communities. What this perception (re)produces is an invisibility of CSA experiences in the public world and possibly to African-Caribbean British victim-survivors themselves.

The non-victim status within both populist and academic discourses when African-American/ African-Caribbean British women are sexually abused both adds to the invisibility of CSA within diasporic African cultures and conveys to victim-survivors that no one will be held to account (White, 2001; Bachman, 1994). A clear illustration of this emerged from civil rights advocate Eldridge Cleaver during the 1970s. Cleaver believed that if you raped a white woman that you raped her father. In his insane

quest to repay the white man for historic and current injustices, he felt justified in practising rape on black women in preparation for his white female victims (Clever, 1968). The complexities of speaking of black on black sexual violence are explored further in Chapters 5 and 6.

Another participant outlined the damaging effect of the perpetuation of the strong black woman representation upon African-Caribbean British/black woman's sense of self (see also Chapter 2).

*Because black women are always portrayed by how strong we are, how we can deal with anything. You know beat us, we get up again, we go to work, we take care of the family, we are strong, matriarchal... I think another reason why it has been difficult to see black people telling their stories and black women telling their stories especially, has been because of this mantle that we wear as black women as being strong, as being able to handle it all, which has been given to us historically (EID1).*

I asked another participant why the image of the innately strong and resilient black woman has endured for so long in regards to CSA.

*I don't know. It's a myth! Because we feel, we hurt, you know we bawl [cry], we carry on, and it is a total myth I think (EID2).*

These representations illustrate the dualist positioning of black womanhood in constant opposition to white womanhood (Dyer, 1997). The construction and inscription of race upon the corporeality of the female body has, since the Enlightenment, situated black and white femininity in opposition to each other. As a result race and gender have become entwined, producing supposed collective knowledge(s) of embodiment and belonging to distinct racial groups with uniquely different cultural characteristics (Dyer, 1997 p.18).

Similarly, EID4 outlines in regard to domestic violence an additional drawback of umbrella racial categories which propagate a particular image of violence against women within minority communities in the UK.

*I think here in the UK domestic violence was one of the things that happened from the eighties and where we are now, in terms of how it's talked about in terms of black minority ethnic groups*

*the issue is around Asian women; that took over. So that although you might see black, minority, ethnic women a lot of the research on domestic violence has been about Asian women, although it may be headed under black women; but it is Asian women that's being represented (EID4).*

EID4 argues that within public narratives such violences have traditionally been associated with Asian women if they are attached to a black, minority, ethnic public policy remits (see also Chapter 7). Arguably, it appears that a hierarchy of women may exist in the UK whereby African-Caribbean British women occupy the lowest tier of womanhood with white, Asian and then women born in continents such as Africa taking precedence in any representational campaign or discourse which addresses sexual violence and women.

EID3 outlined how the non-victim status of AC/Black victim-survivors combined with the coercive influence of supposed race solidarity had an adverse effect on how African-Caribbean British women processed and understood their historical experiences of CSA. Her account resonates with Hall's (1996) discussion of cultural identity. Identity is problematic if it is understood as transparent and static. Rather it is continuously produced, always in process, never complete and always constituted according to Hall (*ibid*) from within representation (p.222). Therefore, a recognition of time, space and history is required to contextualise identity. Hall suggests that there are two ways of understanding cultural identity. Firstly, culture could be described as a 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves' which people with a shared history and ancestry hold common (1990, p. 223). This definition has been the one more favoured by post-colonial subjects; through, for example, notions of blackness. The second version of cultural identity proffered by Hall (*ibid*) acknowledges "differences" constituting "what we really are" or have "become" through history (*ibid*, p.225): both one of becoming as well as being.

*Whereas perhaps white women are taught to be victims we are not taught to be victims, so when we are victims and I'm not ashamed of using that word victim; survivor comes later you know. But when we are the victim and on the receiving end of it we haven't been taught that that is our role necessarily. So*

*when we become it, it's even harder for us to overcome it I think.  
I think it knocks probably black women, not children, but women  
harder than white women (EID3).*

EID3's reflections are arguably more consistent with Hall's first model of cultural identity as she uses the word 'we' five times. The disavowal of the 'I' in her narrative, to that of "*black women*" which she uses twice, suggests a kind of authoritative 'knowing' of how African-Caribbean British women are situated and situate themselves. This 'knowing' suggests a familiarity of 'knowing' a subjugated knowledge (Foucault, 1977) common amongst African-Caribbean British women who identify as black. The use of 'we' to outline the journey from victim to survivor in her account could be argued to diminish her own individual and personal standpoint: alluding instead to an alignment of her own experiences to those of all women of African descent. The ability to speak for a collective could be argued to be a 'privilege' of situated people; in this instance women who are overtly racialised women will probably have experienced racial oppression and 'othering' at some stage of their lives. Thus, EID3's words are similar yet different to the earlier feminist discourses on gender inequality in that they could be argued to be universalising, yet differ in that they are based in a collective 'knowing' of both overt and nuanced forms of racial difference and oppression. As such EID's words act as a template by which we may begin to garner some form of understanding of how racialisation impacts experiences of CSA.

#### THE POLITICAL BECOMES PERSONAL

Hanisch (2006) argued that the phrase 'the personal is political' was born out of the need to demonstrate that consciousness-raising was not a form of therapy: rather the very act of women speaking for and about themselves was a form of political activism. The realisation that their 'personal' gendered existence was "*grim*" was an integral aspect of political activism. The 'political' for Hanisch thus comes to refer to all forms of relational power, not just those exercised by government or other external institutions (Napikoski, 2014).

Participants in this study outlined the reluctance of black British feminist activists to self-reflect or consciousness-raise. Yet their accounts suggest that on some level women did discuss personal

concerns. One participant recalled that the women who attended the BBWG initially followed a feminist template for consciousness-raising, and issues around sexual orientation were discussed. However, it seems that race was still the overriding issue. This manifested in relation to inter-racial dating and marriage to white men which was seen to compromise a woman's membership within 'blackness' and other conflicts which surfaced regarding being 'black' and female (see also Chukwudi -Eze, 1997; Dyer, 1997; Hacking, 2005).

The participants in this study concurred that consciousness-raising was often perceived as taking time away from the 'real' political struggle: that of race inequality (see also Quashie, 1990). The 'collective struggle' took precedence over the 'personal' in gender politics.

*Because we were very clear that we didn't just want to be a group that was just about study, or just about consciousness-raising, because consciousness-raising was also the thing for black women feminist groups during that time. So we didn't want to just sit around and discuss just issues as women, we were very clear this was a political group. So we studied and organised (EID1).*

*You see that feminist mantra was not part of our black feminist movement. That personal is political; I didn't hear that in black women's groups. That's white women's speak in the 70s and 80s. That was white women's speak; that wasn't black women's speak, we were much more race orientated (EID3).*

The above comments appear, at first sight, to be in tension with Hanisch's (2006) framework of what constitutes the 'political'. But they can be read as accounts of how the political collective of blackness superseded the individual, or reconstituted the concerns of black racialised gender with negotiations of which oppression should take precedence: race or gender. Therefore their political activism could be seen as not individual, but instead an embodiment of discursive political blackness intersecting with and suppressing gender concerns. The limited use of consciousness raising (CR) within black British activism, (CR was more common in amongst radical black feminists in the United States) precluded exploration of the "grimness" of gendered lives, shifting focus to the specificities of the 'grimness' of being black and male (also see Crenshaw, 1991).

It could be argued that the political had to become the personal for women of African descent in the UK. Bryan, Dadzie, & Scafe's (1985) genealogical account of the lives of African-Caribbean British women from the post-war era found that Caribbean women were on occasion physically assaulted on British streets because of their colour during the first wave of mass migration to the UK. The African-Caribbean British male represented the archetypal victim of racist violence within the public imagination, with African-Caribbean British women again being invisible. African-Caribbean British women became more invested in eradicating racism not only for herself, but also in her capacity as carer for the African-Caribbean British family.

The rebuke of a useful form of feminist method appears to have separated and reinforced African-Caribbean British women's positioning as different and 'other'. By choosing not to interrogate the gendered aspects of their everyday lives, it seems impossible within the personal is political framework for the personal component of gendered power relations to become visible in the lives of African-Caribbean British women of that period.

*There were a number of women in the group who were lesbian and that also wasn't talked about because it was considered taking valuable time away from The Struggle; and The Struggle was about all these other things we had to devote our energies to being good socialist feminists, doing the business, doing the work, doing the organising, doing the campaigning (EID1).*

In contrast the sole African-American feminist who attended BBWG differed in her attitude toward consciousness-raising, believing that it was an integral part of feminism.

*I became known in the group as the person who was always saying, "Yeah but, the personal is the political as well". So for me it was also about making a statement. So if that is the case it's a big personal issue for me; I want to be able to deal with it. So that also began to germinate some of the discussions within the group about the need to address some of those issues. As a result actually, gradually stuff around peoples' lesbianism started to come out. People started to discuss it so that was a good thing (EID1).*

However, her recommendation did not extend to CSA as the activists at BBWG preferred to focus on and understand what it meant to be black, female and socialist.

*But back in the day certainly 'A' and people like 'B' or some people 'A' represented this one voice that said, "We are not doing this personal is political; we need to do some more sort of traditional feminist consciousness- raising stuff here". And I was one of the vocal people who resisted that. Now I wouldn't. Isn't that interesting? I wouldn't. Now I wouldn't at all! ... Well I think she was asking for some kind of thing that wanted us to be much more at the level of speaking from our individual experience in order to build a pattern that's more collective from that starting point... we were going back the other way I would say. It's very easy to slip into the notion of thinking at the level of the individual and individual experience can get rendered as petty bourgeois indulgence. And in the early days I think that was kind of the general mind set (EID5).*

Being a socialist feminist group the focus on studying Marx and African history meant these women were in the process of examining their lives as racially/classed constituted subjects.

The aim was to get a space for themselves to look at questions of colonialism and the nature of capitalist society. African history and those sorts of things. The object then, was probably to locate themselves as women but not particularly as feminists (Quashie, 1990, p. 44).

The issues worked on included housing, immigration, health, education, legislation alongside nurturing race consciousness and how these matters intersected on the everyday lives of predominantly working class black women in the UK (Parmar, 1984). At the same time Parmar (1984) notes that questions relating to women's sexuality were also acknowledged, but women chose not to discuss or address sexuality or the construction of sexuality for fear of creating further divisions. Yet, in so doing sexuality and sexual preference was located to the *realm of the "private"*. However, she states that this approach was *"inconsistent with the philosophy that all aspects their lives were social"* (p. 87). These inconsistencies are significant to any understanding of the longevity of silence by African-Caribbean British women on the subject of CSA. The fear of further fracturing through what was an already contentious situation amongst black British feminists suggests that silence on CSA and sexual violence

may have been seen as a means of retaining unity between women whilst further safeguarding communities from negative scrutiny from the outside world.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF BELONGING

Belonging to, and identifying with, a raced collective may further have been instrumental in why the women chose to address their everyday concerns separately away from white and more culturally diverse women's groups. Yuval-Davis has argued that belonging is about "*emotional attachment, about feeling at home*" (2011, p. 4). Ignatieff supports this notion of home equating it to home as a safe place (2001): however for a lot of women and girls home is the site of violence and oppression. The significance of feeling safe has been acknowledged previously (Hall & Lloyd, 1993) for victim-survivors especially in their decisions to tell or disclose experiences of CSA. Additionally, safety has been explored in conjunction with maternal responses on disclosure especially in regard to religion (Alaggia, 2001). Yet safety and feelings of belonging have not as yet been explored in regard to racialisation, migration and CSA in the UK.

One participant succinctly illustrates the splitting of the racialised self within the liminality of mind, corporeality, social and political: racialisation creates an understanding whereby we are always aware of being positioned in opposition to both ourselves and the 'other' (Lacan, 1978; Said, 1978; Foucault, 1991; Bhabha, 1993, p. 118; West, 2006).

*And the first time I realised I was black, was when I was ten and I came to this country because before then I was just growing up with my grandparents. My parents had left and come to England and that was the first time coming here having people laugh at you in class because you're speaking with an accent a different language and it was sometimes a different language... You put your hand up in class because you know the question and I think maybe that stemmed from me not talking in a group, putting your hand up people talking. Your talking to answer the question because I was bright [voice gets higher] I still am I guess [chuckles]. And they would laugh at you because of the language you were using, your accent and everything. So eventually the hand came down and you just listened. [pauses,*

*eyes well up with tears]. That brought tears to my eyes saying that (EID2).*

These remarks are both moving and revealing: her recollection of only realising that she was black on arrival in the UK demonstrates the relational oppositional nature of racialisation. Her inability to express herself is partly due to the patois that she is accustomed to using which becomes a source of amusement to the other children. Yet the outcome of this ridicule has an impact: silence and invisibility. She further explains that she believes that it was this early experience in school which would later result in her just sitting silently within meetings at BBWG, and not being able to speak.

Groups like BBWG appeared to enable both a place of safety and provided the women with resources to know, understand and reclaim their West African heritage and history, whilst simultaneously acknowledging their present positions as British subjects. The more rounded understanding of their ancestry could be argued to have been important in that it enabled them to counter previously debasing discourses aimed at reinforcing the idea of the inferiority of black/ African peoples. Additionally, it may have created an imaginary landscape of a supposed 'authentic homeland' counteracting the reality of rejection of Britain during that time. Therefore, coming together as women of African descent may have provided certain members with a new sense of belonging. Race consciousness enabled many African-Caribbean British people to understand that they belonged to a bigger collective of black people(s) and regions beyond the UK where they were not always situated within a binary of racialisation and 'othering', possibly explaining the urge by some activists to travel to the Caribbean and Africa.

The need to belong and locate oneself as a racialised woman emerged as a theme which impacted on victim-survivors' decision to disclose histories of CSA.

*I came to this country in 1977 so I came from at the time a predominantly black milieu living in the States, and black communities it was very kind of segregated really to a predominantly white milieu [deep sigh]. So for me it was very important to try and connect with black communities and fortunately for me I discovered the BBWG shortly after moving to Britain and to London... It was mainly made up of women who*

*had come out of the Socialist movement, the Black Power movement of the Sixties and Seventies and but were wanting something that was specific around black women organising. So that was why it was important to come together (EID1).*

Although EID1 seeks out black communities in London with whom she feels she can identify it is not in the UK that she discloses her experiences of CSA. Yet she has stated previously in this chapter that CR was common amongst black feminists in the US, and so there were opportunities for her to disclose at home. The very same dynamics outlined by women in this study: protecting the 'black community/black male from a racially hostile society' may have a bearing on her decision to remain silent both in the US and in the UK. For in both locations she was a racialised person. For her travelling to Zimbabwe somehow enabled her to address her past experience of CSA.

*I remember going to Bulawayo which is Zimbabwe's second city and this was shortly after Zimbabwe was independent so it was still the freshness, the newness [Inhales deeply] and they claimed me in Bulawayo. They said, "You are one of us". So for me it was like a clear physical resemblance to the people there. So I became convinced that that was where my father's people must have come from originally. In fact my father was the spitting image of Robert Mugabe when I think about it [sigh]. I remember going and talking to a witch doctor there, just having a conversation really, and for some reason I had a kind of epiphany where I must write this book (EID1).*

Hage (1997) argues that belonging is an ongoing project entailing a sense of hope for the future. EID1's account above reflects Hage's view of belonging: it was only when she travelled to Zimbabwe that she felt comfortable enough to address her past history of CSA. Her words imply that there is a tremendous empowerment in being the majority in a society. The fact that the people openly 'claimed her' by acknowledging "You are one of us" seems to have been a powerful impetus for her to trust and hence decide to name her experiences of child sexual abuse.

Interviewees were asked: "Do you believe that feeling that we belonged in the UK would make a difference to African-Caribbean British women coming forward and speaking about CSA?"

*When we came here we felt like we weren't wanted and the white man made us feel like we weren't welcome. We've been*

*here long enough for them (white people) to start accepting that and seeing that we aren't going anywhere. We are born and bred here, we born ya, and we am ya! [Jamaican patois for born here, and are here]. So I think that is what is fundamentally wrong with the youths of today, they have no roots, they don't feel belonging and if you don't feel that then you're not going to speak out about the abuse or anything for that matter (EID2).*

EID2's words provide us with a glimpse of the hurt and anger felt by many African-Caribbean British people when they experience rejection based upon hierarchies of race and colour. She clearly outlines how feeling unclaimed or that you do not belong can deter victim-survivors from disclosing all manner of violence(s) including CSA (see also Chapters 3 and 6).

Feeling that you belong to a supposed community (Anderson, 1991) due to both personal and collective racial oppression and 'othering' validated via subjugated knowledges held by African-Caribbean British people may dictate whom you trust and where you feel safe. This chimes with hooks' (1990) concept of 'homeplace' (see Chapter 1), whereby the 'black' community is seen and felt as a site of safety and acceptance.

Although recent research (Kanyeredzi, 2014; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009) has highlighted that CSA is difficult to disclose regardless of culture or geographical location for African-Caribbean women, within western cultures where skin colour acts as a contrasting signifier carrying racial historical associations and meanings of black sexuality the process and negotiation to disclose appears to be even more treacherous (see also Kempadoo, 2004).

*I think that's just to do with the sexualisation of black people generally. I think it's thought that, you see when people are sexually stereotyping black [pause] white men, let's do the comparator. When people are sexually stereotyping white men they see them as predators to a certain extent and white women as the prey. But we of course, black men and black women, have been sexualised and portrayed as sexual both male and female for a long time to the white community. We have been used and bred in that way, so they just think we are all at it! All of the time! You got predatory men and sexualised female well obviously it's all going on then. Well they are foreign and different they have strange morals and different values (EID3).*

The oppositional nature of racialisation outlined above demonstrates the difference of situation faced by African-Caribbean British victim-survivors. If we acknowledge the embodied impact of race upon the person then we must also acknowledge that the violence born of racism will reconfigure and distort how African-Caribbean British/black women both perceive and experience their subjectivity, agency and entitlement. This offers a space to understand why all of the participants declared themselves as feminists, yet disavowed their own sense of womanhood in their focus on race equality activism and the protection of the black male (see also Davis, 1982).

### PROTECTING THE BLACK MALE AND AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH COMMUNITIES

White (2001) argues that historical representations of black sexuality as predatory and deviant, especially in regards to the black male, have influenced black women's disclosing in the US. The view that silence was the best course of action was recognised by all of the experts in this study to varying degrees (see also Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009).

*I think so because you are pointing the finger at your own again. Saying that this is what the black man do, and they didn't have a good word to say about the black man in the first place. So they were cussing him out and putting him down and here you are as a black woman doing the same thing. It's a guilt trip! [voice rises with frustration]. You know what I mean? It's a really hard thing to do. Do you or do you not? ...because you find a lot of black women are protective over their men and say, 'No man he won't do that!' And take the man's side over their children. It's a sad state of affairs (EID2).*

EID2's observation that some African-Caribbean British women prioritise men over their children is consistent with findings on maternal attitudes in the Caribbean (Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009). The findings from this study and genealogical research on Caribbean sexual attitudes (Kempadoo, 2004) suggest that Caribbean communities are patriarchal making females aware of CSA reluctant to report sexual abuse, ensuring impunity for male abusers.

EID3's account below supports the protection of African-Caribbean British men, but unlike Jones and Trotman Jemmott (2009) she attributes this in the UK to racism.

*We were looking after our sons even those of us who didn't have children, were looking after our sons, our men - our young men were being decimated. So we were concerned about family, we were concerned about [pause] we were concerned about looking after ourselves, uh! (EID3)*

EID5 clearly outlines the prohibition experienced by African-Caribbean British women to publicly speak of the sexual violence which occurred with African-Caribbean British communities.

*In terms of grown adult men's violence to grown adult women was sort of a bit sensitive; off limits. Can't air dirty linen in public and all that kind of stuff... But I think the women were also seen in the dominant ideology as over sexualised, threatening if not aggressive, if not actually violent (EID5).*

The historical representation of black female sexuality as wanton, hyper-sexualised and thus deviant, combined with the denigration of black male sexuality, reproduced through various forms of discourse is well documented and may influence African-Caribbean British women's choice to disclose CSA (hooks, 1982; Hill-Collins, 1991; Hammond, 1999; White, 2001; Tyagi, 2001; Kempadoo, 2004; Ullman & Filipas, 2005; West, 2006, Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009). One participant echoed Crenshaw (1991) in her analysis of how representational issues became barriers to disclosure of all types in relation to black sexuality at both a community and individual level.

*And I think that moment of the 70s early 80s pathologisation of African Caribbean communities was gendered in a sense as you see the men were seen as inherently violent, over sexualised threats (EID5).*

African-Caribbean British/black victim-survivors of CSA in such contexts may be more reluctant to approach support services to the extent that they anticipate encountering negative stereotypes, regarding themselves and their abusers (see also Bernard, 2001; Chigwada-Bailey, 1997; Thiara and Gill, 2012; Wilson, 1993 and for more in depth discussion Chapter 5).

*African-Caribbean British victim-survivors will be deterred if they feel that they run the risk of being further stigmatised: as one participant noted earlier, "you expose, so you are going to be exposed" (EID2)*

*And another concurred.*

*As I said some of the things we've already talked about which is all of the stereotypes that we have in our own heads, the things we are allowed to talk about so we don't put the dirty linen out in public (EID1).*

Where the above participant states, "So we were concerned about family... We were concerned about looking after ourselves; Uh"; suggests a confusion/fusion of the self within the collective of blackness which becomes apparent through her realisation that somehow she has omitted the concerns of black womanhood in the UK.

Another participant demonstrates the complexities involved with race and feminist politics during the 1970s and 80s.

*We went totally activist...Why do you believe it was to your detriment? Because we were still carrying around all this stuff as women [raises voice slightly]. There was me and my sexual abuse, there were lesbians; there was a young mum...I remember one of us had a child, a young boy, and always used to bring him to the meetings every Sunday, and we all ignored him. So he would be pushing a broom around and our meetings were about three hours and he was just left... we all ignored him. So, here's a young single mother with this child, this boy child. We should have put him in the middle actually, but we didn't. But the point is we still had the personal issues and we didn't give ourselves permission to deal with them because we thought that was not as important as the real political with the big P (EID1).*

The allegiance to a feminist ideology although genuinely felt, is superseded here by a focussed activist regime which favours the collective race struggle and the black male. The fact that these women placed the oppression of the black male at the fore of their activism somewhat belies the outline by EID1 above. When she recalled moments of actually being disengaged with the 'black' male, she consciously attempts to reposition him as the central subject in the lives of the women. Expressing incredulity on two occasions she stated that, "we all ignored him". Her realisation that they had not been focussing on "this boy child" prompted her to say, "We should have put him in the middle actually, but we didn't". Her recall of these events visibly angered and puzzled EID1 when she began to outline how she and the

other women had minimised the oppression in their lives in favour of the big “P”, the political struggle which focussed on the black man.

The above accounts by EID1 and EID3 are reflections that acknowledge that the activism of that period omitted the issues and concerns which they themselves faced as women. Where previously in this study the women critiqued white feminist groups for not addressing the everyday concerns of African-Caribbean British women within feminist groups, the reluctance of black British feminists to consciousness-raise and speak openly amongst themselves kept CSA hidden and unspeakable.

This shows that gender is complexly layered by racialisation. If we employ Hall's (1990) theory that cultural identity is produced within representation then African-Caribbean British female identity could be seen as being (re)produced via internalisation of race equality discourses which has been critiqued by African-American feminists' scholars as male focussed (Wallace, 1990; Crenshaw, 1991; White, 2001) hence 'womanless'. The intersections of race, gender and class which Crenshaw (1991) so succinctly outlines, position women of African descent within a disavowed liminal space could be seen as illustrative of the epidermal layer of racially gendered oppression.

Both participants' epiphanies whereby, in the present, they discern the omission of African-Caribbean British women's concerns within their previous feminist activism, demonstrate the nuanced subterranean effect of intersections of race and gender which invisibilise CSA for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors. The invisibility of women within race equality politics (re)produced a monolithic narrative and agenda propelling the concerns of African-Caribbean British males both within public and private forward and diminishing their own subjectivity. As Irvin-Painter (1993) suggests the relational positioning of gender within blackness, that is where a black woman is located in opposition to the black male, it is the “*black male who occupies the race*” (pp. 204-5).

Therefore, the added pre-fix of 'black' to narratives of the self would seem to cancel out any entitlement to justice and visibility of African-Caribbean British/black women. One of the prerequisites to being a

black female is the designation of strength (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009). If this particular characteristic is not present, then where do you belong, and how can we contribute to 'the struggle'? One expert outlined the precariousness of displacement to what is termed 'political blackness' and enforced embodiments of blackness produced externally through direct/indirect encounters of racism, on the subjectivity and agency of black womanhood within the UK.

*No outside of black we will always hang on to that; being strong. I think at the moment all the while in the UK that black women face the kind of racism that we do, and all the while we are on the sharp end of all sorts of things and I think the cuts are a really good example of that, we will always have that sense that we need to be stronger and we are not. We don't chat our business about town (EID3).*

That there is "no outside of black" sums up how 'the struggle' and regulatory socialising interactions of race binaries informs and locates women of African-Caribbean British heritage in the UK. For women who have been sexually abused in childhood the choices to relocate oneself or self-determine in regards to identification is thus complex and limited (see also Song, 2003 and Chapter 5 & 6).

With the social categorisation of 'black' being implicitly gendered male (see also Hill-Collins, 1991; Irvin-Painter, 1993; White, 2001) the concerns of African-Caribbean British/African-American women are lost within it. The unique positioning of African women within the West is a legacy of chattel slavery and the suspension of separate spheres for the purposes of capitalism during slavery. The invisibility of African-Caribbean British/African-American femininity within political discourses continues into the present through the prioritising of black male concerns and the blatant neglect of the realities of everyday life for African-Caribbean British/ African-American women's lives within these discourses of equality (see also Davis, 1982; Crenshaw, 1991; Hill-Collins, 1991). Additionally, I would argue that this context, whereby the status of the black female fluctuates between being hyper visible in regards to certain representations regarding her sexuality and becoming genderless within political blackness, is unbeknown on a conscious level even to ourselves (see also hooks, 1984).

Black female sexuality therefore is fraught with complex contradictions and negotiations: entwined within African-Caribbean British legacies of 'blackness' are complex contradictions of the self and the collective. The choice to become publicly visible by African-Caribbean British/black victim-survivors, to seek justice, is always compromised. If we speak as victim-survivors we implicate and reposition ourselves as 'other' by not adhering to scripts of what it means to be black and female. By negating our racialised identity in favour of gender we run the risk of being estranged from the political collective of blackness/men of 'homeplace'.

#### PROMOTING A POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH COMMUNITY

Fear of being deemed traitorous to African-Caribbean British communities by exposing them in an unfavourable light has been used in explaining why African-Caribbean British/black women choose not to disclose CSA (Lucea, et al,2013; Ullman & Filipas, 2005; White, 2001; Broch, 2013) and came up as a theme in the expert interviews.

*I think its culture and upbringing. You don't do that, you don't talk to anyone, you don't call people's name in the street, those sorts of things but partly it's about feeling a need to transcend all the nasty stereotypes about our community and present as best an image as we can. It's very sad [Pause] it's a big responsibility I think (EID3).*

What is unclear is whether the need to continuously present a positive image of African-Caribbean British communities is based upon a need for victim-survivors to stay located within the familiarity of their communities, or the protection of African-Caribbean British communities from further negative scrutiny and judgement from the public world.

*I think we didn't know how to do it. I really think and partly this is because I now think through a lens of psychoanalysis as well as the other things, that there were some things that became too unbearable for us to even imagine! What so many of us have a history of it [CSA]...What does this say about our community then? And again I am trying to think retrospectively, so I don't know if this is right but I don't think it was articulated. I think that was the kind of implicit fear, how can we, how can we deal with such pain? (EID5).*

This participant outlines how inconceivable it is to acknowledge that ‘unbearable’ acts such as CSA are committed frequently by members of the African-Caribbean British community. Therefore, although this study considers the protection of the black male and the positive image of the African-Caribbean British/black community, as two separate strands, in reality these two aspects of black/African-Caribbean British community life are very much enmeshed.

The prevalence of CSA which EID5 is aware of provokes and upsets her: she asks “*what does that say about the community?*” reflecting the complicated relationship between the collective and the self for African-Caribbean British people. Her words express an unwillingness to conceive that there was no space for CSA to be articulated. The limited capacity or space to contemplate sexual abuse within African-Caribbean British communities at that particular temporal moment, and the fear of addressing anything other than racism is implied in her words in both the accounts above and below.

*I'm not sure that we could really deal with tragic ends... With someone who didn't survive it. We did have some suicides as well. I don't know whether we could have. I say I would want to hear the voices of women from then and now who have been subjected to sexual abuse. Do you think we created a space where we could talk about the deathliness and deadliness of this as well as your capacity to survive? I don't think we did! I don't think we did at all! I don't think as a movement we said, we will find a way to stay with both the capacity of understanding what made it possible for you to survive and to thrive but also with the bits that got killed off metaphorically. Do you understand what I mean? (EID5).*

As she asks these questions in retrospect, we may to some extent deduce that she is asking questions of herself.

*I: Are you saying that we [community] look at the death and the grief and the mourning from a racial path, but from no other aspect of ourselves? That race eclipses everything for example denying one's sexuality, or abuse? Denying the self for the community?*

*Yes, yes, or aspects of the self for the community. Or privatising the aspects of the self somewhere else I think. You should get us [experts] together as a group (EID5).*

Her response articulates the collective nature and sense of responsibility that African-Caribbean British/black people feel when our community is put under the spotlight regarding the actions of an African-Caribbean British individual. Furthermore, she implies that the black women's movement did not have the capacity to delve too deeply into the array of abuses experienced by women of African descent.

These reflections are supported by recent research which suggests that decisions to disclose are not based solely upon the individual's sense of agency, but rather are located in one's social context (Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010). The experts both reflected on why these issues were not public in the past, and wondered how much had actually changed. The precariousness of belonging and citizenship within African-Caribbean British communities in the UK appears to remain an issue.

In contrast to community protectionism, a different response is permitted when CSA has occurred within state or privately arranged child welfare provision; which supports the view that the African-Caribbean British community must be protected, or shown in a favourable light. One participant outlined the liberation that African-Caribbean British/black victim-survivors felt when the sexual abuse occurred within the public domain of local authority care.

*Oh yes. Now let me see if I am just making that up or whether I've got anything to base it on, because my gut reaction is, of course it is because you're not criticising your own community, you're not criticising the family, you're pointing the finger at 'other' and that's so much easier to do. And it's easier to say, you had no responsibility in that setting. So my instinct is that, that would be right. Yes I hear it much more about women who have been in care, than from black women who were with their own families (EID3).*

The suggestion here is that it is easier to speak of experiences of CSA when the abuser can be deemed an 'other': there is more space to speak of cross-ethnic abuse. *"It's easier to say, you had no*

*responsibility in that setting*". Additionally, although CSA may be viewed as common in African-Caribbean British communities has argued by Wilson (1993, see quote on p.20) within western welfare /social support agencies (Wyatt, 1985) within African-Caribbean British communities it is portrayed as a "white man thing".

#### KNOWING AND NOT KNOWING

Two participants maintained that CSA was never openly referred to within African and even Caribbean societies. Rather mothers, grandmothers, aunts in local regions operated a system of 'knowing'. This 'knowing', entailed steering girls away from known perpetrators: girls were just advised, with no explanation, to avoid particular men.

*"Keep away from Uncle Johnny down the road" where and she's talking about. All the adult women know that Uncle Johnny touches girls up, exposes himself, so as a parent you keep your child away from Uncle Johnny, but nobody talks about that or nobody challenges Uncle Johnny, but everybody knows. Going back to what we were talking about, nobody's talking, it's just keep away from that strange man down the road (EID4).*

Another participant argued that children were not informed of known perpetrators because many African and Caribbean cultures are reluctant to educate young children in matters of a sexual nature for fear of sexualising the child prematurely.

The historical Yoruba/Igbo proverb of *"It takes a village to raise a child"* was viewed by West Africans and Caribbean communities as a means of safeguarding children as all members of the village community would collectively raise and protect children who were known to them (Healey, 1998; Spirasi, 2006). This not only implies a supposed shared African history but further illustrates the links which continue to influence African-Caribbean British communities, in regards to the socialisation of children especially girls.

*They think that saying it will sexualise the child. Because what they used to be able to do was to keep the child; everybody knew the child. You know it takes a village to raise it; everybody*

*knew the child. Even if the child didn't know about the impact she was having everybody's mother knew. So everybody's mother looked after that girl and the bullies would have kept their sons in check. So she didn't have to know she could still be a little girl; yes. And the mother's would talk; "Come here sit down", she wouldn't know why she'd be asked; she would just sit down; so we the grownups took responsibility and wouldn't have to speak about it (EID3).*

Additionally, if all adults in the village, known as Uncle and Aunty because of their privilege as elders, have a collective role in socialising and raising a child, opportunities to sexually abuse become more possible, as under this system questioning an adult's access to another's child is viewed as disrespectful. The above comments further suggest a 'Lolita' aspect to the surveillance of young girls in the community. In this respect great emphasis is placed on the physical attributes and supposed seductiveness of a young girl over adult male sexuality.

*But also, with so many of us in care as soon as you pubesque you become particularly vulnerable. I'm African and we are big, we pubesque early. I pubesqued at nine. So the abuse starts then, basically, so at the time I'm back with my mother at thirteen that's just part of my life [Voice grows quiet]... Because they pubesque earlier they are more vulnerable. And I think their mothers are letting them down because they've not been overtly protective. We need to be overt you know? It's perfectly fine to say to your kids don't talk to strangers. We need to more often to say, and mind Daddy! Yes we do, we need to say, and mind Daddy [voice drops] (EID3).*

This early puberty argument could be said to place responsibility for CSA on victim-survivors, or their mothers for both her corporeal development and for not monitoring or curbing her father's actions. Once again the black/African-Caribbean British male is relinquished of any responsibility for his actions, rather it is the girl's physical appearance that precipitates the abuse. This contribution raised further questions as to what constitutes a child culturally (Korbin, 1987a.; 1987; Obikeze, 1999; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009). What EID3 outlines above is reminiscent of Jones & Trotman Jemmott's (2009) findings in their study of CSA within Eastern Caribbean communities and the accounts of victim-survivors in this study (see also Chapters 5 & 6).

## CONCLUSION

Contrary to popular perception the expert interviewees argued that there was no organised public agenda for activism on CSA by Brixton Black Women's Group (BBWG) or the Organisation of Women of African and Asian descent (OWAAD). Attempts at consciousness-raising, where issues relating to sexuality and CSA could have emerged, were thought, at the time, to distract from the political struggle for race inequality. With only one participant recalling ever speaking of her CSA amongst friends and family this study cannot deduce what type of support existed for victim-survivors within African-Caribbean British communities.

Participants explained that during that specific time to speak of such things as sexual abuse occurring within African-Caribbean British communities was too contentious. Fear of external agencies and public scrutiny might have a negative impact on African-Caribbean British communities and especially black men, findings consistent with work, primarily from the US, in which culture - both inside and out - informs and becomes a barrier to disclosure for non-white women (hooks, 1982; Agathonos-Georgopoulou, 1992; Mennen, 1995; White, 2001; Tyagi, 2001; Baynard, Williams, Siegel, & West, 2002; Katerndahl D., Burge, Kellogg, & Parra, 2005). In the case of African-Caribbean British communities, race solidarity, isolation and fear of further racism and scrutiny, took precedence over gender and the sexual victimisation of African-Caribbean British women and girls. The experts suggest that racism and the protection of the African-Caribbean British male and community was a primary factor in regard to African-Caribbean British victim-survivors' decision to (not) disclose (see also, Alaggia, 2001; White, 2001; Ullman & Filipas, 2005). More detailed analysis of the interviews, however, revealed that everyday acts of racism were not the sole reason for the continuance of silence on CSA. Rather racial stereotypes of black sexuality and a precariousness of belonging in the UK played a part. In order, not to draw further attention to African-Caribbean British communities by reinforcing racist beliefs and myths around black sexuality a stance of not only silence but one which actively sought to promote a positive image of African-Caribbean British people's was taken, especially if disclosing had

the potential to provide ammunition to external bodies which may overly penalise black men. Therefore, racism in all manner of guises appears to be a significant factor in the continued silence on CSA within African-Caribbean British communities during the 1970s and to mid-1980s.

## CHAPTER 5: COCONUT MILK AND THE “THE PRISM OF RACE”

### INTRODUCTION

This is the first chapter drawn from in-depth interviews with victim-survivors. It explores whether identity and belonging are significant in how women come to understand their histories of sexual abuse and thus the avenues of support they feel are available to them. Throughout this study participants have suggested in various ways that racial binaries of black and white impacts and affects personal and collective agency. The victim-survivors and the experts both discuss how blackness has, at times, taken precedence over the plurality of identities they embody, including gender.

Manning Marable (1995) argued that black people see every aspect of life through a ‘prism of race’, thus supporting the premise that race trumps gender in our lives, possibly even in regard to sexual violence. If this is the case then African-Caribbean British victim-survivors’ ‘space to speak’, coping strategies and the options available to them to gain meaning may be compromised through this imposed or assumed racialised standpoint. Women’s experiences of CSA, and the resources of support and justice they believe are available to them, must therefore be explored through prisms of racialisation and feelings of belonging as citizens of the UK. This is what this chapter does.

### THE CONNECTION OF RACIAL ABUSE AND CSA

Previous studies from the US (Wyatt, 1985; Russell, 1986), have suggested that a victim-survivor’s present circumstances may inform and affect their understanding of sexual abuse experiences from their childhoods. The Wyatt (1985) study during the mid-1980s identified trust as an issue for the African American participants, who she argued were less trustful in adulthood and thus cautious to report incidents of CSA (1985, p. 17). However there is little or no articulation of the origins or nature of that mistrust. Russell (1986) proffered that African-American “*women who were living in more stressful*

*circumstances at the time of the interviews recalled their past experiences as more traumatic” (p.193)<sup>11</sup>.*

Russell does not overtly discuss racism as a factor affecting African-American victim-survivors recollections of CSA. Neither does she expand upon whether a difference in measurement existed between African-American women whose lives were not stressful. However, she implies that there is a difference in regard to the everyday lives of African-American victim-survivors compared to victim-survivors of non-African American descent.

More recent research into culture and CSA from outside of the UK (Tyagi, 2001; West, Williams, & Siegel, 2000) also found that migrant and African-American, African-Canadian women tend to focus on more recent abuses over CSA experiences in childhood. Yet although these studies identified culture and race as mitigating factors on how migrant and women of African descent in the West gain meaning regarding histories of CSA, they do not clearly name racism, perceived or actual, as impacting women’s agency. Rather the emphasis has tended to focus upon women choosing silence in order to protect black males and the black communities (Crenshaw, 1991; Hill-Collins, 1991; West, Williams, & Siegel, 2000; Tyagi, 2001; Alaggia, 2001; White, 2001).

Race/racism may have been implicitly present within previous studies yet as the lines between ethnicity, culture and race have become increasingly blurred, especially as biological race has now been re-categorised as a political and social construct (see Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 2000; Gunaratnam, 2003). Racialisation and its by-product of racism may have become obscured or ‘unspoken’ within these previous studies on CSA due to the more politically correct rephrasing of it to culture and ethnicity within political and general public discourse. Stuart Hall (2000) argued that in regard to ethnicity, and I would argue culture, that the more these terms are employed and fixed as a substitute for race, that they inadvertently represent race even when that term is supposedly being contested.

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<sup>11</sup> Hypothesis suggested by Judith Herman. Personal communication to Russell (1985).

Borrowing and expanding on Russell's (1986) "measure of trauma" (p.138) this chapter seeks to establish whether a connection exists between sexual abuse and racial abuse experiences and whether the latter has some influence on how African-Caribbean British victim-survivors rate the 'level of effect' of CSA from childhood into adulthood. It further seeks to examine whether the 'unspoken' element of racism, both personal and structural, amplifies 'levels of effects' measurements for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors themselves by exploring the women's early experiences of direct and indirect encounters of racial abuse. This exploration leads to a discussion of whether embodiments of race, early and present experiences of racism, complicates how CSA is measured and understood.

The next section examines the women's assessments of CSA and support services. Subsequent sections will examine the women's measurements of effect for CSA and racism; race, gender and mistrust; African-Caribbean British home and good girl; mistrust of public agencies; identity and representation as barriers to accessing support services; specialist African-Caribbean British sexual violence support. The final section discusses what is lost or gained by locating or regulating oneself through notions of race loyalty (White, 2001) in regard to black on black sexual violence.

#### WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH/BLACK WOMEN AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The Wyatt (1985) study during the mid-1980s identified trust as an issue for the African American participants in her study, who she argued were less trustful in adulthood and thus cautious to report incidents of CSA (1985, p. 17). There is little or no articulation of the origins or nature of that mistrust.

Studies specific to the UK (Kalathil, 2011; Thiara & Gill, 2012; Chigwada-Bailey, 1997; Wilson, 1993; Bogle, 1987) exploring differing forms of violence against women and girls from African-Caribbean British and South Asian British communities have identified the reluctance of black/African-Caribbean British women to approach support services, statutory and voluntary, because of institutional racism and the fear that black men will be treated unjustly. Although support services for example, rape crisis

centres, do not have any interaction with perpetrators, the view that African-Caribbean British men could be further collectively vilified was a significant barrier to one (n=7) participant, Angel.

The women further outlined a 'gendered' distrust of women from within and outside of the African-Caribbean British community (see also Chapter 6). This mistrust was more intense with respect to white females and hence influenced their decisions whether to approach and engage with professionals within existing support provision. Furthermore, the mistrust outlined appeared to be influenced not by personal experiences of attending support services such as Rape Crisis Centres, but by actual and perceived interactions with social welfare services, for example social services. This is not new knowledge, however, when connected to experiences of CSA and the reluctance of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors to approach existing services it provides possibilities for greater and more meaningful analysis and understandings.

#### THE PRISM OF RACE AND CSA

The victim-survivors were asked to rate the impact of racism and CSA on their lives using a Likert scale of: greatly affected, moderately affected, mildly affected, or none at all. They were asked: "Which best describes the effect of racism/ CSA on your adult life?" The word CSA replaced racism in the question for the rating for CSA.

Four of the seven women assessed the impact of racism' on their lives as having a "great effect". Bianca saw the effect as "*moderate*" whilst Sharon stated that she "*didn't know*". Yet when compared to the measure of effect for CSA on their lives only three women rated this as having a clear 'great effect' (see Table.1).

The women were asked to recall significant incidents of racism in their lives which had prompted their measure of effect.

*At age like 5 my mum my sister and me were approached by the National Front and we were spat at and chased down the road.*

*At school, kids were they would call me Paki [Laughs] I wasn't a Paki. You know back in the seventies I would be called black man white man in my first week in school. I just looked at this girl and I was like your initials are NF anyway, so I would expect that from you...Most probably not being picked first for the team, for something because I was black or mixed race. It's just those things. Some of it you just think, oh phew, you bloody ignorant gits and that was it! (Sar).*

Sar here notes that although she had experienced racism from white people, her sense of rejection or un-belonging stemmed from the rejection of not being picked first for a team because of her ethnicity. Yet Sar appears to have rationalised her encounters of racism, putting them down to the ignorance of her abusers.

Similarly, Maria recalled her first encounters of racism as a child involving personal experience of running from the National Front.

*When we were young we had to run from National Front... we used to have like race riots and things like that. I remember when the [major racist incident] happened and they wanted to meet all of us black people... They wanted to fight us and all that sort of thing. You know everywhere you went you were called Nigger and Sambo. Remember [laughs] Sambo? (Maria).*

Although Maria recalls being chased by the NF her recollection of this event does not appear to have caused her any real trauma. However, her recollection of the (major racist incident) seems to have had somewhat of a lasting impact, possibly because as a child she lived in the area where the incident occurred. Her reference to “*race riots and things like that*” suggest that the riots had very little effect on Maria, as did being called “*nigger and sambo*”, which caused her to laugh aloud on recollection.

Porsha could not recall any personal incidents of racism during her adolescence. However, as a young girl of 5 years she witnessed her father being stopped and questioned by the police whilst she, her mother and siblings were sat in the car. Although this incident did not happen to Porsha, witnessing the racial abuse of her father appears to have had a ‘great effect’ on Porsha’s impression of state agencies especially the police.

*My dad got stopped by the police and I was young in the back of the car and I always knew my dad to be quite dominant and it was the first time that I saw someone you know a group of people verbally abuse him and he couldn't really respond or do anything about it and he [policeman] was quite like rude to my mum and us. I saw him [father] like looking back at us a lot like not wanting us to see him react but yeah I was quite young; I'd say I was about five (Porsha).*

Ciara also measured the effect of racism on her life as “great”, she outlines her reasons below.

*There was one incident where I was walking up DDD High St and a man started making monkey noises at me out of his van... I've got a white friend called K and we sat in the park and an old Irish guy he was like, “oh there wasn't much of you coloured people around” but I don't think he was racist that's just the older generation they talk a little bit different. But I can't say that I've really experienced anything. There was a time in Southampton when the guys shouted, “black cunt”. One of the guys that was with us, a mixed race boy bumped into him by accident and he carried on walking and he, shouted, “Oi you black cunt!” I was quite mortified at what I'd heard but nothing has really been directed fully at me. I think it's maybe more of a man thing. A black man thing! ... Oddly enough my best friend, he's a man, he was going out with a girl in Southampton we went raving with all these white people and I felt really uncomfortable because I was like, what happened, where are the black people? (Ciara).*

Once again the experiences of racial abuse that Ciara recalls are, in her opinion, not particularly traumatic. The incident where the van driver made monkey noises at her doesn't appear to have upset her too much. Ciara's understanding of the scenario in the park with the elderly Irish man is insightful. The age of the abuser is often taken into consideration when weighing up racial abuse experiences with many of them being seen as ignorant and or unfamiliar with African-Caribbean British/black people rather than intentionally racist. However, the incidents in Southampton differ, and could be argued to intrude upon Ciara's 'being' invoking a sense of alterity. Hearing the words “black cunt” she describes how she is jolted into reality by this racially gender assault upon her person. This produces what can be termed a sense of hyper-alertness to the situation where she suddenly realises that she is racially isolated with the exception of the dual heritage male.

Ciara's realisation that she is alone without anyone with whom she can identify with ethnically provides us with a greater understanding of why the collective of blackness is where most African-Caribbean British people feel they belong or are located and thus to whom they are loyal to, as described by the participants throughout this study. Being a sole African-Caribbean British/black female in a predominantly white milieu has been, and may still be, perceived by many African-Caribbean British people as precarious or risky in regard to personal safety.

Interestingly, all the incidents outlined demonstrate how the onus of understanding or gaining meaning of incidents of racial abuse are placed on the abused not the abuser, and thus resonates with the fear of being blamed characteristic amongst CSA survivors in their quest to understand whether they were to blame or were complicit in their abuse (Kelly, 1988; Hall & Lloyd, 1993).

Although Sar expressed that CSA had a 'great effect' on her life when she begins to explore the possible consequences of CSA on her adult life, the uncertainty of knowing if her actions, thoughts and behaviours were/are, directly linked to this demonstrates the continuous ambiguities regarding the self which may be produced by CSA. The 'betwixt and between' of not knowing who you could have been denies any certainties regarding autonomy. Such uncertainty reduces agency, implied in the confusion Sar she feels regarding her sexuality, especially what she terms "*proper intimate relationships*".

Porsha also answered 'great effect' on the CSA measure of effect scale.

*It had a great effect. An absolutely huge effect. I think I just kind of came to a point, it's been a journey but I think I went from one extreme to another where I didn't really want anyone to tell me anything. I became quite, I felt repressed for so long that I just wanted to make my own decisions and became a bit bossy and didn't really listen. I think it was a good thing it might have been a bit extreme but it was an extreme that I think I needed to go through you know? (Porsha)*

Her emotional responses are understood as swinging between extremes. Yet Porsha regards her pendulum reactions as a “good thing” even though it may have gone against traditional African-Caribbean British socialisation practices where parents are often overly authoritarian and controlling of children (Reynolds, 2005). She suggests that her behavioural switches can be understood as a means of claiming back her experience from members of her family and friends whom she felt had somehow hijacked any opportunity for acknowledging and naming her own experience of abuse.

Porsha continued to discuss the ways CSA had influenced her behaviour.

*I feel that I did courses and spent so much time doing stuff that would have been deemed right by my dad and other people. I spent so much time doing that like going on these little courses and some of them I failed on. It was probably because of that element and what was going on in my home life... I really want my son to blossom within himself, have a voice make his choices and speak to me. I want to feel like I'm that person he can speak to (Porsha).*

Here we see an on-going uncertainty that Porsha feels about her education. She is not sure whether she failed due to her own capabilities or what she implies as her troubled “home life”. In regards to parenting she expresses her desire for her son to be able to be himself, and know that he can speak with her on any matter. The importance for Porsha that her son “blossoms” is revealing. What she appears to be implicitly revealing is the harm her performance of coping had on her subjectivity and well-being. Her statement implies that the response of her family and friends whereby she was denied opportunities of processing the sexual abuse in her own way influenced and has had a transformative effect on both her parenting of her son and her sense of autonomy. Therefore, her measurement of a ‘great effect’ includes finding ways of countering traditional African-Caribbean British socialisation practices with ones which do not require such blatant performances of being strong or a good girl. The ‘good-girl’ performance is examined in more depth in a subsequent section.

Table3: Assessment of Impact of CSA and Racism

Impact of CSA on life	Greatly affected	Moderately affected	Mildly affected	None at all	Impact of Racism on life	Greatly affected	Moderately affected	Mildly affected	None at all	Don't know
Sar	√					√				
Bianca		√					√			
Maria			√			√				
Ciara	√	√	√			√				
Angel		√					√			
Porsha	√					√				
Sharon			√							√

Angel measured her experience of CSA as having a “moderate effect” on her life. Her own words appear to contradict this.

*Not speaking out in public I can't do it. The way that I dress because I noticed that when I go out I wear more provocative clothes than I do in the day. It's not to attract men; but it is in a way. I just feel that's the only way that I am going to attract someone is like that. But I don't want to attract someone because I want a relationship. I really want to have a happy family but I am scared of the sex. I am scared of what they are going to think of my parents. I'm scared, it's just scary! I will try to find anything to stop them from being with me... [me].. No I never feel hurt but sometimes I feel like I need to get some glass; like me favourite film is "Face Off" and I just want to get the glass and go swish and take, I wish I could just take my face off! (Angel).*

The depth of feeling in this extract is clear, as are the contradictions Angel is trying to resolve. Her anxieties are so strong she implies that she sabotages any possibilities of obtaining her dreams. Angel reiterates that she never feels ‘hurt’ because of her sexual abuse. However, the imagery of self-harm she describes sits uneasily with her moderate effect assessment. The disparity in how the women measured the impact of CSA and racism on their lives suggests that such a scale by itself, may not be an optimum method of assessing the impact of or understanding the effects of either CSA or racism in the women’s lives.

Wyatt’s findings (1985) identified racial physical characteristics as a contributory factor in how women justified experiences of sexual abuse. Foregrounding the corporeality of racialised gender as a rationale for African American and African-Caribbean British men’s continued sexual abuse of young girls (see also Chapter 4) was also found in this study, and recent studies in the Caribbean (Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009). However, the manner in which Angel sees and employs her racialised physicality differs in that she used her body to attract men who have on occasion raped her when she had wanted

to end the relationships. She also outlined that she engages in self-mutilation because her father told her she is “ugly”.

*I have been raped three times... I knew what he was going to do because he phoned me and said, “If you don’t open the door you are going to see what happens, so you better open the door!” He had a knife to my throat. He took the knife from my kitchen and did what he did... I’m ugly and stupid and fat; nobody would want me. People have said that I am ugly, but mostly my Dad says it. I deserve to be punished that’s why sometimes I do myself harm as well! (Angel).*

Similarly, Bianca rated her CSA as having a “moderate” effect.

*It hasn’t really affected me greatly. It has had some kind of impact but I would say a little maybe in-between. I think I’ve learned to be a man pleaser because my mum was.*

*Q. Is that to do with your mum, or the CSA?*

*Well it must have been the abuse, I don’t know? Maybe part of me thinks that all men kind of see you if you are good looking and attractive or easy going that sex is the next step (Bianca).*

Bianca’s words suggest that rather than see herself as a victim of sexual assault by an older man she wonders if her physical features and personality, shaped by her mother, may have influenced his behaviour. In her interview Bianca shape shifts in relation to identity.

Ciara’s response was interesting in that she initially answered “mild effect” and then upon reflection revises her answer to “great effect”.

*It depends on the stage of my life, to be honest.*

*Q. Okay that’s interesting...*

*Because when things are going well it really doesn’t have that much effect on me so mild effect. But when things are going bad it really has a great effect on me. So I would say great, but then it’s all about the situation for me (Ciara).*

What Ciara outlines here echoes Russell's (1986) observation that the African-American participants in her study used their current life circumstances to gain meaning as to the impacts of CSA on their adult lives. Russell found that African American victim survivors tended to rate the trauma of their CSA as having a "great effect" (1986, p. 193) on their adult lives. Ciara did not connect this to current stressful everyday life experiences, but she was the one participant within this study whose living conditions at the time of her interview demonstrated the messiness or 'underneath' of Crenshaw's (1991) intersectional oppressions. Ciara's everyday life could be argued to have been severely disadvantaged as a direct consequence of her sexual abuse - neglect, physical abuse and the poverty in which she was raised, and continues to experience.

*For the first four years I lived with my Nan because my mum couldn't take care of me. I think her abuse put her in hospital for a while...I moved out because of my mum's husband and got my own hostel. Then I shackled up with my boyfriend and he started hitting me and I didn't really know much different because my mum used to beat me and then say she loved me. Because my mum was a heavy weed smoker and she was partial to a drink to say it in a nice way...Why did you choose him over me? I come up with my conclusion of the money situation...She said "well I'm not giving you money to go to school anymore when you are not going". So we used to go to this guy's house he was an older guy he owned a shop as well. Sometimes he would be there and sometimes he wouldn't, but he would always be there to let us in and he would like give us weed and alcohol... (Ciara).*

Although she does not explain the nature of her mother's illness her words indicate that she believed her mother was hospitalised due to her own history of sexual abuse. She implies that her mother's reliance on drink and drugs may have contributed to the family struggling financially and hence her mother's reluctance to return to being a single-parent by separating from her abusive partner who contributed financially to the household.

Additionally, because she was a serious truant in secondary school her mother refused to give her lunch money, even though she was not at home during school hours. Without lunch money she and a friend would spend the school day at the home or business premises of an older African-Caribbean

British man who would provide the girls with drugs and alcohol. Ciara did not clarify whether she experienced any sexual exploitation or abuse during these visits. It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate why women/mothers are discreetly complicit in CSA and CSE cases. Although women as perpetrators of CSA are in the minority (Kelly, Burton, & Regan, 1998) the role of women in sexual abuse cases has tended to be downplayed possibly in order not to encourage 'mother blaming'. However, what Ciara suggests that intersections of oppression position mothers in places where their options are severely limited.

Sharon and Maria both assessed the impact of CSA as "mild". Similar to Porsha, Sharon outlined that the area she felt her CSA had impacted the most was on her education.

*Because higher education came at a later stage for me. I think it was 2003 that I achieved my first degree and between 2003 and 2009 when I pursued my Masters I was still dealing with some kind of emotional problems... I still feel that the impact on my dyslexia does impact on my confidence to a level. And I don't like the idea or feeling inadequate at that level. (Sharon).*

Sharon's blames her late entry into higher education on CSA, as she had been 'dealing' with emotional problems. Her reference to dyslexia is somewhat confusing a response regarding her thoughts on the impacts of sexual victimisation. Rather than speaking of sexual abuse she discusses the impact of dyslexia on her self-confidence. Maria also expressed that CSA had only a "mild affect" on her adult life.

*I will say mild. Only reason I say mild is that we are very family orientated and when we are all together then you have to see if him; he's invited, and it's like he has to come [very low whisper] "Why does anyone invite him?" (Maria)*

Maria's initial response of "mild" effect is almost immediately called into question when she begins to discuss how she feels when her abuser may potentially be invited to a family gathering. At several points during the interview Maria would erupt into anger or become almost childlike when she spoke of her abuser.

Q. So it is only when you have to see him that it has an impact?

Yes because I don't think about him or it at all. It's only like I said as I'm starting to get older now I don't know why it is bothering me now? When maybe it should of, when I was growing up at that time.

Q. What are the things that are bothering you now?

Because I just think he's got granddaughters and my niece, she's only 11 and she is well developed for 11 and they are always together. I am thinking if only I could tell her mum to watch out to look something? Because he's got R now and she is six and they are always like that [low whisper and crosses fingers to indicate closeness]. I just can't; remember they are his granddaughters. He may say, "Don't tell your mum". Because when he came here two weeks ago he had U with him and I said to her, "Where are you and your granddad going? And she said, "To the cemetery" and she said, "And then we are going back to granddads"; and I'm thinking. I think it is since he got the grandchildren; I'm thinking you dirty bastard! I hope you ain't troubling them! ...

Q. Would you ever confront him or report him to the authorities?

Nah, nah; I don't think so. No I don't think so! I would just go straight and stab him. I would stab him or shoot him if I had a gun or something. I don't understand why I never stabbed him or something? But those sorts of things don't go through your head does it? Even as teenager it doesn't go through your head (Maria).

What Maria outlines is complex and layered. What she articulates is a fear based in personal 'knowing' or understanding of her abuser and his possible grooming methods. His 'closeness' to his granddaughters has caused her to recall her own abuse and thus has made her suspicious of his actions toward them. Although Maria is worried for her grand-nieces she did not see reporting her brother to the authorities as an option open to her as a teenager or now in the present as an adult. Her response echoes Evan Stark's (2007) concept of coercive control (see chapter 2) in that her agency is constrained and regulated by African-Caribbean British communities' mistrust of white public agencies, and the possibility that it is she who may be displaced from her community and family if she reports the abuse.

Therefore, even though Maria is a grown woman supposedly equipped with the power to address her abuser and gain some form of justice for herself whilst also protecting younger females in her family, her situated power is diminished when she contemplates turning to the public world for justice and support. Rather than approaching external agencies or turning to her family to protect her grandnieces she imagines causing him physical harm; *“I would stab him or shoot him if I had a gun or something”*. Maria words clearly demonstrate how race impacts and informs her sense of agency.

The measure of affect given by the women supports the data from the expert’s chapter in regard to race taking precedence over the personal. Over half of the women - four out of the seven victim-survivors - rated racism as having greatly affected them into adulthood. Three women rated CSA has greatly affecting their lives. However, it should be noted that Ciara explained that the effects of CSA fluctuated depending on her present circumstances. This was not the case for her measure of effect for racism which she rated as ‘great’. Only Sharon could not rate the effect of racism on her adult life. However, it is important to note that she did not choose the ‘none at all’ option.

#### RACE, GENDER AND MISTRUST

Where previous research has identified the issue of trust as a significant factor in enhancing women’s understanding and help-seeking after histories of CSA (Courtois & Watts, 1982; Fong-Beyette & Josephson, 1987; Hall & Lloyd, 1993), the women in this study did not initially express mistrust toward sexual violence support agencies. Rather they described a mistrust of white women. The perception, real or not, that the majority of sexual violence support services are staffed by white women may have some bearing on African-Caribbean British women’s decision not to approach sexual support services. Maria’s childhood memory of interacting with young white girls in school suggests that racially gendered mistrust may stem from childhood inter-personal experiences.

*Sambo and Gollywog that’s what they know about Gollywog you know or monkey but at the end of the day it didn’t bother me  
The white girls in our class used to call us monkey and yet they want to eat out of our crisp packet. You know and want to play*

*with you in the playground so when we was growing up, you are calling us Sambo and monkey and sitting beside us on the bench and calling us best friend (Maria).*

Maria's words offer insight into the origins of her mistrust of white women in adulthood. Her rebuke is born through contradictions of relations whereby at one moment she is called a racially abusive name, whilst simultaneously called upon in the next moment to share her crisps. She minimises the hurt of being interpellated as a racially gendered 'other' and her own grudging acknowledgement of her personal situated self as a black woman. Her mistrust of white women in adulthood appears to be grounded in her view that African-Caribbean British women are comrades whilst we have something that others want; "*sitting on the bench and calling us best friend*" yet rejected when we have served our purpose. This mistrust appears to have been reinforced in adulthood through her interactions with white female staff in public institutions, for example in her son's school: her response is consistent with recent research which finds a correlation between inequality and social mistrust (Fairbrother & Martin, 2013).

When asked if she would consider approaching existing support services to address her history of CSA she offers this explanation.

*I don't like them [white women] because nothing has changed. Nothing has changed! ...No I wouldn't go [sexual violence support] to any because they do silly things don't they? Because what they do is [voice drop low and mimics an overly kind soft voice] "How are we? Did it affect you then?" I think it is that silly voice that they put on. I don't like them (Maria).*

Maria conveys a sense of despair: *because nothing has changed. Nothing has changed!* In addition she implies that women who work within such services may be disingenuous and patronising.

Similarly, Angel affirmed that personal experiences of racism would influence her decision to approach existing services.

*Q. Do you believe that racism or experiences of racism could be a barrier to you seeking help and support?*

*I. Yeah I just feel that they wouldn't understand. I feel downgraded I feel like I wouldn't be able to go to organisations like that if I needed help (Angel).*

Although Angel states that she would not attend a sexual violence support service because they would not be able to understand racism, she does not describe such services as racist. Rather she maintains that they “*wouldn't understand*”. Attempting to explain to someone who has not experienced racism is not impossible, but can be complicated as such relational encounters have the potential to become contentious, especially if the other person is white. However, having to additionally articulate how race/racism and culture complicates living with histories of CSA may prevent African-Caribbean British women approaching services where they may feel restricted from speaking freely of all aspects of their lives. A similar view was echoed by the experts in this study, in the collaborative activism on various feminist agendas of the 1970s and 1980s (see Chapter 4). Again the victim-survivors clearly outline how race/racialisation impacts their decisions to approach external support agencies and thus their human rights entitlements to support.

#### THE AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH FRONT ROOM

The women in this study also suggested that the African-Caribbean British home was a significant contributor to mistrust. African-Caribbean British socialisation processes informed African-Caribbean British children of whom they could and could not trust, especially during the post-war era. Maria's account of listening to the adults speak about “everything” was not uncommon during the 1960s and 70s. The ‘front room’ was a central space for African-Caribbean British families because African-Caribbean British people were not welcome in many leisure establishments. The ‘front-room’ was the space where visitors would be entertained and contestations of racial oppression were aired and debated. If children were seen but not heard, we were routinely exposed to our parents and their friends discussing and venting all manner of negative and positive interactions with the outside world.

*They used to discuss everything, but they never spoke of anything if you know what I mean? When the women were in the front room you know they would just be chatting; we as kids*

*would be sitting down and watching the telly, because remember you are deaf but you are only watching the telly for them... On a Friday evening granddad used to have all his friends come around to play dominoes; and then you cook and making tea for this one, making tea for that one, mixing Guinness punch for that one, and doing this for that one so you would listen to them, talking about the wicked things these [white] people do... (Maria).*

Similarly, Porsha recalls being informed about racism and re-racialised through the accounts of the adults in the home, although she grew up in the 1990s. The difference in how these knowledges were transferred from one generation to the next may become evident in the tone of such transferences. Maria's parents were economic migrants who emigrated during the post-war years. This generation of Caribbean migrants were proud to be British subjects and members of the Commonwealth (Fryer, 1984; Goulbourne, 1991; Hacking I. , 2005; Lee & Schultz, 2012).

*I mean my views and interpretations on slavery and whatever are formed by my parents, by what I heard in my household... being angry at certain races just came up from my surrounding, from what I remember, it was what I was used to. You know it is a view that might not be directly said to you, but you kind of get a vibe, and you know from your lifestyle and the way we do things that things are very, people are still very angry and mistrustful of other cultures having a hidden agenda to put us down; and keep us down because that's where we once were. That ancestral hatred and anger and stuff, is imprinted on the children, on us growing up and we might not know that consciously but it is a feeling of anger and frustration (Porsha).*

Porsha offers a glimpse into temporal shifts in both African-Caribbean British socialisation processes and the impact of 1970s black political consciousness (her parents were Rastafarians) on the formation of her racialised self. In contrast to Maria's parents, Porsha's parents were more aware of their African heritage and seemed to actively instil in her a certain cultural way of being and acting.

These accounts demonstrate how subjugated knowledges are reproduced and transferred inter-generationally, which within African-Caribbean British families and communities perpetuate anger, frustration and mistrust. Porsha clearly outlines how her sense of self, her identity, has been informed through narratives of slavery and racial oppression.

Both Maria and Porsha's accounts enable us to understand how racialised people are situated on multiple levels. Maria's experiences with her white female associates at school could be seen as reinforcing the knowledges spoken in the setting of the front room whilst the women chat and the men play dominoes. These informal transfers could ultimately become a barrier to her even considering approaching support services:

*"I am racist, you know, I really am. I don't encourage nobody bringing anybody white into my house" (Maria).*

Porsha's understanding of her racialised positioning within the UK appears to be more informed by her parent's 'subtle' process of socialisation and resistance. Simultaneously, these subjugated knowledges are reinforced by the institutional racism that she witnesses as a young child, and thus appears significant to her and may possibly explain her desire to negate her own wishes and perform 'good girl', as already noted in a previous section by other participants.

### **'GOOD-GIRL'**

Porsha talked of a period after the abuse where she felt it necessary to please 'others', to negate her own feelings, desires and ambitions. The need to please family members, especially mothers, was something which emerged for two other participants (Bianca and Angel). Being a 'good girl' seemed to be an important characteristic of their African-Caribbean British girl and womanhood.

*My daughter said, "You know you've spent all your life being the good daughter, being the good mother"; I said, "I do because that's all I've been taught to fix things". Even up to this day that's all I do is fix things, even with my mother that's all I do is fix things. I don't mind because she's my mum but my mum never really taught me life's responsibilities but what did mum teach me? Just how to be a good girl really (Bianca).*

Here Bianca demonstrates the power and influence of the parental socialising process upon the agency of young children. Her response to her own daughter's observation of her performing 'good girl' appears tinged with an underlying tone of resentment, even regret, suggesting that she may have found being a 'good girl' disempowering and therefore does not want her daughter to emulate her. While she

states that she doesn't mind "*fixing things*" for her mother, she appears to think that her mother's sole legacy to her was to be a good girl.

Being a 'good girl' or good African-Caribbean British child also entails not speaking of sexual matters with African-Caribbean British communities and households. The conservative nature of African-Caribbean British/Caribbean communities has been discussed by previous scholars (Garfield, 2005; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009; Reynolds, 2005) echoed by sexual violence scholars in the Caribbean (Kempadoo, 2004; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009).

Angel's reason for performing 'good-girl' adds an additional dimension to the usefulness of this strategy. Being a good-girl enabled some semblance of protection for her mother and herself from her physically/sexually abusive father.

*Even with my dad and me having sex I still feel uncomfortable around him. I know that I am scared of him. But that's because if I say anything he always used to say I should be seen and not heard. So if I say anything I feel he will take it out on my Mother; because whatever I say he takes it out on my Mum. Whatever I do he takes it out on my Mum, so I try to be a good girl! (Angel).*

The socialising of African-Caribbean British girls to present a 'good-girl' image has been documented previously (Garfield, 2005; Reynolds, 2005) who have surmised this is a means of policing a girl's behaviour especially within the public for fear of encouraging further scrutiny or racist stereotypes and in safeguarding a young girl from sexual advances and harassment. Reynolds uses the Caribbean phrase '*tie the heifer and loose the bull*' (2005, p. 90) to illustrate the different socialisation practices imposed upon young African-Caribbean British children by mothers as both a safeguarding strategy and a form of resistance. However, expanding on Reynolds' (2005) differentials of gender socialisation practices by exploring Angel account above we begin to glimpse the trap that African-Caribbean British females face when and if they chose to tell about CSA committed against them by African-Caribbean British males.

The expert interviews and US research show that African-Caribbean British/African American people are aware, on both explicit and implicit levels, of how they have been historically constituted and interpellated within racially dualist processes and discourses of hegemonic whiteness (Althusser, 1971; Hall, 1996). The significance of this liminal 'knowing' for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors is in its ability to inform African-Caribbean British/black people of the limited options available to them in regards to 'being'. The normative stance of hegemonic whiteness produces an abundance of choice in 'being'. The interpellation or situated state of African-Caribbean British/black people, in opposition to hegemonic whiteness, necessitates the reduction of choice of 'being' for those people associated with race in order to reinforce the omnipotence of white privilege.

The prism of race that is the initial deference to what constitutes blackness outlined by Marable (1995) becomes apparent in the options available to African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA. Socialisation practices employed by African-Caribbean British families to keep their children safe from everyday acts of personal and structural racism ensure that the manner in which African-Caribbean British people act in the public world is weighed against the possibility of both implicit and explicit forms of racial oppression. Yet temporal shifts in attitudes to African-Caribbean British people must be considered in regard to what the victim-survivors have outlined in regard to both being a 'good girl' and African-Caribbean British socialising practices in general. Yet deciding to approach support services to assist with histories of CSA still appears complicated for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors in the present. Their words suggest that they possess an understanding of their situated selves as racially gendered persons. Consequently, they appear aware of what is expected of them by African-Caribbean British communities and how they may be represented externally as 'other' (see also Chapter 4) within the dominant discourses.

Therefore, African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis is used here to demonstrate the traditions for 'being' available to African-Caribbean British victim-survivors. Ann Phoenix (1992) found similar traditions in her work on race and class and early pregnancy amongst white working class and African-

Caribbean British teenage mothers in the UK. This study suggests that where performances of strong black woman have been justified as an historical form of resistance to white racism (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009; Garfield, 2005), African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis acts in a similar manner yet further enables the choices of that resistance to become visible. African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis therefore is presented here as the dominant option afforded African-Caribbean British victim-survivors to live with the both racial and sexual oppressions which will not be recognised structurally or within African-Caribbean British communities themselves (see Chapter 6 for in-depth discussion of this concept).

Viewing options through a racialised prism does not offer African-Caribbean British/ black victim-survivors much choice of being. Rather you are faced with the option to disclose and seek support or remain silent and stay within and belong to the collective of African-Caribbean British/black. Therefore, moving from a 'good-girl' stance to what I have termed African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis can provide victim-survivors with an outward veneer of resilience passed intra-generationally from mother to daughter to the impunity of CSA within African-Caribbean British communities and racism from wider society. The women outline the options available to them as racially gendered citizens in the UK in the following sections.

#### THE PRISM OF RACE AND SEEKING STRUCTURAL SUPPORT FOR CSA

This study and previous research has identified that women are fearful to speak of their experiences within their own communities for fear of condemnation by family and friends (Wilson, 1993; Crenshaw, 1989; Chigwada-Bailey, 1997; Tyagi, 2001; Alaggia, 2001; Gillum, 2008; Aronson Fontes & Plummer, 2010). In this context, it is relevant that five of the seven survivors interviewed did not see external agencies as a 'safe-place' for them to work through their histories of CSA. This is interesting because BME/BAME services, although limited, do exist and supposedly have been developed to engage with a diverse range of minority women, including African-Caribbean British women.

Five of the seven victim-survivors in this study revealed how the intersections of race and gender impacted on their decisions about seeking help from such agencies. The women felt uncomfortable, anticipating that they would be judged in a stereotypical manner by the white women whom they presumed staffed such agencies. When asked how many would approach such services five stated “No”; one answered “Maybe” with only one responding “Yes”.

The lack of culturally-aware services which African-Caribbean British women can see and identify with could convey a lack of interest in their experiences of sexual violence and even an unwillingness to truly engage with their lived realities of structural exclusion and socio-economic disadvantage produced through racialisation. Without ‘spaces of safety,’ for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors to speak of CSA what may be perpetually conveyed is the devalued status of black womanhood and the lack of human female entitlement to help and support which has underpinned and historically sanctioned the sexual victimisation of the black female body.

### **STRUCTURAL AND PERSONAL MISTRUST**

Only two victim-survivors could name a sexual support service provider. When asked if they were aware of any services which supported women who had experiences of CSA, Ciara named Rape Crisis, yet still answered “No” when asked if she would use such a service.

*Yes because we don't really trust white people. A lot of black people don't trust white people, because they put the white man into one category, that is the government, the mayor and normal white people in the same category (Ciara).*

Ciara's comments suggest that for African-Caribbean British women the distinction between structural, societal and individual relationships become blurred. When public policy and legislative agendas are deemed racist and discriminatory, structural mistrust can be transferred to individual relationships between black and white people(s). This mistrust appears to reproduce and reinforce racial difference, opposition and at times anger.

Maria also named Rape Crisis. She too stated that she would not approach any existing organisation for victim-survivors.

*Q. Have you ever been to any organisation for support with your experience of CSA?*

*No. I just don't think that I would go.*

*Q. Why?*

*Because like I said they would talk down to you wouldn't they? And make you feel, I think that's what they do they talk down to you. This is what I think they speak down to you and they make you feel like a victim and not like you have overcome it. They put on that stupid voice and no I think they bring you back to being a victim. And then all sorts of things would rear its ugly head. No, no, no I would never do that! But maybe if it was run by black people, maybe as I'm thinking I most probably would (Maria).*

Maria's refusal appears to be grounded in her belief that she would be patronised, 'talked down' to, she is also explicit about fearing any alignment to a status of 'victim'. However it is unclear from her words whether her fear of being brought "*back to being a victim*" is to do with her CSA or her race. Her reluctance to seeing herself as a victim is not uncommon amongst women with experiences of CSA (Lamb, 1999). Additionally, for many African-Caribbean British women the label of victim runs counter to the embodiments of black womanhood (West, 1999; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009).

bell hooks (1984) has argued that the feminist embrace of a patriarchal sexist ideology, which associated the feminine with the term 'victim', had the effect of ostracising many women from the feminist movement. The rebuke of the term by women who do not identify with being passive, powerless or helpless led feminists and black men alike to deem black women as "*so strong*". For the black man black women did not need to be active within the feminist movement (hooks, 1984 p. 45), and thus many weren't. However, one possible consequence of this particular form of racial patriarchy was silence on the subject of CSA within our communities. This silence, whereby racism was seen as the only violence in the lives of black women, may have influenced the implementation of initial support

services from the late 1970s onward, as African-Caribbean British women did not speak publicly about CSA within our communities.

Maria's reference to that 'stupid voice' is almost suggestive of an adult speaking to a child in a condescending manner. What she implies is an awareness of nuances of racially gendered relations of power and authority which exists within gender. Her perception of existing service providers as occupying a place of powerful authority has become a barrier to Maria approaching services. However she adds that if she were to speak with another black person that she would probably attend a support service. She did not specify gender in her comments suggesting that for Maria the most significant factor in any future therapeutic support would focus on commonalities of racial experience. However she may have taken it for granted that she would be working with a female member of staff due to the setting of sexual violence services.

Sar also commented on how certain support agency staff spoke to African-Caribbean British women. She suggested that their approach was not only condescending but often intrusive.

*Where someone who has phoned them to get some one to one counselling therapy that is what the person will need more than: "How is your health? And do you have a social worker? [mimics a posh voice] how old are you children?" Because that is what a lot of organisations do; services whatever, they want to dig deep within the rest of your world (Sar).*

The scenario described by Sar is interesting in that she appears to confuse third sector support services for adult victim-survivors with statutory agencies, for example, social services. What is interesting here is that she was a support worker in a statutory service until very recently. If Sar would be hesitant to approach an RCC with her work experience it suggests a confusion regarding the role of such agencies as RCC. Therefore, negative experiences with statutory agencies may further be a barrier to African-Caribbean British, and other women from diverse backgrounds, approaching sexual violence support services, if they fear they will encounter the same intrusive approach.

However, when Maria was asked why she thought no specific service existed for African-Caribbean British women, she outlined that it was not racism or the fact that African-Caribbean British women were marginalised. Rather, in her view it was the continued silence of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors on such matters that had not brought the issue to the attention of the public world: for her existing service provision should not be held responsible for a gap in provision.

*Q. Why do you feel there is no specific service for African-Caribbean British women?*

*Because we haven't said anything they don't know it exists do they? They don't think it exists (Maria).*

The fear of external scrutiny compounded the perception that statutory agencies and those who work with them are lacking in understanding the situated and cultural lives of African-Caribbean British women and are therefore not to be trusted. This was a significant factor, especially when women had previous experience of statutory and third sector support agencies.

*I was talking to a counsellor and I was saying about the door being locked and the potty. She then went and said to my doctor that she needs to refer me to social services because she thinks my son is in harm by his grandparents. So then social services came to my house and asked me certain questions and they asked him questions (Angel).*

This experience had a detrimental impact to seeking any further support for either herself or her son. Angel suggested that it was the lack of awareness or the ignorance on the part of her white counsellor and doctor regarding African-Caribbean British cultural practices that caused this unnecessary intervention.

*Yeah but in the end they closed the case. They realised it was just an old fashioned Caribbean way and he doesn't seem to be in any harm.*

*Q. And the people who came were they Caribbean?*

*I. The counsellor and the doctor?*

*Q. Were they Caribbean?*

*I. No.*

*Q. So how did they know it was just an old Caribbean way?*

*I. The social services guy who came was Caribbean. He was Jamaican.*

*Q. So is it a Caribbean way to lock the door with a potty in the room?*

*I. Yeah. (Angel)*

The scenario outlined by Angel supports Korbin's (1987a) contention that the 'act' deemed abusive must be placed within a cultural context. However, the lack of an understanding of temporality in regard to shifting or situated African-Caribbean British cultural practices placed both Angel and her child at risk. The intervention of the Jamaican male social worker may have clarified this particular situation.

However, reliance on a supposed cultural knowing or cultural competence, in the employment of people from the same or similar backgrounds can potentially present further risks for child protection. The supposed cultural knowledge enabled the social worker above to dismiss any concern by placing it within acceptable Caribbean norms (Lord Laming, 2003) and thus resonates with the Victoria Climbié case.

*Assumptions based on race can be just as corrosive in its effect as blatant racism... racism can affect the way people conduct themselves in other ways. Fear of being accused of racism can stop people acting when otherwise they would. Assumptions that people of the same colour, but from different backgrounds, behave in similar ways can distort judgments. (Neil Garnham QC, cited in Climbié Inquiry, Lord Laming, 2003, p.12).*

Culture is neither monolithic nor static. Rather it encompasses a vast amount of variables because it is shaped by a variety of factors. Equally, cultural practices are always in a state of temporal flux and reconstruction through constant interactive transfers with various location(s) and peoples (Song, 2003). Anthropological studies exploring the intersections of culture and childhood abuse and maltreatment have argued that culture and the upbringing of parents have been used to excuse and justify the abuse of children consciously and unconsciously (Korbin, 1987a; 2003).

In fact, Angel disclosed during the interview that she was still experiencing sexual abuse from her father. She locked the door when her son stayed at his grandparents; just as her mother had locked her in her room to protect her from her father's sexual advances. Therefore, the social worker's actions could in fact be deemed a form of gatekeeping to protect this particular family and the African-Caribbean British community from additional external scrutiny (see also Chapter 4).

However, Sar's comments below support Angel's in regards how much external agencies can be trusted by African-Caribbean British women. For Sar, the lack of a culturally-aware understanding has become a key barrier to African-Caribbean British women trusting such agencies.

*Oh, of course definitely. Because certain social workers and organisations people full stop have this view... we are not easy sometimes yeah, but if we see one of our children hitting another we are going to tell them off. And we are going to have a go at them because it's wrong. We are not going to say [mimics posh voice] "Oh darling don't hit the child over the head with a sledge hammer". We are going to say; [strong voice] "What do you think you are doing? Get downstairs to your room now". There are different ways that we are. Now you know which may cause problems in society because of the way we run our households, the way we talk and some people don't like it. It's cultural. And so you know there is more chance of a black woman having a social worker than a white woman having a social worker where there are the same issues (Sar).*

Her comments regarding more African-Caribbean British women having with a social worker reinforces the notion that African-Caribbean British women are targeted by such agencies merely because of our skin colour and the manner in which we raise our children. The continued scrutiny of African-Caribbean British women's parenting by agencies has become an additional barrier to African-Caribbean British women seeking assistance even when they are in need of support for themselves and their families (Spirasi, 2006).

The women in this study suggested that in some regards they did not feel that African-Caribbean British people felt a sense of belonging to the UK: and citizenship did not equal belonging. In fact, being deemed a citizen, yet not feeling that they belonged, further problematised their sense of entitlement to

seek support. Therefore, identity and representation in relation to help-seeking will be discussed in the following section (see also Chapters 4 & 6).

#### IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION AS BARRIERS TO SEEKING SUPPORT

Feeling that you can identify with those who work in a supportive capacity for CSA is an important factor, which has the potential to influence African-Caribbean British victim-survivors decision to approach existing support provision.

The fear of being labelled mentally ill is, I would argue, one of the great of concerns of people who have had this experience. The very nature and impact of CSA takes away one's sense of certainty about all aspects of our well-being: physical, psychological and spiritual. This fear, I suggest, is transcultural, as previous studies have shown (Wyatt, 1985; Russell., 1986; Finkelhor, et al., 1986; Tyagi, 2001). However, when racial stereotypes intersect with CSA, African-Caribbean British victim-survivors may be further deterred because of dominant discourses which automatically link CSA with mental health conditions. In the case of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors this mistrust is compounded and informed by the overrepresentation of African-Caribbean British people in the UK being diagnosed with such mental conditions as schizophrenia (Mental Health Foundation, 2015).

Therefore, if African-Caribbean British women present as not coping, it contradicts convenient dominant stereotypes of our innate 'strength' and thus both positions us as not 'black enough' to ourselves and the African-Caribbean British community, whilst further reinforcing dominant external medical discourses which suggests that we must be in need of mental health assistance.

However, Bianca's words disrupt any notion of a unified stance by African-Caribbean British women to approach support services, and thus demonstrate the heterogeneous nature of Caribbean communities in the UK. Bianca was the sole respondent who was willing to access an existing service, for example Rape Crisis.

*Yes I would have gone. Because it wasn't about them it would be about me and what happened to me. I would have gone to them to help, but because I wasn't making my colour an issue I probably wouldn't be expecting them to make. Because their colour wasn't an issue to me I wouldn't expect them to make my colour an issue for me. Because that wouldn't be why; that wouldn't be the problem. The problem would be what I've come to discuss with you. Do you see? (Bianca).*

Bianca's ability not to see her colour or culture as a barrier or issue to approaching support services was only supported to some extent by one other victim-survivor (Sharon) in this study who answered "maybe" to this question. The fact that Bianca would be willing to attend a service provider for support with her experiences of CSA suggests that she is able to see herself and others as non-racialised subjects and thus transcultural (Fukuyama, 1990) service provision where gender is the sole therapeutic consideration would appear sufficient for her needs.

Bianca's Trinidadian background problematises her sense of identification in a UK context. When positioned as a black woman within UK discourses of representation, she displays an awkward resentment to be positioned as such. Identifying more with her indentured Asian heritage and her present British status than her African ancestry she demonstrates a continuous contestation, albeit implicit, of her positioning with blackness.

*Q. When you think of black women, which words spring to mind?*

*Strong...*

*Q. Any others?*

*Bitter, love, reliable. See I want say smart but I don't think. You see some are but...*

*Q. Now which of the words you listed would you say best describes yourself?*

*Reliable, love, strong, and smart (Bianca)*

Bianca's comments appear to support Hall's (1990) analysis of the shape-shifting positionality of post-colonial subjectivity within the UK and Bhabha's (1994) notion of the emergent subject located within the liminal spaces of citizenship, identity and subjectivity enables a glimpse of the fluidity and flux of

African-Caribbean British identification and agency. Therefore, Bianca's comments demonstrate the complexities of identity: she may feel more comfortable working with a counsellor whose physicality does not resemble West African, and does not identify as black. By suggesting that black women are not "smart" and are "bitter"; but she Bianca is "smart" she repositions herself from outside of the racialised category black. Simultaneously, she repositions herself back within 'blackness' by claiming the adjective "strong" to describe herself.

Bianca's comments illustrate the complexities of lived experiences and situated instability of positioning occupied by subaltern people in the UK (Bogues, 2014; Hall, 1990). This frequent implicit repositioning, claiming, disclaiming renegotiation of the self is similar to experiences of disassociation endured by many CSA victim-survivors (Hall & Lloyd, 1993; Herman J. , 2001). Where it is interesting for this study is where race, gender and sexual violence, especially sexual abuse experienced in childhood, compound, intersect and disrupt 'being' for African-Caribbean British female victim-survivors; always positioned as 'other' thus creating a more deeply layered, often contested, sense of subjectivity.

Both Bianca and Sharon differed from the other five victim-survivors in this study as they were born outside the UK and thus spent their formative years in countries where the population were and are of predominantly African or black demographic: the negative effects of racialisation/racism where black and white are always starkly dualist and oppositional seem to have been minimal for both. The late process of racialisation in both these participants' lives suggest that their subjectivity is less hindered or informed in the same way as the remaining five participants in this study who were born and raised in the UK. When both these participants were asked to rate the effect of racism on their lives Bianca rated the impact as "moderate". Sharon did not give a rating, preferring instead to describe what she felt toward her mother's white partner who was one of her abusers.

*... even though he was white I didn't see it as a race issue I just saw it that he was an adult who was a paedophile you know preying on... I could have easily hated him you know because I've heard the reaction of one or two people who heard that he*

*was, one or two people of my race who learned that he was white and straight away they have that racial "how dare he so and so white South African, he has done this to you". But I didn't have that outlook I just saw him as an individual who abused children (Sharon).*

Sharon reveals here how race and colour complicate disclosure(s) for CSA survivors and their families. This was also an observation of the experts in this study and is consistent with previous research conducted in the US, Canada and more recently in the UK (Foundation, 2015; Gillum, 2009; 2008; Latta & Goodman, 2005; Tyagi, 2001). This appeared to be significant, especially for those women who were born and raised in the UK and their sense of citizenship and entitlement. Sharon's account of the responses and attitudes of those to whom she disclosed provoked an assumption that her abuser did so because he was white and she was black African. Consequently, the individual accountability of her abuser is lost and subsumed within collective historical discourses of white supremacy and actual and perceived acts of racism within the present; not his own individual acts of abuse. This is what Sharon herself rejects when she says '*I saw him as an individual who abused children*'. As with the experts (see Chapter 4), it appears that African-Caribbean British communities are more readily accepting of incidents of CSA which are perpetrated by white male abusers on black female bodies.

#### SPECIALIST AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH SEXUAL VIOLENCE SUPPORT

The victim-survivors were asked if they thought specialised services were still needed for African-Caribbean British women. This line of examination sought to establish whether the demand for specialised separate services called for during the mid-1980s by black British feminists was still seen as relevant for victim-survivors.

*I think one of the fears that we do have is fear of being judged. Being looked at like we are not a whole woman. With all the misconceptions that we have to, even though we cry we are looked at as weak... I see a benefit in both settings. If you were to have a multi-cultural group of survivors and a cultural group of survivors. I feel that if it is going to be a multi-cultural group coordinators of that group need to acknowledge and allow the group to understand that they acknowledge the distinct cultural differences in there. So you acknowledge that from the start.*

*Because ethnic minority I think, I mean ethnic minority groups from maybe the Caribbean have similar experiences as Africans because some of these experiences and friends that I have who have experienced CSA within family, and not being supported and their voices just being totally oppressed throughout childhood and even into adulthood are Caribbean have been Caribbean. I also have African friends that have experienced this. I think it would be extremely powerful for an ethnic group a black African Caribbean group to have an individual group for themselves. Because then it signifies or implies a full focus on their experiences and their support needs. I believe that we know what level of support is needed (Sharon).*

Sharon's hesitancy in regards to the benefits of culturally mixed groups may explain her "maybe" response as to whether she would approach existing services. She asserts that one of the key roles of support group facilitators has to be the acknowledgement of cultural difference within multi-cultural groups. By allowing women the opportunity to describe their specific cultural heritages and how they inform experiences of CSA, she suggests that commonalities of experience can emerge with cross-cultural dialogues. Her ideas resonate with Hays' (1996) recommendation for cross-cultural counselling as discussed earlier in this chapter, and Kalathil's (2011) findings in her UK study on mental health and African-Caribbean British women.

Additionally, Sharon can imagine the usefulness of separate groups for African and African-Caribbean British victim-survivors with facilitators derived from these specific cultures, which might be more powerful in establishing the support needs of African-Caribbean British/African women. Her use of "we" in the following statement: "*I believe that we know what level of support is needed*" instantly separates and 'others' those whom she perceives would be facilitating such a group. Her statement implies an implicit political black standpoint as the focus of attention is on the lived experiences of the women within it. Her claiming of women with similar diasporic histories, those of African descent coupled with her disclaiming of women from differing cultural backgrounds, suggests a rebuke of traditional knowledges held by 'others' in regards to what is best for African-Caribbean British/ African black victim-survivors with histories of CSA. The tone of this statement conveys mistrust towards those whom she implies have no real understanding of the positionality of women of African descent in the UK.

However, Sharon is also able to imagine how this mistrust could be overcome in regards to sexual violence support agencies future provision for African-Caribbean British women.

*I think it is very empowering to have and I think when you have actually strengthened the group and the group has really transitioned to grow itself, in self-esteem then I think it might be safe to mix the group multi-culturally. Because then you don't want to shock the other culture. Because most of the time I can say that if an English person was to hear the style of parenting of ethnic minority parenting, it might be shocking to them. I think also not to confuse the other culture too much it might be wise to separate. But when it comes to maybe community work then I think then boundaries don't need to be set. But when it is a group setting maybe separate would be better (Sharon).*

Angel concurs that an initial autonomous group for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors within sexual violence support agencies based on similar cultural backgrounds would be most beneficial.

*Q. Do you believe there should be specific services for African-Caribbean British survivors?*

*Yes. Because they will understand more.*

*Q. Should it be separate or joined within existing services?*

*Both I think it depends what you feel most comfortable with. (Angel)*

However, Angel's words suggest an awareness of the complexities of identity which compose the heterogeneous nature of African-Caribbean British communities in the UK and that women should have a choice regarding which setting is more comfortable for them.

However, Bianca prefers a culturally aware service provision that is open to all women, whilst noting that speaking to another woman of the same or similar background would make it easier.

*A woman is a woman. And although I said about black women being easier to talk to, I think it should be available to, I think it could be advertised as a black service, or the workers in there should all be black, but I don't think the person who is coming to seek advice should be targeted because a white person should be able to go to this place. A white person could go to a place where it is predominantly white and not get what they are looking for, and it could very well be that they walk into that place and get the advice they need. In that way you are killing*

*two birds with one stone and showing them that our culture can, and showing that we do go through things and give advice and what we says is equally as important as going into a white person (Bianca).*

Bianca here argues that making such a service accessible to all women could potentially deconstruct stereotypical myths regarding the capability of African-Caribbean British women to care and support women from diverse backgrounds. Bianca's remarks regarding the assumption that all white women are catered for within existing services is insightful. New migrant communities facing xenophobia and racism may feel that their experiences of isolation could better be understood by women from established migrant communities. Ciara also believed that a culturally-aware diverse service provision would be the way forward, especially because it reflected the changing demographic of the UK.

*I think it should be incorporated but take people's culture into, because you know black people, white people, Asian people, it should all be different. Like the Metropolitan Police, because we are the minority so to speak, so there should be six black, six Asian, six white to deal with the women who are coming in (Ciara).*

The option for African-Caribbean British women to speak with a counsellor from a different culture than themselves is as important as working with a practitioner from a similar background to themselves.

Where Thiara and Gill (2012) identified that African-Caribbean British women tended to confide in friends for support with histories of CSA this was not the experience of three of the victim-survivors in this study.

*Q. Do you have any friends who may have had experiences of CSA?*

*Yeah, yeah...*

*Q. What type of relationship is it; for example do you offer support to each other?*

*One of my friends doesn't discuss it; just won't discuss it. And my other friend I don't like to discuss it with because you get floods of tears and you get just too much; yeah just too much! (Porsha)*

*... And she said, did anything happen to you when you were growing up? And I said, 'why you asking me? Did anything happen to you?' She said yes. So I said same here and you know we poured more brandy. We spoke about it that day, once we spoke I don't know for the whole day and evening and then that was it kind of. Then at the back of my mind I was thinking I hope she don't tell no one. And I bet she was thinking, I hope she don't tell no one. But that is what I just assumed that she was thinking, but we never said, you aren't going to say anything are you? But it was just good to talk (Maria).*

*Q. With the knowledge that you all have regarding the CSA, do you offer each other support?*

*No not really because, well in not in detail. I mean we have spoken about what has happened but not like fully, fully in detail. We know it was very similar and more or less the same kind of case, at the same time of our lives (Ciara).*

These reflections do not clearly articulate why disclosure to friends did not create some form of ongoing support between them. However, where previous research (Thiara & Gill, 2012) has suggested that African-Caribbean British women prefer to seek support from friends the impression given is that the support is ongoing and substantial. Previous reports of support between African-Caribbean British victim-survivors could be deemed as misleading as the three participants above only revealed that they had disclosed experiences of CSA to friends.

This was the case with EID3 (see Chapter 4) where she and her friends met informally to discuss and ultimately clarify what their sexual experiences in childhood were. Paradoxically where the women in this study mistrusted white women, they also implicitly demonstrated a mistrust of women from within the African-Caribbean British communities also. What emerged was a type of communal gendered mistrust with many of the women outlining that they first disclosed their histories of CSA to boyfriends, uncles etc.

## CONCLUSIONS

The women expressed how in almost every aspect of their lives race/racialisation informed both direct /indirectly their sense of autonomy and agency. From childhood, African-Caribbean British socialisation

practices have influenced how the women the relationships within and outside of African-Caribbean British communities have been coloured by these socialisation practices. However, the importance of such practices for African-Caribbean British children has been to educate and equip them to live in what is often a racially hostile white society. Understanding and imparting the nuances of racism to young children is difficult to transfer intra-generationally. However, as the women have outlined childhood experiences of racism have impacted and reinforced the necessity of viewing their lives through a racialised lens.

Although none of the women measured their CSA experiences as having no effect at all, only two of the women expressed that CSA had greatly affected their lives. One further explained that she felt that the effects of the CSA oscillated depending on her present-day circumstances. However, those women who had rated their sexual abuse below 'great effect' often outlined very graphic and compelling ways in which they felt the abuse had impacted their lives.

More women outlined racism as having a significant effect on their lives. Where the women were asked to outline any acts of racism which influenced their assessment their recollections were mainly from childhood. These ranged from serious incidents where they were chased by far right political supporters to less traumatic episodes of racist name calling. However, these early experiences of racism combined with indirect experiences of racism appeared to inform the women of whom they could trust and where they belonged.

Race and racism did not appear to influence how the women gained meaning regarding their experiences of CSA. However, race and racism was a factor in help or support seeking choices for the women. The women perceived that support provision for CSA was predominantly led and staffed by white women whom they expressed a mistrust of.

Whilst some of the barriers to disclosure reflect those found in previous research. (Hall & Lloyd, 1993; Hays, 1996), the women in this study revealed that racially gendered and cultural mistrust as additional

barriers. That said the participants also expressed a general mistrust of African-Caribbean British women, preferring in some instances to disclose histories of CSA to men.

In imagining an ideal support service there was consensus that this should initially be autonomously run by African-Caribbean British women, engaging with women from diverse communities at a later stage. A culturally-specific service was preferred by ten of the twelve interviewed women. However, with the continued funding crisis of existing agencies a culturally-aware service provision is more realistic (see discussion of intersectional liminality in Chapter 7). Additionally, following in the tradition of Rape Crisis the initial phase that the women speak of, that of African-Caribbean British groups initially then gradually merging with women from differing cultures could be seen as a long overdue revised version of consciousness raising. This is not to suggest that CR equates to counselling, yet such a template could afford African-Caribbean British women an opportunity to come together and speak their lives in safety.

The lack of representation of African-Caribbean British women as victim-survivors in advertising services and in national and regional campaigns on sexual violence were a further barrier. None of the women had seen an advertisement with an African-Caribbean British woman and thus believed that no one really cared about their abuse. However, all of the women in one guise or another expressed trepidation regarding disclosing publicly to agencies. This fear centred on the women's opinion the external agencies, whether third sector organisations or statutory bodies, did not understand the intersections of race, gender and class. Personal experience and intra-generational socialising practices seemed to (re)produce the belief that on all levels - individual, social, politically - the public world was not to be trusted as it was racist.

Therefore structural, societal and individual relational experiences informed women's perceptions of the possibility to seek and find support and impacted on the agency of victim-survivors and thus it could be argued that their choices to seek support were viewed through a 'prism of race'.

## CHAPTER 6: “BOIL STONES PRETEND THAT YOU ARE COOKING SOUP”: REPRESENTATION AND THE ROLE OF MATERNAL MIMESIS ON DISCLOSURES OF CSA BY AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH VICTIM-SURVIVORS

This chapter examines African-Caribbean British victim-survivors' experiences of childhood sexual abuse (CSA). The aim of this chapter is to understand how intersections of race and gendered embodiment inform coping strategies from the point of disclosing experiences of CSA whether in childhood or adulthood. Where recent explorations of how race and culture inform victim-survivors of CSA (Tyagi, 2001; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009) little is known of how hybrid identities in the UK influence diasporic African-Caribbean British young women after disclosure and 'telling' others of experiences of CSA.

### KEY THEMES

Several themes emerged which although significant were not unique to African-Caribbean British victim-survivors. For example, many of the women explained that not only they but their mothers also had experienced CSA (Lamb & Edgar-Smith, 1994). Kanyeredzi (2014) also found this in her recent study of African-Caribbean British women's experience of domestic and sexual violence. Expanding on Kelly's (1988) continuum theory she developed the continuum of oppression framework to explain how historical and current intersections of racial and patriarchal oppressions continue to be experienced by women of African descent, which also serve to maintain silence on sexual violence. Whilst Kanyeredzi (2014) locates racism on the continuum of violence(s) experienced by African-Caribbean British women, the participants in this study outlined how the imposition of prescriptives of race and gender intersected and impacted the victim-survivors and their caretaker's response after disclosures of CSA.

*“Boil stones pretend that you are cooking soup”* (Ciara) sums up the 'performance' of resilience associated with African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA (Wilson, 1993). Ciara's statement illustrates how some African-Caribbean British mothers may advise or coerce their daughters into hiding all manner of abuses, including CSA, by encouraging or demonstrating a racially specific way of

being: 'strong and chaste'. A core theme in this chapter is why a victim-survivor might embrace African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis.

The following sections will focus on the women's recollections of disclosing CSA in order to ascertain whether African-Caribbean British cultural attitudes and expectations were significant in their decisions to tell others. Subsequent sections explore: cultural and racialised socialisation practices; African-Caribbean British communities' surveillance; control of young female sexuality; prohibition on speaking of sexual matters. To begin, a brief outline of previous research findings on disclosure patterns will be discussed, in order to contextualise the women's experiences.

Jones (2000) suggests that the term disclosure tends to refer to the reporting of CSA to authorities, whereas 'telling' often infers the action of an adult sharing abuse experiences (2000; Alaggia, 2001). Previous research has tended to focus on children in order to facilitate early identification, provide appropriate support services post-disclosure (Summit, 1983; Alaggia, 2004).

However, both clinical and non-clinical studies on disclosure patterns suggest that between 30-80% of victim-survivors purposefully delay disclosing sexual abuse until adulthood (Arata, 1998; Smith D. , et al., 2000; Paine & Hansen, 2002) if they perceive that the response will be unsupportive (Roesler & Weissmann Wind, 1994). Expanding on Jones' (2000) distinction between disclosure and telling, this study suggests that it is not just adults who 'tell'. Rather it could be argued that 'telling' is a tool of leverage more associated with the young, especially with the limited power they possess in relation to adults.

Previous research shows victim-survivors disclose on multiple occasions (Summit, 1983), in various modes - accidental, purposeful, prompted/elicited (Mian, Wehrspann, Klajner-Diamond, Labaron , & Winder, 1986; Sorenson & Snow, 1991; Jones D. , 2000; Paine & Hansen, 2002) or via a third-party (Goodman- Brown, Edelstein, Goodman, Jones, & Gordon, 2003). Studies also found (Sorenson &

Snow, 1991; Alaggia, 2001) that the different ways that children tell is significant, and children attempt to tell caretakers in a variety of ways and on multiple occasions.

The accounts given by the six women in this study correspond to these patterns, with the exception of Angel, who was still being abused.

## THE VICTIM-SURVIVORS

Two of the women's experiences fall under the category of extra-familial abuse (Finkelhor, 1979; Wyatt, 1985; Russell, 1986); Sar was sexually abused by a 16-year-old boy who lived in the same domestic violence refuge, she recalls the abuse beginning at 5 years of age and lasting for a few months. Porsha was repeatedly raped over a 24-hour period aged 13 by a 17-year-old boy. She stated that the rape had been arranged by her female friends who attended the same school.

Afterwards I became aware that my friends all knew I was a virgin and none of them were. And they were all always on my case about being a virgin. And one particular girl had kind of orchestrated me going there and him doing what he had to do. Afterwards I just got like a laughing down the phone and people just shouting, "Oh well you are not a virgin now; what are you complaining about?" (Porsha)

Both Sar and Porsha did not demonstrate any ambiguity regarding the meaning of, or defining their experiences as, CSA. Revealingly, these were the only cases which were disclosed to external agencies and thus are consistent with previous research (Finkelhor, 1984; Kelly, Burton, & Regan, 1998).

Five women had been sexually abused on multiple occasions and thus experienced intra-familial and extra-familial sexual abuse. Bianca's first experience began at the age of eight and was perpetrated by a tenant living in her mother's house; subsequent abuse was by her mother's live-in boyfriend in her early teens. She described these experiences as 'genital fondling'. Maria's abuser was her older

brother of ten years; full penetrative abuse began when she was 6 years old and occurred every school day for nine years.

Ciara experienced sexual fondling under the age of 10 from an 'uncle' and then genital fondling by her mother's live-in boyfriend from the age of 12 years, until she ran away at 15 years. Angel approximated the onset of her abuse as two years old, she was made to watch her parents have sex and touch the genitals of both parents. She implied penetrative abuse by her father, but then retracted these experiences, framing them as 'dreams'. Sharon could not recall the exact age that an 'Uncle' first masturbated in front of her. Not long after migrating to England with her grandmother to join her mother she was raped by her maternal uncle, and by her mother's husband as a teenager.

Both Angel and Sharon were abused by female perpetrators, but most previous research (Russell, 1986) has identified that men and boys are the majority perpetrators of CSA. The women's accounts support Kelly's findings (1998) that when women abuse or are involved in CSA they are usually connected with men who were also abusive to them.

Whilst all seven participants were in contact with their siblings and family members, all thought these relationships had been impacted negatively by the CSA. The most turbulent relationship for six of the women was between themselves and their mothers. The response by mothers to their daughters' disclosure of CSA, whether as children or when the victim-survivors had reached adulthood, was a source of major conflict for the women in this study.

#### MULTIPLE 'TELLINGS'

Research on how children and adults speak about CSA has highlighted variables which may prevent victim-survivors telling purposefully: developmental maturity; whether abuse is intra/extra-familial; repressed memory; feelings of responsibility and complicity (Flathman, 1999; Kelly, Burton, & Regan, 1998; Bussey & Grimbeek, 1995; Lamb & Edgar-Smith, 1994; Sas, 1993; Finkelhor;1984). Very little

research has focussed on whether cultural factors influence disclosure (Alaggia, 2001; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009).

The women in this study explored the impact of racialisation and cultural demands on both how they understood their CSA histories and the responses when they first disclosed. All seven women went through a process of disclosure which involved several stages of telling (see Table. 4), consistent with previous research (Alaggia, 2004; Jones, 2000; Summit, 1983; Courtois & Watts, 1982). Additionally, where Summit identified that victim-survivors may reach a stage in the disclosure process where they recant their accusations of sexual abuse, none of the women in this study did this, rather they seemed to continue disclosing until they received what they believed was an appropriate response: that is until their victimisation was validated and they felt some semblance of support.

Table. 4: The process of disclosure

Name of Participant	Disclosed under 10 years	Disclosed as teenager	Disclosed as an Adult
Sar	√	√	√
Bianca		√	√
Maria	√		√
Ciara		√	√
Porsha		√	√
Sharon	√	√	√
Angel			√

As Table.4 demonstrates two women told at all three stages of their lives: childhood, teenage years and in adulthood, and four told at two stages. Angel's abuse began before the age of 10, yet differs in that

she was still being abused, disclosed this to her therapist when she was in her thirties, and then again to myself during the interview process.

That these women continued to disclose could be said to contradict an African-Caribbean British stance of silence outlined by the experts (see Chapter 4). This disparity may not be as contradictory as it first appears. The experts outlined that there was no active public provision on CSA, and some women did disclose to close peers. Therefore, victim-survivors did 'tell' other African-Caribbean British women, which echoes the multiple 'telling's' of the victim-survivors in this study. But these often fell on 'deaf ears'. Another factor which may have deterred public activism of black British feminists, thus reproducing silences and barriers, may arise from the impunity of African-Caribbean British male abusers.

Whereas the experts drew on racism and sexism as barriers to disclosing, including the harmful impact that may ensue for African-Caribbean British communities, the victim-survivors engaged on a more experiential level. Their decisions seemed to be produced from an organic but experiential knowing that disclosing in public could be detrimental to the stability of the African-Caribbean British family, the racial abuse of African-Caribbean British men and the devalued status of African-Caribbean British women.

*It is disrespectful to the family. They are scared of what friends and family are going to say. They say that you are lying because it can go either way, they believe you or they don't. Mainly with the black community they will say you put that on yourself, it is your fault of the individual other than the man...*

*Q. Some people argue that it is the fear of the police why they don't speak out. Would do you think?*

*I think it is both. Because I know because of the police that's why I wouldn't speak. That scares me especially with the black community, because they are racist (police) they are not going to believe you. Or they will say, she wanted that! So that is a scary thought... just being in that room being interviewed that is a scary thought. But also, as I said it is the friends, the family the community that's a hard thing to say (Angel).*

Yet the continuance of multiple disclosures within informal networks could echo theories which suggest that adult victim-survivors continue to disclose in order to cognitively gain meaning about the victimisation they faced as children (Bulman & Wortman, 1977; Taylor, 1983). However, meaning did not appear to be the rationale for six of the participants as none of them conveyed that they possessed any ambiguities regarding their experiences. The women in this study continued to disclose in order to be acknowledged and supported as victims of sexual abuse.

### **TURNING A BLIND EYE**

In one way or another most common response by parents, especially mothers, was that the CSA was acknowledged and then ignored. Six of the women stated that they were believed when they first told as children. A dismissive attitude or 'turning a blind eye' to CSA has been linked, in the case of Caribbean communities, to cultural attitudes. Jones and Trotman Jemmott (2009) found that CSA was culturally bound in the Eastern Caribbean (Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009). They report an implicit social sanctioning within an atmosphere of secrecy; this involved some maternal complicity due to reliance on a male breadwinner ideology: patriarchal values privilege protecting men by disempowering children.

Bianca stated that she had not discussed her CSA with her mother as a child because she feared that any disclosure may add to her mother's already turbulent life and due to the status of the first man to abuse her.

I must have been about eight or nine and the person actually lived in the house as a tenant... Because in those days everybody rented out rooms because they couldn't get houses. It was always a cousin, uncle or an aunty or somebody if one person had a house they would rent a room out not to strangers to like an uncle or an aunt or a brother so it was family not connected, but it was a family (Bianca).

Bianca notes here that her household depended on the financial contribution of this tenant, that to tell anyone may impact negatively on the economic status of her household. Therefore in this instance it is Bianca who could be seen as ‘turning a blind eye’ to the abuse she has experienced in order to safeguard the family finances. Her hesitancy supports a finding in previous research (Paine & Hansen, 2002), but in her case the intersections of gender, race and class are evident in the account of the household composition.

Ciara believed that her mother may have turned a blind eye to the sexual abuse because the abuser’s financial assistance was needed.

*She said, she just didn’t want to recognise it. Because when he came into our life, he owned his own business, he had money and we weren’t poor anymore! So I think if she got rid of him we would be poor again. That’s what I think, she hasn’t said that, that is my opinion because we had everything, we had a PlayStation, a big TV, you know we had big whole psyche hi-fi, we had chairs. Because before him it was carpet that didn’t fit the floor; we all slept in the front room but I did have my room before he came about actually, but we didn’t have as much. So I just think it might have been slightly living a comfortable life and she didn’t want to give it up [Voice drops very low] (Ciara).*

Ciara’s suggests here that living in poverty can create a situation whereby sexual abuse can be ‘ignored’, almost sanctioned by the non-offending parent: “*She said she just didn’t want to recognise it*”. Ciara’s mother was a lone parent; financial hardship may render a non-offending parent and household reliant on the income of the abuser.

Interestingly the financial dependency described by the oldest victim-survivor Bianca (51) has commonalities and differences with that discussed by Ciara the youngest (24). The reliance on the income of an additional person in order to sustain the household suggests that financial hardship or poverty may have been, and still may be, a significant factor in enabling CSA to be overlooked within African-Caribbean British communities. Whilst Bianca’s mother owned her own home, albeit out of the need to escape the blatant racism experienced by African-Caribbean migrants during the post-war era,

she may have struggled without the income of the tenant. Ward and Patel's (2006) argument that poverty and racial discrimination are a conducive context for child sexual exploitation (CSE) are here relevant to CSA.

The negative response by parents, especially mothers, on initial disclosure whereby victim-survivors were believed yet rebuked appeared to produce a longing for the sexual victimisation to be recognised in a supportive manner. Subsequently all seven of the participants continued to disclose at differing stages through into adulthood. Although Porsha's parents reported the sexual abuse to the authorities the remoteness of her parents after it was revealed that she had experienced anal rape, left her feeling unsupported especially by her father.

#### PARENTAL RESPONSES

Table.5 summarises the responses of parents to being told about CSA.

Table .5 Response of parents

Name of participant	Parent Believed and was supportive	Parent believed but was unsupportive	Parent did not believe	Response to daughter's disclosure by parent(s)	External support taken to support daughter
Sar		√		After disclosure mother focused on abuser not daughter. Has not spoken of sexual abuse since.	
Bianca		√		Mother has not spoken of sexual abuse to date.	
Maria		√		Father beat brother (abuser). Mother discovered abuse but has not spoken of it since. Called Maria a liar.	
Ciara		√		Mother supported abuser. Beat daughter badly.	
Porsha	√			Initially supported by family. Abuse characteristic (anal rape) prevents parents from speaking of abuse since disclosure by police.	√
Angel		√		Sexual abuse on-going into present.	
Sharon		√		Mother and abuser beat her. Shamed publicly to family and friends	

Six women expressed a range of emotion from deep sorrow to anger toward their mothers as adults; one had never felt the need to discuss her experience because her mother played a part in her abuse as a child and as an adult. Angel expressed great empathy for her mother's refusal to acknowledge her abuse. She displayed an understanding of the consequence of coercive control (Stark, 2007) on both her mother's agency in relation to her father and her mother's participation in her own sexual victimisation.

*I just thought that she didn't want me, that she didn't like me. Also, my Dad was very violent. My mum never gave me any cuddles; I think she resented me. I did hear an argument one time when she said, "You promised you would stop hitting me if I had your child, and you didn't". So I realized that she really didn't want to have me, she was forced to ... I can definitely live without the sex thing. All the time I just picture my Mum all over me or her just lying there lifeless with my Dad (Angel).*

One woman first told her grandmother aged eight; another disclosed to a friend in adulthood. Two disclosed to boyfriends/children's father also as adults. One participant's mother discovered the CSA was occurring whilst she was out working yet has not spoken to her daughter about her experience since her initial questioning on the day of discovery. The remaining victim-survivor (Porsha) disclosed to her sister when she was a teenager who then went on to inform the parents who informed the authorities.

Maria's recollection of her father's response on discovering her abuse by her brother reveals how an essentialist argument meant the brother was not fully held to account.

*I think because with my dad it was she's a little girl you know? Look how big and strapping a nasty boy like yourself ... I think my... I think with women they think ok he said it never happened so we will just sweep it under the carpet. We will just leave it like suh! And that's it; end of argument he won't do it again (Maria).*

What Maria implies is that her father beat his son not because he was sexually abusing his sister, rather he was punished because of Maria's young age and her small size. She suggests her father

believed that this beating would stop the abuse, but it did not, it continued until her brother started dating when he was 25 and Maria was 15.

Where Maria began to outline her mother response, she seems to stop herself inferring the beating of her brother concluded all parental involvement in the situation. According to Sanderson (1995) it is not uncommon for adult victim-survivors to feel anger toward their mother's.

Feelings of anger [towards mother] rage and feelings of abandonment, betrayal, and expectations of care and nurturing may also surface during the healing process... children frequently believe their parents, especially their mother, to be omniscient and omnipotent and expect their mothers to be aware of their pain, hurt and anxieties. If the mother is unresponsive to these emotions the child feels that she has been abandoned...as a result the child and later adult feels betrayed (pp. 222-223).

Lovett (1995) employs Rohner's theory of affection/rejection to explore how and if maternal responses have a moderating effect on the level of trauma. Bianca illustrates the complexity of feelings produced by a perceived response of rejection or affection (Rohner, Hahn , & Rohner, 1980) by mothers.

*But it is interesting that when I told my mum that, my mum still stayed with my step-dad; and they actually split up after that, a while after that because she'd had enough of his beatings. So they didn't actually split up because of what he'd done to me, they split up because of what he'd done to her. I was angry with my mum for that; disappointed because she did believe me. They had words but I don't know what lies he told (Bianca).*

Bianca's resentment is amplified when her mother only ends her relationship with her step-father because of the domestic violence she is experiencing: implying not only a sense of resentment, but additionally abandonment and rejection by her mother. Table.5 summarises the responses of parents to disclosures of CSA.

## BEATINGS

Within African-Caribbean British communities the practice of parents physically chastising or threatening to 'beat' a child when they have committed some misdemeanour, or behaved in a rude and disrespectful manner, has traditionally been a part of growing up in an African-Caribbean British family (Arnold, 1982; Smith & Mosby, 2003) . We all expected to be chastised and corrected in this manner, and in most cases, it is and has been a normalised practice of African-Caribbean British socialisation. I have my own personal recollections of my siblings and me being beaten by our mother on numerous occasions. However, I also recall the beating I received as being almost life threatening when my mother realised that I was at an age where I could inform others (friends, extended family members, and teachers) of the sexual abuse I was experiencing.

Ciara's recollection of being beaten after her mother became aware that her boyfriend had sexually abused her demonstrates the severity of physical abuse experienced by some young African-Caribbean British victim-survivors.

*My mum has been very violent toward me, but that was the most violent I had ever seen my mum. She pulled chunks out of my hair, she was slapping me, she pushed me off of the chair; in fact she really beat me all over the front room but then like she'd calm down and leave the front room and go in the kitchen and she would be like, "yeah she thinks she is a big woman" (Ciara).*

Although Ciara was accustomed to being beaten by her mother, the beating she describes above suggests that during the post disclosure period her mother's violence became more severe. The reference to "*she thinks she is a big woman*" implies that her mother may hold Ciara responsible in this situation for attracting the attention of her abuser. Thus she has become her mother's equal if she is 'engaging' in sex activity; even though her mother acknowledges her status as a minor with the words: "*she thinks*". The fact that Ciara is only 13 years of age when her mother's boyfriend begins to make sexual advances to her appears lost in her mother's statement as she transfers the responsibility of the abuse away from the abuser onto her daughter.

Similarly, Sharon's recollection of her mother rubbing chilli into her vagina when she was five years of age as a punishment for 'supposedly' playing inappropriately is another example whereby a girl is punished because it is felt that she is acting 'too womanly'. What Sharon describes could be seen as informing a young victim-survivor that telling about sexual abuse would carry severe consequences.

*I must have been five years old and I was playing with other children and my mother got the impression that we were playing somewhat inappropriate. So I was playing; which is a common punishment back home; my mother used pepper, hot pepper on my vagina, as a punishment; and I wasn't supposed to cry. My mum physically beat me [long pause]. I remember she beat me so badly that there was some blood coming out of my head and she instructed me when I went back to tell my grandmother that I fell and I complied [Begins to cry] (Sharon).*

Sharon's memory as a young child in Africa suggests that she learnt she would be held responsible for any act which might be deemed even remotely sexual. Whilst living with her grandmother Sharon is abused on two separate occasions, once by a male friend of the family and again by his sister.

*I really cannot recall the exact but the picture that stayed with me is just that 'Uncle' who would have been I believe in his mid-twenties and I was maybe about five masturbating in front of me. And I vividly remember the picture of it; the physical demonstration of it. And I couldn't tell anybody because of the culture back home. I wasn't sure whether I could tell anybody. Then another incident that I recall in Africa the sister of that same man the family had a shop that was connected to that house they used to sell sugar and things like that and I remember that I was left with the sister that was minding that store and I can very much remember the female taking my hand and touching herself, so that was like an experience when it comes to experiences (Sharon).*

The use of physical violence as a means of 'correcting' a child is not exclusive to African-Caribbean British/West African cultures. However, the circumstances that the women describe suggest beatings within African-Caribbean British communities are used to punish any sexual acts by children, chosen or coerced. The beatings outlined by the women in this study after they dared to 'tell' indicate that this practice may be employed to reinforce hierarchies of control based on age and gender (Reynolds, 2005).

*He just rushed me and started kicking me in the ribs, beating me. My mum was standing there by the heater telling me, while he's kicking me, 'you respect him he is the man of the house. Don't disrespect him in this house'. The violence was getting quite severe, my mum then decided to stop him and as my mum attempted to stop him he physically lashed at my mum (Sharon).*

At aged 13 Sharon had purposefully talked to her mother about the sexual abuse in front of her step-father. Her recollections demonstrate the patriarchal respect that men are given within our cultures and the limited support for girls who are sexually abused.

When 'beatings' occur after disclosures or discoveries of CSA it may lead girls to think that the abuse occurred because of the unruliness of their body, read by the racially inscribed abused child as confirmation of the inadequacy of the black sexually violated body. Acts of corporal punishment may remove responsibility of the sexual abuse away from the abuser by transferring it firmly onto the corporeality of the young girl. Therefore, beatings may initiate and intersect with dissociative coping strategies, producing a loathing of the physical for the victim-survivor. Physical punishment combined with the failure of caretakers to address the abuse not only informs victim-survivors of the uselessness of disclosing further, but may convey and deter others within the family from speaking out.

*He must have forgotten his school book and he came back to the house and saw... but he has never mentioned anything to me. If he had of said to mum, "mum oh, mummy I think such and such is happening" or whatever my mum would have beat him. Maybe he just thought let me come out of it; I'm not going to say anything whatever reason he chose not to say I don't know? I don't know? But I know I don't blame him for not saying anything I suppose he don't have to (Maria).*

Maria later learned from her cousin that another sibling had been aware of the abuse taking place after discovering it one morning when he returned to fetch some school books. He had never mentioned the abuse to her or any other member of their immediate family. He had spoken of the abuse only to a female cousin he was close with. Maria believes that he was fearful of being beaten by their mother if he had disclosed what he had seen and heard. Therefore, the use of 'beatings' within African-Caribbean British communities creates a state whereby all face the dilemma of whether to tell. This was

the case in my own personal experience, where it was only discovered in adulthood that my elder sister had often hidden whilst I was being abused. It was not what she had seen that contributed to her mental health difficulties but what she had heard whilst hiding in the airing cupboard.

The women's accounts are consistent with previous accounts by African-American, African-Canadian and Caribbean female victim survivors (Alaggia, 2001; Tyagi, 2001; Aronson Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009) which also discuss what I have termed the cultural gains and losses of disclosing CSA within African-Caribbean British/African American and Caribbean communities. Disclosing sexual abuse does not guarantee that the abuse will end: the choices for victim-survivors narrow once they understand the impunity given to abusers, and the possible dismal of their experiences by parents who may seek to ensure their silence with the use of physical abuse.

The use of physical violence by mothers could be seen as removing feelings of guilt that she could not protect her child; a distancing of familial and community condemnation for the abuse away from herself by locating any possibility of blame onto the child.

#### HOW THEY WOULD HAVE LIKED IT TO BE

All of the women cried when they were asked to recall how they first revealed the sexual abuse and to whom. Sar explained that she had first told her mother, and was asked 'how would you have liked her to respond,

*Sit down with me and let me say what happened. "What happened if you can tell me what happened?"... She was so busy with the other women in the refuge she was doing her own thing. She had this new found freedom. I would have liked her to sit and listen and maybe fill out some of the gaps that I hadn't remembered...I'm alright. I just got a bit upset when you asked about what did she say; because it's not the response I wanted but I may not get the response because she has her things doesn't she? (Sar)*

Maria also outlined how she would have liked her mother to respond.

*I don't know because you know if I was my mum and something happened to my daughter it is very hard. I think it would be very hard for a parent. As much as you would be there to comfort her and tell her, oh it is ok mummy will be there for you it will never happen again and maybe make her go to counselling and let people counsel her (Maria).*

Ciara's response was similar.

*To never bring him back in the first place. That would have shown me some sort of support. Her saying, "oh you know it was bad of him to do that"; acknowledge that he did it and to comfort me and then not to bring him back. You know not even so much even calling the police because I'm not a fan of the police anyway .To actually acknowledge me instead of just ignoring it and thinking of herself (Ciara).*

All three sought comfort, support and protection. Sar also wanted the opportunity to express how she was feeling and to ask questions. Maria acknowledges the complexities of being a mother having to face such a situation, and the potential need for an external therapeutic service to support the child.

Maria's account of her mother's negative response sheds further light on the significance of a supportive response. Although Maria's father physically punishes his son for the abuse and thus demonstrates that he believes Maria, her mother, who discovered it, supports her son and calls Maria a liar.

*I told my mum [voice dips] but he is my mum's favourite you see; I don't know why? But of course I said, you know Nan<sup>12</sup> but she didn't believe me. But my dad did and my dad gave him the beating of his lifetime and then [Voice drops lower] when he got the beating I think he thought that granddad believes I won't do it again; "nan didn't believe her anyway" and I think [Voice drops lower] me and my mum we don't have that type of mother and daughter relation that we used to have once upon a time (Maria).*

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<sup>12</sup> Maria alternates between calling her mother; Mum and Nan. She does the same with her father calling him Dad and Granddad.

## GENERATIONAL PATTERNS: AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH MATERNAL MIMESIS

Finkelhor (1984) explored what parents tell their children about sexual abuse and found that regardless of race, profession, class, education, religion, place of residence that many parents were reluctant to address the subject. However, the parents who actively chose to discuss CSA with their children tended to be women who had themselves experienced sexual abuse as children: they sought to keep their children safe by educating them. Finkelhor does not discuss whether sharing their own experiences was part of this process of education.

Five women in this study revealed that their mothers had used purposeful/ implicit disclosure as an informative tool, in all but one case after as girls they had informed mothers of sexual abuse; three recalled their mother had openly stated they had been sexually abused; two thought this was implied. Only two women did not have any intimation that their mother's had been abused (see Table.6).

Table. 6: Mothers history of sexual abuse

Name of participant	Mother named own abuse	Mother implicitly Suggested	No disclosure by mother
Sar			√
Bianca			√
Maria		√	
Ciara	√		
Porsha	√		
Angel		√	
Sharon	√		

Ciara illustrates the role of this revelation played.

*My mum actually said that she was sexually abused as a child; so I don't understand. I mean my mum raised me to [shouts] if anyone touches you, make sure that you tell me. I mean der, der, der! She was really quite vigilant with us, so I don't understand why she just put it to the back of her mind? (Ciara)*

Ciara's confusion links her mother's refusal to acknowledge or address what has happened to her in light of earlier cautions: she is perplexed and frustrated.

Porsha infers that her mother disclosure was a means of explaining her felt inadequacies as a parent.

*Q. Can I just ask what type of abuse your mother experienced?*

*I. Domestic violence and CSA.*

*Q. Did she tell you this?*

*I. Yeah...*

*Q. In what context did she disclose her CSA to you?*

*Well I was aware of the domestic abuse that was going on around me. I found out at quite an early age when I was about 10 or 11 about what happened to my mum and I suppose my mum had insecurities about how she mothered. I think I was a bit young to hear it but it I didn't get the full extent until later on... I kind of took on the role of not parenting but you know being strong for my brothers and sisters; not really showing any weakness for their sake or my situation (Porsha).*

Although Porsha was the youngest participant in this study (aged 24) her understanding and awareness of how her mother's disclosure had situated her, not just as a child, but later with her own experience of CSA was truly insightful. Her self-awareness "*I didn't get the full extent until later on*", and "*not really showing any weakness for their sake or my situation*" suggest that on reflection she has become aware of the impact of the legacy of her mother's disclosure on both her own life and those of her siblings.

*Because I was kind of raised and taught to handle situations... being an overcomer you know just getting on with stuff like you know the plate that you are served I suppose. So just, just fighting the battle regardless (Porsha).*

Fighting on regardless and being an 'overcomer' are attributes which have traditionally been associated with being black and especially female (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009).

Sharon's account of her mother's implicit purposeful disclosure provides a glimpse of how African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis – defined here as the process whereby African-Caribbean British mothers, with their own histories of CSA, inform their daughters through purposefully revealing their own experiences of CSA or through adopting certain behaviours and standpoints on how to live with

sexual abuse provide their daughters with a type of template of resistance to cope with experiences of CSA and the possibility that nothing will come of speaking of the abuse especially to family and friends within the community. The women's accounts suggest that mothers who have themselves experienced CSA often inform their daughters of how to 'live with' sexual abuse. My own personal experience supports what the participants describe regarding the advice given by mother's purposeful disclosures of their own histories of CSA. In the past a common reason given to young girls to remain silent centred upon how she would be viewed and treated by any future male partner if he discovered that she had been sexually abused as a child. It was often implied that the abused child would be seen as 'unclean', sexually 'slack' and thus not worthy of marriage. I recall such a conversation with my own mother.

An additional reason for remaining silent emphasised that young African-Caribbean British girls who had experienced CSA would undoubtedly become sexual prey for African-Caribbean British men and boys. The rationale for African-Caribbean British mothers to purposefully disclose their own histories of CSA could be seen as them attempting to inform their daughters of the perils of disclosing within African-Caribbean British communities. African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis may not be a coping strategy exclusive to African-Caribbean British communities. However, the subjugated knowledge held by African-Caribbean British mothers regarding the negative consequences to their daughters if they disclose within African-Caribbean British communities may be impetus enough for the reproduction of a mimetic performance of resilience by African-Caribbean British women from one generation to the next.

*My mum has been angry at me and she said why don't I just let this go? I am acting as if I am the only child who has been abused; the way she coped with it was by ignoring it. Because when she said that to me she also said why don't I just let it go? You know why do I need to push it? I'm not the only child that has been abused and that was all she said to me she never said more than that to me (Sharon).*

In attempting to understand not only why this racially gendered discourse has continued to be reproduced Kanyeredzi (2014) argues it should be understood as a continuum of oppression across

generations of women, whilst Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2009) has attempted to shatter the myth of the strong black woman by deconstructing and highlighting the negativity produced by this enduring stereotype in the lives of women of African descent. However, Porsha, Ciara's and Sharon's accounts have enabled a glimpse into the how and why it is continuously reproduced.

*When my parents did find out what had happened and other family members at that point it wasn't really about me, it was about their pain; and not wanting them to feel all the frustrations they felt you know? (Porsha).*

Porsha's here notes the distress she felt on seeing her parents in pain after her disclosure of CSA, with what she was feeling becoming almost of secondary concern.

Her account also hinted at the power of representation and how external signs, symbols and ways of being are often appropriated. The discussion in this study of performance and mimesis within African-Caribbean British women's coping strategies reveals the limited options for women associated with colour. Moreover, wider discursive processes and representations rarely draw on the personal experiences of survivors. It is in this sense that I argue all victim-survivors of CSA occupy a liminal position, as we are often informed via pathological discourses and knowledges.

The accepting resignation that CSA has and will continue to occur within African-Caribbean British communities, especially by mothers, serves to normalise it (see also, Aronson Fontes & Plummer, 2010; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009; Tyagi, 2001). As yet no study in the UK has explored how coping strategies of resistance employed for structural/personal forms of racism inform coping strategies for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA. However, the women's accounts of disclosing CSA to family members suggests that projecting a racially gendered stance of resilience (African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis) is often the only mode of living with such experiences available.

Although Porsha felt during her teenage years that her only option was to embody the template of African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis, her attitude clearly shifted as she has matured.

*Now I feel like there are two truths because the reality is for me years on I feel as though my interpretation of what a survivor is and being strong has changed. To me now it is not suppressing all the things I used to feel and how weak I felt; Just embracing it that for me now is what strength means (Porsha).*

Porsha's refusal to continue to conform to a template which projects a racially gendered resilience for sexual abuse is inspiring.

## CONCLUSION

Women's accounts enable us not only to name the barriers which continue to inhibit African-Caribbean British women choices in regard to histories of sexual abuse but to also gain a fuller understanding of how these are experienced within everyday lives. Culture, racialisation/ racism impact on both how they make sense of CSA and the possibilities for recognition and seeking support. Their decisions are not only understood and shaped through gender (Finkelhor, 1984; Kelly, Burton, & Regan, 1998; Sas, 1993; Lamb & Edgar-Smith, 1994) but additionally through a lens of culture, racialisation and political blackness.

Where previous research has highlighted the distinction between 'disclosure' and 'telling' (Jones D. , 2000) this study found that the women told their care-givers, with disclosure to an external agency rarely the aim or even an option if the abuse was intra-familial. Women continued to 'tell' until they received what they felt was an appropriate response especially if the maternal response was negative.

Where the abuser was a mother's partner, boyfriend or son the maternal response tended to be negative followed in most cases by physical abuse by mothers which located responsibility on the abused girl. In the two cases where the abuse was reported to an external agency, it served the interests of parents rather than the child, and created a further set of contradictions. Although, all of the women remained in contact with their families, for all but one it was the mother-daughter relationship which was strained.

The accounts have been analysed through a concept of racialised gendered mimesis, passed on intra-generationally between mother and daughter: This functioned as a coping strategy and mode of resistance which enabled them to live with the adversities of life such as CSA histories, poverty and racism. I have termed this process African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis: the transference of a coping strategy is imparted verbally/non-verbally through silences ('turning a blind-eye'), avoidance of, or eclipsing of the child's own experience of sexual victimisation through disclosures of the mother's own. With the limited options, available to African-Caribbean British victim-survivors African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis speaks of the lack of 'space for action' (Kelly, Sharp, & Klein, 2014) and the process of gains and losses that African-Caribbean British victim- survivors experience in the UK.

## CHAPTER 7: THERE'S MORE TO ME THAN RICE 'N' PEAS AND JERK CHICKEN: RAPE CRISIS CENTRES AND AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH PROVISION IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on existing sexual violence support services for victim-survivors of CSA, drawing on findings from a survey conducted with Rape Crisis Centres (RCC) in England and Scotland. Historically African-Caribbean British victim-survivors have been reluctant to disclose sexual abuse to public agencies, especially to social services and the police. Little was known about how African-Caribbean British victim-survivors view support agencies such as Rape Crisis. Black British feminists called for more culturally-aware service provision for African-Caribbean British women during the 1980s which recognised the lived experiences of racialisation, racism and cultural prescriptives for African-Caribbean British CSA victim-survivors (Bogle, 1987). This chapter examines whether current provision by one of the long standing voluntary organisations known to deal with CSA have recognised and implemented services which acknowledge African-Caribbean British realities as noted during the 1980s and 1990s (Bogle, 1987; Wilson, 1993).

### ETHNICITY, CULTURE AND CSA SERVICE PROVISION

Recent studies conducted in the US, UK and Canada concur in identifying culture and ethnicity as key barriers to women of African descent accessing support services (Crenshaw, 1989; Tyagi, 2001; Alaggia, 2001; Aronson Fontes & Plummer, 2010; West T. , 1999; Thiara & Gill, 2012; Kalathil, 2011; Ahmed & McCaw, 2010). This study also found that African-Caribbean British women often felt torn between reporting incidents of sexual abuse and seeking support for themselves and feeling that they would be betraying African-Caribbean British communities, families and men by placing them at risk from external agencies which were seen as racist, judgmental and stigmatising (see Chapters 3, 4 and 5).

Psychological and anthropological research has identified that culture and ethnicity are involved in how victim-survivors gain meaning and process CSA experiences (Korbin, 1980, 1987; Kalathil, 2011). Similarly, feminist researchers found that gender and sexuality were enmeshed in the creation of meaning, and thus served to produce 'profound' and consequential differing effects between female and male victim-survivors (Kelly, Burton, & Regan, 1998).

Just as gender and sexuality shape meanings and consequences for victim-survivors, the conjunction of racialisation and gender informs African-Caribbean British victim-survivors. Racialised attitudes to sex and sexual violence, within particular cultures influences both the communities' response to CSA, and the individual's sense of agency in seeking support (Korbin, 1979; 1980; Chigwada-Bailey, 1997; Kalathil, 2011). Consequentially, since the 1990s, therapeutic services for victim-survivors of sexual abuse in Canada, Australia and the US attempt to acknowledge the intersections of race, culture, class and gender (Hays, 1995). Recent research conducted in the US, Canada and the Eastern Caribbean suggests that cultural factors are significant in both determining and understanding how communities define CSA/rape, and how this understanding influences opportunities for help-seeking (Alaggia, 2001; Tyagi, 2001; Ullman & Filipas, 2005; Jones & Trotman Jemmott, 2009; Aronson Fontes & Plummer, 2010).

Herman (2001) has identified that both present every day and historical legacies of racism (slavery) have had a traumatic impact on diasporic Africans well into the present. Yet, to date, few attempts to implement services which reflect the cultural legacy are evident for African-Caribbean British CSA victim-survivors within the UK, with the exception of Women and Girls Network in London and more recently Trafford Rape Crisis Centre (Kalathil, 2011). Acts of racism have been acknowledged on a continuum of violence (Kincheloe, 1999, p. 13; Herman, 2001; O'Neil & Morgan, 2010; Mahon, 2011; Vera-Gray, 2015) yet are not recognised in law as serious.

Racism and the traumatic impact that it produces in the lives of African-Caribbean British women has not been widely understood until recently, and therefore has not been recognised by CSA support services as requiring attention within therapeutic services for CSA (Hays, 1995; Davenport & Yurich, 1991; White, 2001). The lack of an acknowledgement of how racialisation and racism contorts how African-Caribbean British victim-survivors gain meaning regarding our histories of CSA, can act as a barrier to approaching support services for African-Caribbean British women with histories of CSA. Everyday acts of racial violence have a long lasting impact on the well-being of African-Caribbean British communities and individuals. Porsha outlines the possible complexities involved in African-Caribbean British women displaying vulnerability in the wake of experiences of victimisation.

*We want to be known as the whole; the kind of strength that can never be victimised. The kind of like, I don't want to go all funny on you [Laughs] but as women when it comes to slavery and times like that women were very badly treated. I mean slavery was slavery for men and women, but I think coming from that culture, coming from that I think we are more... it's even more important for us; that's where the anger comes because it is even more important for us to be seen as strong and not be seen as weak (Porsha).*

The silence by African-Caribbean British women regarding CSA experiences has not assisted agencies like RCCs in recognising the need for more culturally-aware services. Porsha's words demonstrate how racialised discourses of the 'strong' black woman, employed now by women of African descent as a form of resistance, have been incorporated in present day African-Caribbean British cultural socialising practices.

Research from the US, Canada and Australia has argued for the service providers to understand the meaning of ethnic identity for the women they work with. According to Hays (1996) it is imperative for the counsellor to understand the influence of culture and ethnicity on the clients, even if the client themselves do not see these factors as significant. The title of this chapter refers to what could be seen as the neglect or lack of understanding of African-Caribbean British cultures in the UK by external agencies, both statutory and voluntary.

## THE SURVEY

One aim of this study was to establish what provision existed for more established migrant communities in the UK, specifically for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of child sexual abuse (CSA). The focus was Rape Crisis Centres (RCCs) which have historically worked with and supported women with experiences of child sexual abuse. From the late 1980s, Kelly's (1987) concept of the continuum has been employed by RCC's in order to develop responses for victim-survivors of CSA in the UK and the US (Jones & Cook, 2008).

The survey sought to deduce whether on some level African-Caribbean British victim-survivors were perceived as being culturally provided for because of our British heritage and thus capable of being accommodated within existing gender focussed services (Richardson, 2006, p. 6). Questions sought to establish whether RCCs have recognised and implemented services which directly addressed the intersections of racialization, and racism.

However, any investigation regarding provision of culturally-aware service provision must take into consideration the issue of funding for third sector organisations like Rape Crisis. Currently RCCs are having to apply for funding several times a year from statutory bodies and/or charitable donors.

## RAPE CRISIS CENTRES

In 2008 there were 38 Rape Crisis Centres still in existence in England and Wales (Corry, Pouwhare, & Vergara, 2008; Coy M. , Kelly, Foord, Balding, & Davenport, 2009); a figure falling from 68 in 1984 (Walby & Allen, 2004). When the survey was undertaken there had been a slight increase because of ring-fenced government funding and centres in Scotland were included: thus 51 centres covering England, Wales and Scotland were approached and 13 responded. Nine answered all the questions, four responses were incomplete. Seven of the centres were based in England and six in Scotland, there were no responses from Wales, although at the time there were only two centres located there. The respondents completing the survey fell into two categories: four front line staff members and nine

holding director/managerial roles. Five had over 10 years work experience at their particular centres, with the remaining eight between 1 – 7 years' experience.

### **LOCATION OF THE CENTRES**

According to the 2011 Census approximately 1% of the UK population identify as African Caribbean (Office for National Statistics, 2011), with the largest concentrations of African-Caribbean British people residing in London and the West Midlands. Survey questions sought to establish whether RCCs, especially in areas with a high percentage of African-Caribbean British residents, took into account and reflected in their practice(s) pluralities of intersections of race/racism, gender and class when addressing the needs of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors. Out of the thirteen RCCs that participated, only one was located within a region with a high African-Caribbean British population. The remaining twelve centres were geographically dispersed throughout England and Scotland. Eight of the centres provided support to more than one area in their geographical region.

The 2013 Scottish census data estimated that Asian, Asian-Scottish/Asian British made up 2.7% (141,000) of the population; with African, African-Scottish/British making up 0.6% (29,000) (Population and Household Estimates, 2013). The vast majority were residing in cities such as: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dundee. Similarly, culturally diverse communities exist in England. For example, the 2011 census figures for the county of Essex were: Asian/British Asian's 3.19%; black/ black British, 1.93%; "Mixed", 1.52%; Chinese:1.3% (Rogers, 2011, p. 6). Although the African-Caribbean British community is relatively small in many parts of the UK there are sufficiently large communities for culturally-aware services to be considered on some level.

### **SERVICES PROVIDED**

The most common forms of support offered by the RCCs were a telephone helpline and face to face counselling; both were offered by twelve of the centres. Other services included: online/ email support;

group work; advocacy; ISVAs; support for family and friends; body and complementary therapies; text support; and outreach work in communities.

Ten out of thirteen stated that they did not provide any specific service under the BME/ BAME category; one centre did not answer the question. Thus two centres did offer this service. In order to understand why ten centres did not provide a BME/BAME provision it may be necessary to understand the original framework and objective of UK Rape Crisis Centres. By reflecting back historically on the formation, and the aims, of these centres the limited awareness of the importance of culture within service provision may become apparent.

### **HISTORY OF UK RAPE CRISIS CENTRES**

The first Rape Crisis Centre (RCC) was opened during the 1970s by a group of women in North London (Jones & Cook, 2008), armed with a feminist ideal to address rape in the lives of women. Women's accounts of childhood sexual abuse, which had begun to emerge via consciousness raising groups during the 1970s and 80s, further shaped the agenda (Jones & Cook, 2008). However, unlike their American counterparts, RCCs in the UK have remained relatively independent of each other, and have not realised any major funding unlike those in the US. Jones and Cook (2008) suggest these factors may account for the continuation and greater level of feminist radicalism within the British centres. The original objectives of these pioneering women were varied.

It was a group of about 40 women who met because they wanted to do something about rape. Different women had different ideas about what it was they wanted to do. One group became a support group, the others decided they wanted to campaign. It was out of this group that the idea for a Rape Crisis came. I think there was about ten of them to begin with. (Bernadette Manning, quoted in Jones & Cook, 2008, p. 8).

More centres emerged, offering in the first instance a telephone helpline service primarily staffed by volunteers, and paid members of staff if funding was available. Centres further provided women with:

practical legal advice in regards to the police and judicial system; information on sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy testing and face to face support; and self-help groups. However a therapeutic service was not the sole focus for the original centres. By couching women's experience of sexual violence within a continuum of violence, it was possible for RCCs to illustrate that the sexual violence experienced by women and girls were connected to a structural context that ensures the oppression of women within patriarchy (Kelly, 1987). According to Jones and Cook (2008) the early centres wanted to encourage further consciousness-raising (CR) programmes which would ultimately enable wider social change.

The original ambition of RCCs was understood as political, whereby the practical work would strengthen and feed social change. The everyday experiences of women using the centres would shape campaigning in regards to oppression in the lives of women (Hanisch, 2006).

If we take into account the original premise and locate the ethos of RCCs within the temporal moment of their formation we are better placed to understand why the impact of racialisation/race, culture and ethnicity on how women gain understanding of their experiences of CSA and sexual violence was not initially addressed by RCCs. The Rape Crisis organisations in the UK were created by feminists who focussed on women who had experienced sexual violence and rape, feeding those concerns into service provision whilst simultaneously campaigning for the eradication of sexual violence. This agenda did not initially provide for the intersections, or the embodiment, of race and gender on the lives of women from varying cultural backgrounds, although it must be stressed that black British feminists were also involved at early stages. However, the omission of cultural factors in service provision during the early years of RCCs may have been a consequence of the 'race loyalty' whereby CSA was not spoken of publicly by African-Caribbean British victim-survivors (see Chapter 4).

## THE AMBIGUITY OF BME/BAME IN SERVICE PROVISION

The ambiguities in regard to what constitutes BME/BAME, was evident in two centres' responses to a question about provision for African-Caribbean British women, reflecting previous commentary on the usefulness of such terms (Aspinall, 2002; Richardson, 2006). Where the 'A' in BAME suggests a plurality of subjecthood of Asian British communities, the 'B' in BME/BAME flattens out a plurality of cultures, therein reinforcing the normative aspect of whiteness by its absence. The reasons for the omission of African-Caribbean British or Caribbean/African suggests, on one level, the acknowledgement of a British heritage of colonisation within African-Caribbean British communities and therefore, making specific cultural provision irrelevant as full British citizenship is inferred for African-Caribbean British women. However, the fact that African-Caribbean British is not highlighted in such categories is too complex and layered an issue to be addressed any further in this study.

One centre responded to the question of provision for African-Caribbean British women thus:

*Our priority is Eastern European community due to much larger numbers (ERCC1).<sup>13</sup>*

Where RCC provision did acknowledge culture, ethnicity there was justified references to FGM, honour based violence and language as a barrier. However, I would suggest that a simultaneous focus should addressing CSA within the lives of African-Caribbean British women. For if they employ Kelly's continuum (Kelly, 1987) and Kanyeredzi's (2014) continuum of oppression to the lives of African-Caribbean British women then they may have experienced CSA and racial abuse in addition to other forms of VAW. Some African-Caribbean British women may be deterred from seeking support because they do not recognise themselves within categories like BME/BAME. This suggests that BME/BAME provision needs to be more explicit in its representation of inclusion toward African-Caribbean British women.

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<sup>13</sup> Notation: E= English or S=Scottish; RCC= Rape Crisis Centre and then centre number e.g. 6.

## LOCAL AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH POPULATIONS AND RCC PROVISION

Eight of the 13 centres answered “Yes” to the question; “Does the area you serve have an African Caribbean black British community?” with three responding ‘no’; one ‘don't know’ and one not answering this question. However, five of the eight centres where an African-Caribbean British community was acknowledged answered “no” to the question: ‘have you made specific efforts to reach African-Caribbean British women’? Three centres had made efforts at outreach, and one centre did not respond.

Two centres provide specific services for BME/ BAME women and two additional centres chose to leave comments in the section which asked for an outline of the specific BME/BAME services available. One (ERCC8) referred back to a previous answer which specified the types of service offered, another re-stated the services offered: “*ongoing helpline/email support; 21 sessions face to face*” (SRCC5). These responses suggest that these centres saw their generic provision as sufficient to address the needs of African-Caribbean British women. To the extent that this is the case they could be seen as endorsing a universal model based upon the normalising of whiteness, thereby omitting the situated experiences of culturally diverse CSA/sexual violence victim-survivors. This fails to take into account the everyday negotiations of racialisation, racism, class and community loyalty that confront us before any decision is made in favour of ourselves. One centre based in London outlined and understanding of the layers of complexity involved.

*We will also need to consider that African-Caribbean British are not one homogeneous group, but vary in complexity and maybe divided by numerous issues related to identity such as shadism, island and mixed parentage issues. I think one of the most significant challenges is the lack of African-Caribbean British women therapists. And also that we do not have a eurocentric frame but have a holistic afrocentric term of reference for therapy (ERCC6).*

What this respondent alludes to is both the diverse nature of African-Caribbean British communities and the messiness of legacies of division produced by slavery and colonialism. These divisions, based

upon racialised hierarchies within and upon subsequent generations of African Caribbean and African-Caribbean British peoples, are complex and nuanced in how they position African-Caribbean British people(s) themselves and in relation to whiteness. A recent study (Kalathil, 2011), conducted in the UK with African-Caribbean British women attending mental health services, outlined the continuing resonances of histories of slavery and colonialism on the psyche of African-Caribbean British communities and how these may be employed as coping strategies. They also spoke of the collective resilience in terms of their communities surviving colonialization, slavery and the continuing legacy of oppression and the resilience of black women (p. 10).

Popularist associations of black female 'strength' can thus be seen as an active enactment of ancestral coping mechanisms, rather than an innate characteristic of black femininity. The mimetic process, once mastered, is complex to dismantle. Therefore, when African-Caribbean British victim-survivors attend therapeutic services it could be a greater challenge for non-African-Caribbean British therapeutic and support staff to see beyond the veneer of resilience often presented by African-Caribbean British women. This is not to argue that African-Caribbean British victim-survivors can only be supported or understood by other African-Caribbean British women, but to demonstrate that awareness of differences is a vital part of service provision.

The reference to 'shadism' is an example of hierarchies of racialisation through which darker skinned African-Caribbean British women are relegated to an inferior position. Dual heritage people are liminally positioned between the opposing locations of black and white. Where racist discourses and practices have located people of dual heritage as being black, black or African-Caribbean British people have contested this imposed positioning by viewing people of dual heritage origins as 'not black enough' (see Chapter 4). From personal experience, I often wondered whether my own CSA was due to my darker shade of skin in comparison to that of my family. This thought constantly provoked me, especially because my abusers were either very light skinned or white. Again a non-African-Caribbean British person would not necessarily understand the dynamics of racialisation upon a darker skinned women's

self-esteem or the constant negotiation of dual heritage victim-survivors might have about belonging, or her black mother's complex positioning for having a child with a white man.

Similarly, the cultural conflicts and stereotypes within African-Caribbean British communities regarding differing islands in the Caribbean, is in part due to the variety of colonising styles. Therefore, what appears to be required for African-Caribbean British victim-survivor service provision is a commitment to a culturally aware practice which uses enquiry by staff members of the standpoint of each woman approaching such services.

### **SERVICES TO AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH VICTIM-SURVIVORS OF CSA**

One Scottish centre argued that their service was “*socially inclusive and thus provided support to all women regardless of ethnicity and culture*” (SRCC4). The respondent qualified this statement by noting that this included those who fell within the BME/BAME and African-Caribbean British category, but as the BME/BAME/African-Caribbean British population in their geographical area was small they had only provided support to two BME/BAME women. She did not give any approximate figures for African-Caribbean British women in her locality, but clearly stated later in the survey that there was an African-Caribbean British community in that area.

Two centres, one in England and one in Scotland, provided a specialised service for women under the BME/BAME category. The centre in England was located in an area where 9% of the local population identified as black/black British; with a further 3.7% dual heritage. In the Scottish region, the figure was 0.1% identifying as Caribbean or Black Scottish, and “mixed” higher at 0.4% (Rogers, 2011; National Record of Scotland: Statistical Bulletin, 2013).

The English centre (ERCC5) was more detailed in their explanation of their specialised BME/BAME/African-Caribbean British service. They provided bilingual training for therapists working in refugee projects and they attempted to provide service users with a choice of whom they worked with. They did not clarify the nature of this choice, for example, whether it was based on working with a staff

member of the same or similar cultural, ethnic or religious background. Additionally, they did not qualify whether that choice excluded race, religion, class similarities but was based upon rapport and trust. The focus for this centre was on language as a barrier; a factor which has been identified by previous research on cultural barriers to women's help seeking behaviours. However, language is not usually a barrier faced by African-Caribbean British women (Bent-Goodley, 2007; Ahmed & McCaw, 2010).

This RCC outlined the need for services to have a more complex layered response to women who had to address "*identity concerns as this may compound the trauma they experience*" (ERCC6). Although this centre has incorporated the cultural needs of certain women who experience language as a barrier to seeking/receiving help, in regards to the particular concerns of African-Caribbean British women the centre did not provide any specific services. Reasons for this are unknown; however, it may be surmised that as with all of the centres funding is of great concern; funding bodies and the centres themselves may not be able to articulate sufficiently how identity issues impact and continue to feed trauma caused by historical experiences of CSA.

Although the two RCCs stated that they offered a specialised service for BME/BAME women, there is a clear disparity in each centre's response to the needs of women from African-Caribbean British groups. The first response from the centre in Scotland fits a generalised social policy response which demands public bodies have a commitment to equal opportunity and non-discrimination in regards to the usual social categories of race, religion etc. and as such is consistent with Fukuyama's transcultural concept (Fukuyama, 1990; Hays, 1996). The statement: "*We do not discriminate and will support women with whatever issues they may present*" (SRCC4) further suggests that this centre continues to practice within the original pioneering feminist framework of Rape Crisis Centres (Jones & Cook, 2008). The lack of articulation in the above quote of how intersectional dynamics of race, gender and class are embodied by women infers a lack of understanding, or underestimation, of these in the lives of African-Caribbean British women.

The acknowledgement of 'identity' as a factor in how African-Caribbean British women engage with past experiences of sexual abuse, and language as a barrier to seeking support provides us with a clear example of what Hays (1995; 1996) has termed a transcultural-specific service response, which unlike the transcultural model, takes into consideration and places at the fore culturally-specific concerns whilst simultaneously locating those concerns within a transcultural framework. With the focus on deconstructing the ethnic differences contained within the 'black' in such acronyms the tendency for reductionist, even dehumanising, service responses is lessened (Hays, 1996, p. 333; Aspinall, 2002; Richardson, 2006; Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993).

This centre has a long tradition of providing services which acknowledges how culture, race and racism impacts upon their client's agency. However, where this centre's response extends Hay's (1996) transcultural framework is within their practical support which recognises the specificities of women's experiences due to the diverse cultural composition which constitutes the UK, for example, dual-heritage women and white and black women who are in relationships with black and white men. Where the demands for a culturally-specific service from a UK context may not be realised due to funding constraints, this centre's response is to provide a culturally-aware service, within which the particularities of women are acknowledged and addressed. This may provide a realistic template for future provision which can accommodate African-Caribbean British victim-survivors.

### **OUTREACH BY RCCS**

A further question asked about whether outreach was undertaken with African-Caribbean British communities. Whilst one Scottish centre (SRCC4) appeared to have a less clear understanding of the concerns of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors they had attempted outreach work through advertising. Two other centres acknowledged that they required additional support/ research in how to engage with not only African-Caribbean British women but women who they felt came under the BME/BAME headings.

*Any suggestions as to how we can engage with any BME women would be welcome (ERCC1).*

*It is not something we have found time to develop or research at present. This is something we hope to change soon (SRCC3).*

The majority (nine centres) reported that they had not made specific efforts to reach African-Caribbean British women in their particular areas: in three cases this can be linked to there being no local African-Caribbean British community. Six centres did not outline why they had not undertaken outreach. One Scottish centre stated that they did have an African-Caribbean British community, but had not approached the community directly.

*We have mailed out to all BME organisations but they were not specifically African-Caribbean British (SRCC5).*

Although this centre had attempted to reach women by restricting their efforts to mail-outs and not approaching African-Caribbean British organisations or businesses (i.e. hairdressers) directly, opportunities for engaging with African-Caribbean British victim-survivors are lessened due to the culturally non-specific nature of organisations which advertise and employ acronyms like BME/BAME (Fukuyama, 1990; Hays, 1996; Richardson, 2006; Aspinall, 2002) .

The three centres which had conducted outreach within their local African-Caribbean British communities had done so through advertising. One (ERCC6) stated that they had also made specific effort to target African-Caribbean British women, but did not specify how. Another centre (ERCC5) stated that they had just begun to address providing a culturally-specific service for African-Caribbean British women.

*Some - not sufficient; hope newly appointed paid worker will. With new management support, begin to address this (ERCC5).*

Although the Rape Crisis ethos has traditionally preferred women to self-refer, a growing acknowledgment of how culture may inhibit women's ability to approach services has influenced how certain centres now engage at a local level (Jones & Cook, 2008) as outlined in the quote by a former member of staff at Cumbria Rape Crisis.

For many women it is not culturally familiar to just pick up the phone and self-refer- that's when we have a responsibility to try and reach those women. We were right to be challenged and I have experienced this a lot in my work with refugee women. (Jude Boyles, former collective member at Cumbria Rape Crisis, cited in Jones & Cook 2008, p.18)

Recent research conducted in the UK with African-Caribbean British and South Asian mental health users (Kalathil, 2011) found that women wanted the professional they were working with to see them as individuals, with their own unique "*pre-story*". Participants stated that it was important for professionals to understand the social and experiential causes of their distress. Additionally, they wanted the impact of inequality, discrimination, racism, sexism to be acknowledged within the client-practitioner relationship. Where professionals did not take these considerations into account the women stated that they felt "*judged, ignored, isolated, punished and powerless*" (p. 3). The requirements outlined by Kalathil's participants could be argued to be less about culture and more about agencies providing good practice to all women.

In contrast the response by ERCC6 focuses on an understanding of the lived experience of the intersections of racialisation/racism upon the subjectivity of women and the everyday nuanced uncertainties these produce in women's feelings of belonging, citizenship, identity. Moreover, it suggests that these affect the negotiations that culturally diverse victim-survivors have to address simultaneously when seeking support for CSA experiences. A possible reason for this more comprehensive understanding could be the centre's location in a metropolitan city with diverse communities. The understanding of identity in this centre's response suggests a knowledge of the intersectional embodiment of racialisation upon gender. This may have been realised through their work with local residents (15% identified as African-Caribbean British out of 48% BME clients) or through the composition of the culturally diverse staff members in this particular centre.

## UNDERSTANDINGS OF BME/BAME

In order to establish whether RCCs felt that African-Caribbean British women fell within BME/BAME provision or whether our particular British-ness eclipsed our African-Caribbean British culture, RCCs were asked: 'Do you believe African-Caribbean British women are included under the BME/BAME category'? I sought to understand if service providers understood what the acronyms stood for, and which sub-groups they located within them. On more than one occasion I have had to explain to very senior academics that the 'B' in BME/BAME stood for Black and not British. The confusion surrounding these terms are illustrated by a response to the question.

*One centre replied: "Yes. But need Asian speciality as well"  
(ERCC5).*

This response suggests that there is some ambiguity around such acronyms: although the respondent acknowledged that African-Caribbean British women fell within these categories, the assertion that an Asian speciality is required suggests some confusion regarding the meaning of BAME provision. For, as stated earlier, BAME stands for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic. If an Asian category already exists within this category, it may be supposed that there is also confusion regarding which groups are included in the black section.

Of the 13 centres, nine included African-Caribbean British women within the BME/BAME category. One centre in Scotland answered "Yes" and "No"; the reasoning behind this dual response was explained thus.

*We do not have a great deal of BME/BAME /African-Caribbean  
British women in our area; we can only speak about two whom  
we have supported (SRCC5).*

This respondent's comments suggest that the categories of BME/BAME are related to the local composition of the community where the centre is located and the women who use the service on a regular basis. It appears that the respondent is suggesting that African-Caribbean British women are catered for within BME/BAME categories in general, but in this particular centre's experience it may be

that African-Caribbean British victim-survivors are not specifically catered for due to their absence both in accessing the service and by the small African-Caribbean British population in that area.

One centre (SRCC2) did not provide for BME/BAME service users and did not explain why they thought that African-Caribbean British women were not included with the BME/BAME category. The two “don’t know” responses also did not provide a BME/BAME service for victim-survivors.

*We provide all services for all women, regardless of race and background (SRCC3).*

*We have 0.4% BME in [area] - not sure how many of those are African-Caribbean British (ERCC1).*

Once again the response from SRCC3 is generic, suggesting a transcultural slant. The continued reliance on statements which use the term “regardless of race and background” could imply to African-Caribbean British women that the centre lacks knowledge about African-Caribbean British communities.

These data provide some support for the view that there is some confusion regarding the terms BME/BAME and which groups fall within their classification. This may explain why the provision of culturally-aware services for African-Caribbean British women is scant even when there is a local African-Caribbean British population. African-Caribbean British women were viewed as being included in the BME/BAME provision by eight out of the thirteen centres, therefore it may be assumed that our Britishness did not initially cancel out a specific cultural heritage or need for culturally-specific provision. Rather it seemed the size of African-Caribbean British populations in certain areas were the deciding factors.

## AWARENESS OF INTERSECTIONAL ISSUES

Of the 13 centres, eight answered “Yes” to the question “In your opinion are there any additional issues that African-Caribbean British survivors of CSA might encounter?” Two centres skipped this question, with the remaining three answering “don’t know”. This question sought to understand if RCCs understood how intersections of race and gender could impact both an African-Caribbean British

woman's understanding of her history of sexual abuse and her sense of agency in regards to accessing support.

Crenshaw's (1991) theory of intersectionality addresses the multifaceted simultaneous intersections of systemic and social inequalities of race, gender, sexuality, class, experienced by women associated with colour. Her theory outlines how women associated with colour experience race, gender and class discrimination not independent of each other, but rather intersected, producing multidimensional experiences of oppression, and thus is of relevance to RCCs support provision. For Crenshaw (1991) intersections of race and gender must be acknowledged in order to understand the subordination of women associated with colour. Yet implementing services which acknowledge intersections of race and gender may be problematic, in that intersectionality is a theory. In its abstract form, it does not enlighten or instruct the experiential to emerge and become tangible; this requires a relational process of enquiry between service provider and victim-survivor. Therefore, a revised framework is required if intersectionality to become an effective framework for practice.

The comments from those centres which recognised additional issues show an awareness of how the dynamics of discrimination, racism and social exclusion are experienced or embodied and thus may become a barrier, deterring African-Caribbean British women from seeking support.

*Racism, barriers to accessing services, reluctance/length of time to engage with services, issues around loyalty, more somatised responses, issues around identity, injuries that bruise the spirit! (ERCC6)*

*Racism from police, judicial system etc. (ERCC4)*

*Experiences of racial discrimination will reinforce experience of CSA. Add in white partners (abusive) of black mothers and white mothers; (must be much worse) (ERCC5).*

Although all three responses refer to the structural impact of racism the second response is more general: police harassment and the over representation of African-Caribbean British people within the judicial system tends to be more associated with African-Caribbean British men. The lack of a more

complex understanding of African-Caribbean British women's experiences of intersectionality may not initially dissuade African-Caribbean British victim-survivors from approaching services, but may not be sufficient to retain African-Caribbean British women after the after initial contact.

The first and third statements have more depth in understanding of the realities of racialisation and structural exclusion. The first statement from ERCC6 outlines the positionality of African-Caribbean British women, offering a glimpse of the multiple levels negotiations which must be undertaken by African-Caribbean British women when choosing whether to approach support services.

ERCC5 suggests an awareness of how everyday experiences of racism may continuously inform victim-survivors dealing with histories of CSA. However, they do not comment on how racist abuse can compound and distort the lived experiences of histories of CSA. This lack of articulation may illustrate what is produced with the polarisation of discourses which address gendered violence and racial violence as two distinct occurrences and political concerns. Therefore, misunderstandings regarding the intersections (Crenshaw, 1991) of racism and sexism may continue to invisibilise the experiences of African-Caribbean British/black women (Omolade, 1994; Hays, 1996; White, 2001). Yet the awareness demonstrated by ERCC5 that CSA is not experienced by African-Caribbean British victim-survivors as an isolated matter, such that experiences cannot be separated out from embodiments of race and gender, nor other forms of abuse shows an astute consideration of complexities involved in how victim-survivors gain meaning and live with their CSA past.

The comment about white partners is less straightforward but suggests that the respondent is aware that racialisation and histories of racial abuse may complicate relationships, even intimate ones, and therefore may even complicate relationships between women within a therapeutic setting. The final statement by this respondent is interesting: "*add in white partners (abusive) of black mothers and white mothers; must be much worse*". Although the statement is unclear the framework of this study attempts to understand how historical constructions of race situate both African-Caribbean British victim-

survivors and informs support service provision. Therefore, the statement could be interpreted on a variety of fronts: a) gender is seen as taking priority when we explore sexual violence, by making reference to “*white mothers*” the intersections of ethnicity, culture and racialisation are cancelled out when white women are positioned in relation to white men; (b) abusive relationships between black mothers and white fathers are easier to explain because of underlying racist beliefs; (c) abuse within white on white relationships are much more complex to understand because of the omission of racism. The statement ‘*must be much worse*’ resonates with white liberal notions regarding the lives of black women as characterised by double or triple oppression. Equally this comment could demonstrate a more layered understanding of the complexities involved when race and gender intersect for example; coupled with a shared cultural heritage (white and black) and how racialisation compounds these types of relationships.

The statement is consistent with Fukuyama’s (1990) transcultural framework, highlighting commonalities of inequalities which are shared between groups, in this case women. Paradoxically the respondent’s omission of black on black acts of CSA and sexual violence, referring only to white abusive partners appears to support ‘black race solidarity’ discourses which omit black on black sexual violence historically and in the present. Therefore, it could be argued that the historical invisibility of representations of African-Caribbean British/ black women as victims of sexual violence, except in regards to white men invisibilises black men as perpetrators. This respondent’s comments reflect the lack of discourse which focus on the lived experiences of African-Caribbean British women within the present and the gap in our understanding of sexual violence in African-Caribbean British communities ( see also Omolade, 1994; White, 2001).

For African-Caribbean British victim-survivors, fear of disbelief is compounded by historical stereotypes of black female sexuality and the denial of African-Caribbean British/black men’s sexual violence toward African-Caribbean British/black women. Additionally, stereotypical views held by members of the dominant white society regarding the supposed impact of racism in our lives further act to prevent

African-Caribbean British women from coming forward. The comments below are a response to the question: "In your opinion are there any additional issues that African-Caribbean British survivors of CSA may encounter?"

*Cultural differences; childhood abuse and serious neglect (not maternal, but environmental); hunger and deprivation (SRCC4).*

It is not clear what "cultural differences" are being referred to here. Excluding maternal responsibility of such abuses by the respondent suggests reluctance to 'mother-blame'. The mention of hunger and deprivation again suggests that the respondent possesses a level of understanding regarding how structural disadvantages and intersections of race, class and gender have restricted economic opportunities of some African-Caribbean British groups (Crenshaw, 1991). Yet hunger, neglect, abuse, deprivations and poverty are not exclusive to African-Caribbean British groups. Therefore, this statement suggests unfamiliarity with the lived experiences of African-Caribbean British populations in the UK and within her locality.

Additionally, although the respondent later attempts to create a unifying image of women by stating: "*We try to integrate and not isolate. They are women the same as us*" (SRCC4) her comments could be read as 'othering' to African-Caribbean British women and communities. If her analysis of living conditions were based on her local knowledge of the lived experiences of African-Caribbean British people, the comments could be seen as informative. However, this respondent came from a centre which stated that it provided a BME/BAME service, yet could not distinguish the ethnic background of the single woman who attended.

Although many agencies have attempted to use intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) as a tool to understand how intersections of race, gender and class compound sexual violence I would argue that the theory is insufficient for support services which wish to understand how social identities are negotiated and lived for African-Caribbean British women. As such it seems unfair to critique services which may adhere to a traditional notion of an additive model to understand and create service

provision. Expanding on Crenshaw's theory I wish to propose a framework of investigation which centralises difference and enquires from differing standpoints in order to enable the individual to emerge and promote a climate of exchange between women across the social positions and standpoints we occupy. I have termed this framework intersectional liminality.

### INTERSECTIONAL LIMINALITY

Intersectional liminality is a dual analytical framework building on and reimagining Crenshaw's original concept by linking it to the post-colonial/ ethnographic term liminality (Turner, 1969; Bhabha, 1993). Turner (1969) describes the attributes of liminality/liminal personae as threshold or threshold people. He stresses that liminality is necessarily ambiguous because the condition of liminality and liminal personae have slipped through into the gaps between networks of classification. They are 'betwixt and between', holding no position within cultural spaces, where they have no status or recognition. Because of this ambiguous positioning they are often only represented symbolically through: "death, invisibility, being in the womb or wilderness, or the eclipse of sun and moon" (p. 359).

Bhabha (1993) uses a stairwell to demonstrate a pathway (liminal space) between upper and lower areas, annotated with plaques of blackness and whiteness (p. 4). His illustration of a constant up and down flow between black and white denotes the possibilities of liminal exchanges and interactions. The fluidity of interaction prevents identities from becoming polarized, distinct and limited. Within the liminal space the ebb and flow or flux of interactions strips away dualist constructions of people as 'upper/lower', 'black/white', 'man/woman'. In this space the complexities of humanity can surface, encapsulating the hybridized variations which make up the human condition. The liminal space is an emergent space; where it is possible to hold multiple positions without contestation.

When used in conjunction with intersectionality the processes of subordination that Crenshaw implores us to acknowledge become visible through articulation of an individuals' lived experience (Hall, 1996). The liminal space invites articulation in a way that marginalised or triple oppressed does not.

Intersectional liminality requires us to investigate the ambiguities which are produced by the intersections of dynamic processes of racial, sexual and class oppressions upon the person. If an enquiry is undertaken from a position of seeking to understand how these processes have formed the individual it may address the barriers that women encounter in their everyday lives. Current uses of intersectionality run the danger of universalism of sameness in experiences of inequalities whilst further promoting competition amongst political and structural theories and practices devoted to each inequality (Verloo, 2006). One reason for this is that the application of this theoretical tool does not inquire into the particularities of how inequalities converge and impact upon subjecthood causing ambiguities in and for a person. There is too little space for the individuality of our marginalised lived experience(s) to be understood. As a consequence, creating responsive support services for victim-survivors often comes up short since holding so many competing labels is almost impossible to articulate.

As a result, the everyday negotiations and experiences of African-Caribbean British/black victim survivors may become lost through the lack of individual articulation. Bianca's description of her own shifting often resentful, sense of identity is an example of how relying on public policy classifications of certain groups may reduce the complexities of lived experiences for all people not just African-Caribbean British women (see also Chapter 5). Often within public policy terminology we are located within discourses which speak of marginalised and multiple oppressed positions. However, in reality I argue that African-Caribbean British women occupy all of these locations at varying different times and within differing spaces. Yet the liminal space of ambiguities of being, of constant shape shifting, appears to be a more constant location. Liminality enables room for clarity of affect within both a subjective and communal setting, of the flux of experiential effect of being several things simultaneously: CSA victim-survivor, racialised, national/non-national, classed, straight/gay.

Intersectional liminality therefore demands that we explore the lived experiences of individuals within the complexity of their lives. Furthermore, the interactive interpersonal labour required illuminates both

the person speaking and the listener, and affords and rewards the listener with a greater understanding of how racialisation, sexual violence, class, sexual orientation and all the positions that women occupy may curtail agency, citizenship and entitlement (Plump & Geist-Martin , 2013).

## CONCLUSION

The survey did not yield a large enough response to make any claims to representativeness of RCCs in the UK. That said the RCCs which participated appeared to demonstrate a continued commitment to a feminist agenda which focussed on gender inequality as the framework for understanding violences against women.

Although the comments from several respondents demonstrated an understanding of intersections of disadvantage in the lives of African-Caribbean British/black women deriving from histories of racialisation and intersections with gender and class inequality, there was limited understanding of how to create provision which took these concerns into account. Only two centres offered any culturally aware service provision.

The inadequacy of acronyms such as BME/ BAME was illustrated through the inconsistent, confused and confusing responses of survey participants. The Black in BME/BAME does not encourage or enable service providers to explore the variations in service users' cultural heritages and value systems. They fail to address culturally-specific concerns of women (Aspinall, 2002; Richardson, 2006). Therefore, I argue that the categories of BME/BAME require further scrutiny in order for them to become more representative and recognisable to those peoples who supposedly fall within them. This is important not only for African-Caribbean British and many other communities but also for public agencies who engage with diverse cultures and communities.

Crenshaw's (1991) concept of intersectionality was formulated to account for how the intersections of plural oppressions impact the everyday lives of women associated with colour. As a theoretical concept it accomplishes what it sets out to achieve. As a framework which articulates the experiential I suggest

that it is insufficient as it does not provide the means by which interpersonal barriers of social difference can be transgressed in order to invoke empathy between humans. To meet this challenge I propose the concept of 'intersectional liminality', which has the potential to provide richer more detailed understandings of the situated lives of victim-survivors.

One of the aims of the survey was to understand whether the omission of culturally-aware support for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors was due to the African-Caribbean British heritage of British colonialism and our supposed integration within British society (Fryer, 1984; Lee & Schultz, 2012). Survey responses suggested that this was not the case. Several had attempted some form of outreach, others sought information as to how they might approach, whilst others noted that they focused on the needs of the women within their catchment area, and there was a very small African-Caribbean British community. That said only one English centre offered responses which showed that they had truly considered and attempted to devise services which addressed the specific cultural needs of the women in their locality.

The dearth of funding may explain why emphasis is still placed on providing telephone helplines and counselling which have historically have been core RCC services. The lack of sustainable and sufficient funding may impact on RCCs ability to acknowledge and provide culturally aware services. Whilst survey responses suggest limited understanding regarding how culture intersects, prohibits and restricts women's agency, there was nonetheless a willingness to engage, albeit from a distance (e.g. advertising) with BME/BAME communities. This distanced approach may be due to an implicit uncertainty of how to approach BME/BAME/African-Caribbean British women. By addressing the ambiguity of the terms BME/BAME two effects are possible: firstly, agencies will not appear to be Eurocentric, transcultural and ignorant of the cultural demands placed upon women; secondly, by engaging directly with specific target groups a process of interchange and understanding can emerge diminishing fears of offending the 'other'. In this process, sexual violence support provision can begin to

recognise the impact of historical and everyday acts of racial violence on the agency of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors to seek help, and make sense of their experiences of CSA.

Moving forward the development of new forms of practice based loosely upon the original RCC consciousness raising framework could enable African-Caribbean British victim-survivors and women from differing cultural backgrounds to come together and speak of their experiences of CSA. A means of achieving a true exchange of experiential positions of women who have experienced sexual victimisation and those who support them could be achieved by employing both a culturally-aware approach and by expanding Crenshaw's (1991) theory of intersectionality to include a framework of enquiry through what I have termed intersectional liminality.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS: “WHITE WOMEN LISTEN”; BLACK WOMEN SPEAK

Hazel Carby (1982) urged white women to listen in the early-1980s. I would urge all women associated with colour to demand the right of subjecthood to be able to ‘speak’ of the sexual abuses they have experienced in their lives. If we do not demand or pick up the baton and speak we remain emergent always suspended within the liminal, never fully emerging as political beings with a legitimate right to safety and protection as human beings.

The silence by African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA appears to have contributed to my inability to recognise myself and other African-Caribbean British women in existing literature on CSA. This gap in our understanding regarding African-Caribbean British attitudes to CSA derived during the literature review, influenced the epistemological and methodological framework of this study.

In order to address the gaps in our understanding of how African-Caribbean British victim-survivors live with histories of sexual abuse, the continued silence on the subject by African-Caribbean British women, the theoretical framework necessitated a multi-disciplinary approach. This framework encompassed: critical race theory, black feminist theory, intersectionality and post-colonial theory. The mixed theoretical approach enabled the study to locate and contextualise the absence of a particular African-Caribbean British voice from discourses on CSA within various temporal moments in the UK.

For example, one of the major challenges was contextualising and formulating a ‘working’ cultural classification for the women I wished to interview. The racial category of black employed in the UK to denote an array of people both ethnically and politically was not suitable as it obscured the histories of African-Caribbeans in the UK and our cultural hybridity. African-Caribbean British became the term used as it spoke of the migratory journey and destination of this cultural sub-group and also the liminal positioning created by being located both inside and outside the cultures we embody (see Chapter 3). That said, the use of the term did on occasion present challenges of articulation and identification, especially for the experts. Interesting, the reluctance of the experts to ‘update’ and self-identify as

something other than black suggested that even within this temporal moment it was necessary for the continuance of a culturally ethnic form of political identity as discussed in Chapter 1.

The data chapters, especially that analysing the interviews with experts, and to a lesser extent the victim-survivors, clearly illustrate the adjustments involved in self-identification and women's entitlement to speak as British subjects. For women and African-Caribbean British communities during the period of post-colonialism in London, the impact of processes of racialisation and 'othering' was clearly outlined and identified as influencing how women and ACB communities understood and responded to disclosures of CSA.

With limited discourses which addressed the lives of women associated with race from a British context as garnered from the literature review, the study relied heavily on comparative positions of racialisation on peoples of African descent and thus drew extensively from critical race theories mainly from the US and African-American feminist scholars. Although, geographically there were differences in regard to histories of colonisation and migration, African-American and African-Caribbean British experiences (personal/ structural) of racism and political activism, connections could be drawn on how racism impacted agency for female victim-survivors of African descent residing in the West.

In addition, employing the theoretical framework of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991), enabled exploration of how axes of inequality merge and impact agency for African-Caribbean British women to some extent. However, a reliance on a theory produced specifically to articulate the racially gendered and economic disadvantages faced by some African-American domestic violence victim-survivors did not always feel adequate to investigate the main aim of this study: understanding African-Caribbean British victim-survivors' 'space to speak'. As such, the multi-theoretical approach in this study acts as an intersectional liminal net able to hold many different lived experiences. This theoretical framework attempts to capture and interpret the findings on affiliated levels, yet acknowledge and articulate

'difference' of lived experiences geographically. This was also the case for the methodological framework employed in the study.

In order to explore these questions the study's methodological approach was rooted in what I have termed an intersectional liminal framework, data garnered from the Expert interviews, and the gaps in literature steered the direction of the study. The research evolved via in-depth lengthy collaborative interviews involving the participation of both researcher and researched, with a shift in one of the core questions following the expert interviews. The study initially sought to explore the 'personal is political' in regard to CSA and black British feminist activism. However the direction shifted to incorporate embodiments of racialisation/racism, belonging and citizenship as significant in affecting African-Caribbean British women's autonomy and agency in relation to CSA.

To enable the impact of living with racism and CSA experiences to be spoken of and discussed openly, the dialogue had to be bounced back and forth and probed in the pursuit of articulation. In this shape shifting process the emergent status of subjugated knowledges and lived experiences of the intersections of racism, sexism and classism held experientially within and amongst African-Caribbean British women's 'knowing' finally emerged and was openly named.

This tussle for articulation occurred more with the experts than with the victim-survivors. They grappled with the complications of claiming their own localised phenomenological realities of racism and letting go of established theories derived usually from outside the UK. Thus the experts reflections suggested the embodiment or appropriations of external racialised representations of black women as suggested by Hall, (1990; see Chapter 3).

Understanding how their experiences of racialisation and racism had shaped their sense of agency with respect to CSA, and their responses to disclosures by African-Caribbean British friends and family members, was a difficult topic. The everyday realities of race, gender and class were commonly framed by the experts in terms imitative of African-American feminist landscapes. While their lived experience

chimed with aspects of these theoretical frameworks and narratives, on deeper reflection they were insufficient to take account of the hybridity of the African-Caribbean British experience.

Engaging with black British feminists to explore their agendas and activism, combined with my limited readings from the literature review was the starting point for the data analysis in Chapter Four: this chapter not only contextualised the whole study, but further revealed reflections regarding African-Caribbean British women's lived experiences within wider British society and their relationship to the feminist movement itself. These new understandings redirected and guided the subsequent research.

The concept of 'space to speak' is an adaption of existing perspectives on women's agency in regard to domestic violence (Lundgren, 2004; Coy & Kelly, 2011; Kelly, Sharp, & Klein, 2014), to describe the lack of opportunities that African-Caribbean British victim-survivors have both within and outside of African-Caribbean British communities. Where the educational advantage of the experts enabled them to articulate how race politicisation combined with embodiments or appropriations of racialisation, positioned African-Caribbean British women at a disadvantage to that of the African-Caribbean British male and the white female this was not the case for CSA. The experts all held a level of discursive reasoning regarding the reasons why African-Caribbean British women often locate themselves within representations of blackness.

The realisation that for many African-Caribbean British victim-survivors there had been no 'space to speak' of the realities and fears produced by CSA in the UK, because of racism and the need to prioritise the struggle for race equality, seemed to both anger and produce a sense of relief for the experts as they admitted and spoke of things which two experts stated they had held onto for many years. It was during these moments that the conceptual framework of intersectional liminality was conceived, further developed and refined during the interviews with victim-survivors and data analysis.

The question of how CSA and racism impacted African-Caribbean British women's agency revealed differences between the experts and the victim-survivors. For the experts race politics and racism had

eclipsed gender concerns for most: the prism of race taking precedence over 'personal' priorities. Additionally, many had expressed that CSA was thought to be a 'white thing'. This perception may have been the result of the dominance of black men within race discourses and activist agendas and the lack of representations of African-Caribbean British women within CSA and sexual violence discourses in the UK.

For the victim-survivors' racism informed their attitudes to approaching and trusting existing support provision. Yet it seemed that perceptions of more nuanced implicit racist practices, not necessarily from personal experience influenced opportunities to seek support outside of ACB communities. Additionally, the response to disclosures of sexual abuse appeared to be influenced by a racialised expectation of how they should move forward from such experiences as discussed in Chapter 6.

The study therefore recommends more culturally diverse public representations of victim-survivors in order to challenge the view that CSA is a 'white people thing'. Creating a counter-narrative which disputes this conception would encourage more African-Caribbean British victim-survivors to speak of experiences of CSA within African-Caribbean British communities and approach support services without the fear of encountering negative stereotypes of black female sexuality.

The analysis with the experts began during the interviews through probing enquiries aimed at articulating the connections of racialisation and CSA from an experiential level which were missing from the literature review. The 'betwixt and between' tussle of the realities of everyday lives brought the complexities of lived experience to the surface. Both space to speak and intersectional liminality originated within the research process.

The chapter entitled Coconut Milk and the Prism of Race explored whether racialisation/ racism informed the victim-survivors' understandings of their histories of CSA and their decisions to access support as adults. Furthermore, it explores whether identity and belonging were significant to African-Caribbean British women's accounts of CSA.

This chapter is foundational in demonstrating how embodiments of race may influence women's autonomy and agency. It outlined how, historically, African-Caribbean British socialisation practices have reinforced both a set of gender norms and racial binaries of difference, creating forms of mistrust for African-Caribbean British people. Socialisation of African-Caribbean British children, both indirectly and directly, to engage with a racism in the public world may underpin the mistrust of white females by African-Caribbean British women. Interestingly, mistrust of white males was not mentioned by the participants.

When asked to rate the effect of CSA in their adult lives, more women ranked racism as having had a greater effect. However, when women's accounts were analysed, what they revealed raised questions about this ranking. The Measure of Affect of CSA and racism for the victim-survivors revealed that over half felt that personal experiences of racism had affected them into adulthood. In regard to how sexual abuse had affected their adult lives, three of the seven women reported that it had affected them 'greatly'; one participant outlined she felt the affect fluctuated at differing times in her life (see Chapter 5).

The Measure of Affect findings suggest either a greater understanding of the impact of racism on agency and personal well-being, the success of African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis in deflecting or suppressing negative effects, and or, a less comprehensive understanding and vocabulary of the possible effects of sexual abuse available to African-Caribbean British victim-survivors. The lack of such a vocabulary could be the result of the limited representational choices of African-Caribbean British women within popular, academic and public health discourses which was identified in the literature review.

Where previous studies found that African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of domestic violence relied upon family and friends for support this was not the case for the women in this study. The decision not to confide in friends and family may have been influenced by victim-survivors desire to present a 'good

girl' front to other African-Caribbean British people. The difference in attitudes toward CSA and domestic violence may be an additional factor influencing women's ability to speak of sexual abuse. There may be smaller 'spaces to speak' of CSA than domestic violence within African-Caribbean British communities. The fear of being judged by racist stereotypes and African-Caribbean British cultural norms of female resilience did inform the women's sense of autonomy and agency to seek support. Additionally whilst all claimed a sense of citizenship to the UK, this did not translate to feelings of belonging to British society (see Hill-Collins, 1991, Chapter 1) and appeared to implicitly affect their sense 'safety' and or entitlement to approach support services.

Replacing the racial category black with a more specific term enabled recognition of claims women of African Caribbean descent as British. In practice this may accomplish three things: African-Caribbean British women's sense of entitlement to seek support for histories of CSA may increase. Secondly, the need to perform 'strong black women' can be questioned by African-Caribbean British women and finally, it may act as an initial step towards modes of enquiry for practitioners and researchers based on liminal intersectionality .

The chapter entitled Boil stones and pretend you are cooking soup: representation and the role of African-Caribbean British Maternal Mimesis discusses women's experiences of disclosing CSA, asking whether race and culture informed both responses to disclosure and the coping strategies of victim-survivors.

Although what women outlined in regard to speaking has parallels to previous work, they had told on multiple occasions from childhood, throughout adolescence and adulthood until they received a supportive response. Whilst all had maintained contact with their families, their relationship with their mothers was the most conflicted. Disruption of relationships with mothers is not uncommon however, with six of the seven women describing the response by their mothers as being dismissive and for more

than half resulting in 'beatings', or in one case being 'shamed' amongst family, the levels of conflict reported were high.

Whether the CSA was intrafamilial/extrafamilial seemed to be linked to these responses by mothers. Where perpetrators were fathers, brothers, sons, mothers boyfriends/partners and kinship 'uncles', there was a more negative response to telling by mothers. Where the sexual abuse was extrafamilial the response tended to be more supportive.

### **AFRICAN- CARIBBEAN BRITISH MATERNAL MIMESIS**

Three of the women stated that their mothers had purposefully revealed their own experiences of CSA to their daughter, with a further two doing so implicitly. The reasons for this appeared to be to offer a template for their daughters to mimic: a way to remain strong and transcend situations without recourse to justice. I term this process 'African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis'.

It is important to stress that African-Caribbean British maternal mimesis is not another facet of 'mother-blaming'. Rather the concept aims to illustrate what lurks beneath Crenshaw's (1991) axis of inequalities. It points to how the continuation of a conscious lack of personal agency for mothers is transferred inter-generationally by women experiencing intersections of abuse: racial, gendered, socio-economic etc and how these assaults of inequality creates liminal positions of disempowerment. Passing on maternal mimesis to daughters with similar experiences of abuse(s) may in fact, represent a coping strategy born of love and caring from mother to daughter.

There's more to me than rice 'n' peas and jerk chicken: Rape Crisis Centres and African-Caribbean British Provision in England and Scotland presented data from the survey with Rape Crisis Centres (RCC) in England and Scotland. While the findings cannot be taken as representative of RCC service provision, responses shed light on whether RCCs acknowledge culture and race as factors which might compound experiences of CSA for African-Caribbean British women. Only two centres stated that they provided BME/BAME provision. Nine out of the thirteen centres included African-Caribbean British

people within the acronyms: however, there was some confusion regarding which groups fell within the 'black' of BME/BAME. Interestingly, one centre was unsure if African-Caribbean British people were even included within the categories.

The centres demonstrated a continued commitment to gender inequality as a major cause of violence against women. Most displayed limited understanding of how intersectional inequalities of race, gender and class positioned African-Caribbean British women, with the exception of one in a metropolitan city. In regard to engaging with African-Caribbean British communities at a local level one RCC stated that they had advertised their services to local BME/BAME organisations. However, the reductionist (Aspinall, 2002; Richardson, 2006) nature of such acronyms may ensure that the advertisements would not reach African-Caribbean British women.

This study argues that more scrutiny is required to establish which groups are included within the acronyms in order to establish the specific challenges faced by the groups they supposedly encompass. Since the financial sustainability of RCCs is a constant issue, culturally specific provision is unlikely in the present climate. This led to the conclusion that service provision needs to be culturally aware, rather than culturally specific or competent. By employing intersectional liminality as a method of enquiry and understanding, the concerns of African-Caribbean British victim-survivors can be incorporated into service provision with a nominal cost.

### **INTERSECTIONAL LIMINALITY**

Cultural competence has not been a means by which sameness in regard to trauma for victim-survivors of CSA has been recognised. Rather it could be seen as reinforcing binaries of racial difference. A more progressive approach is needed which both acknowledges cultural difference, yet seeks to understand and share the complexities of gender oppression in the lives of women and girls. Expanding on Crenshaw's (1991) theory of intersectionality, creating a working model from the heuristic theoretical model may be a means by which to achieve this exchange of knowledge.

Intersectional liminality provides a framework with a focus on genuine enquiry by researchers or practitioners in support services. It relies upon the engagement of parties in a process of active exchange to achieve meaning, understanding and articulation; learning through the exchange and tussle of articulation within the liminal space where subjugated knowledges lay previously silent. This method whereby the client/researched is the 'expert' enables the specifics of their lives to emerge, minimising assumptions and stereotypical beliefs and the power dynamics of the researcher/practitioner to be challenged.

#### FUTURE WORK WITH AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH VICTIM-SURVIVORS

This study set out to add the voices of African-Caribbean British activists and victim-survivors to knowledges on CSA. It was important to understand why African-Caribbean British victim-survivors of CSA often remained silent regarding their experiences. Although the participants in this study outlined various reasons for the omission of African-Caribbean British victim-survivor perspectives from existing discourses on sexual violence more robust investigations are required in the future to address the imbalance in our understanding of how race/racialisation impacts autonomy and agency for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors.

Future research is also required to address the 'them and us' attitude produced by racial 'othering' between women as we all may experience some level of sexual violence in our lives. Racial divisions create gender hierarchies of mistrust between women of differing cultures which serve patriarchal systems of race and gender oppressions. Therefore, a culturally-aware dialogue between women is needed in order that we can support women who may have experience(d) such forms of sexual abuse.

Space to speak highlights that opportunities for African-Caribbean British women to talk about childhood experiences of sexual abuse are limited, in part due to continued perceptions that African-Caribbean British communities and the black male need to be safeguarded from external scrutiny. Women identified and articulated factors which aided the impunity of African-Caribbean British male

sexual abusers within African-Caribbean British communities. Soci-economic factors were present within certain accounts given by the victim-survivors implicitly suggestive of child sexual exploitation. Both experts and victim-survivors outlined how the corporeality of women of African descent was somehow used to explain the sexual interest and sexual abuse perpetrated by African-Caribbean/African-Caribbean British men. Where feminist theories have argued against essentialist biological arguments which relinquish men's responsibility to control their sexuality these arguments were not always forthcoming in a few of the accounts in this study.

Both experts and victim-survivors suggested that speaking of CSA within and outside of African-Caribbean British communities was problematic as it can serve to reinforce negative stereotypes of black female sexuality and perpetuate the sense of precariousness to belonging by African-Caribbean British communities in the UK. The impunity afforded men of African descent explained in this study was reminiscent of the "*I am, because we are*" (White, 2001) attitude identified by African-American feminist scholars which have enabled African-American abusers to escape justice.

The unique relationship between black men and women may in fact be representative of the *village raising the child*, (Healey, 1998) and thus an ethnically cultural tradition which has been amplified by the need for a political collective to safeguard against further racist oppression in our communities.

Achieving racial equality in the UK continues to be a challenge both structurally and on a personal level. The Experts' accounts suggested that for African-Caribbean British women patriarchal practices of oppression are often obscured by racism or even overlooked in order to safeguard the unique collective relationship of blackness in the West. Therefore, creating spaces for African-Caribbean British women to speak, using where possible images which include African-Caribbean British women, will enable them to recognise themselves within discourses on CSA and convey that they can speak openly of their experiences without feeling pre-judged or racially stereotyped. By understanding how culture/racialisation prohibits African-Caribbean British women's speaking of CSA a robust programme

of outreach to engage African-Caribbean British women should be developed in order to add their voices to existing knowledges on CSA in order that we might support all victim-survivors of CSA better in the future.

Understanding how culture impacts the lives of women of African descent in the West has been explored extensively within African-American/Canadian fiction and scholarly discourses. However, this has not been the case for African-Caribbean British victim-survivors in the UK. Additionally, although racism (structural/individual) both actual and perceived has been found to be a factor influencing decisions for women in American and Canada, it has not been studied in conjunction with CSA in any significant way. One advantage of being African-Caribbean British is the hybridity of difference which makes up our ethnic and cultural heritages. We belong to a variety of communities, the collective of blackness being only one. Consequently we have a viewpoint which can accommodate an array of multiple positions. As such we should refuse to allow one aspect of our social identities to silence us for fear of evoking historic stereotypes about who we are or where we belong as African-Caribbean British women.

The victim-survivors in this study outlined a workable model of service provision which would initially enable them to come together and speak of CSA amongst themselves, which was reminiscent of the consciousness-raising by feminists during the 1970s. Future service provision should explore this option as a practice mode which would enable the women to speak of their experiences of CSA amongst themselves in order for them to understand why CSA could not even be broached even within African-Caribbean British communities. The women also stressed that separate groups for African-Caribbean British and African-British victim-survivors should only be the initial means to more culturally diverse groups not the end. Spaces need to be created where the 'sour' intersections of sexual, racial and socio-economic abuse can be spoken for African-Caribbean British women and girls. Maybe then a new form a positive form of maternal mimesis can emerge.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: EXPERT POSTER

Calling all Feminists of African Caribbean descent  
Were you part of a Black Women's Group during the 1970s  
and 80s?

Would you be willing to participate in a research study  
examining sexual violence in the 'Black' community and  
the issues that concerned 'Black' feminists during the  
1970s and 80s?

Then please get in touch

Your stories are of great historical importance



Interested? Please contact: [Joanne Wilson](#)

Office: 020 7133 5130 Mobile: 0779 504 8672 E-mail:  
[joannewilson@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:joannewilson@londonmet.ac.uk)

## APPENDIX 2:EXPERT INTERVIEWS INFORMATION SHEET

Reactivating the Activism: looking back to go forward

### Information Sheet

This sheet will explain the aims of the research project, and what will be asked of those who choose to take part in the study. Additionally, the sheet will outline how the information gathered from participants' will be used in the future.

If there is any aspect of the study which requires further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher on the contact details below.

The research is funded by the London Metropolitan University's Vice Chancellor Studentship Awards.

Researcher: Joanne Wilson

Tel: 020 7133 5130 / 0773 500 8602

[Jow031@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:Jow031@londonmet.ac.uk)

### Introduction

The study intends to explore the impact of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) on the lives of African-Caribbean British (AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH) survivors. Child sexual abuse knows no cultural or racial boundaries, however, to date the response to provide specific services for survivors of African (black) descent in Britain has been almost non-existent.

If you kindly choose to take part in the study, I will ask you to recall the activism of service providers, and activists like yourself who fought for specific service for survivors of black African descent during the 1980s-mid 1990s.

Q. What are the interviews for?

- The Expert historical interviews will create the framework and contextualize the entire project. By revisiting the demands of black feminist activists during this period in regards to service provision for CSA survivors, the project can identify what was achieved during the eighties and nineties, and the factors and issues which still remain to be addressed in regards to policy and specific service provision in the present.
- Additionally, it is important that the activism which occurred during 1980-mid 1990s is recorded not only in feminist 'her-stories' but also for black British history.
- The study will explore the reasons for the 'silence' of black activists since the mid-1990s.
- My long term aim is to use the information gathered to influence future policy and service provision for AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH survivors. Additionally, the information can be used in the future to both understand cultural factors which may assist external agencies in safeguarding the wellbeing of children at risk of harm, and support survivors with any specific cultural needs.

Q. How the information will be gathered

In the event that you consent (complete consent sheet) to take part in the study, all interviews will be recorded with on audio tape. The researcher will also take notes.

Q. What will happen to the information I give?

All recordings will be typed into transcripts so that there is an accurate and full record of what you said. All recordings, notes and transcripts will be kept safely. All identifiable information for example, names, age, will be removed to ensure confidentiality and keep identities secret, if you so wish. Your written consent will also be required before any of your excerpts and quotes can be published.

Q. How long will the interview take?

The interview will should take 1-2 hours. The interviews will be conducted wherever, is convenient for the Expert witnesses. This can be at the Women's Library, London Metropolitan or at a venue of the interviewee's choice.

Q. Can I get feedback once the project is completed?

Those who wish to access the outcomes of the research study should check the Child and Women's Abuse Studies Unit website [www.cwasu.org](http://www.cwasu.org) for further information.

Q. Who should I contact if I have any further questions?

Joanne Wilson c/o CWAS, London Metropolitan University, Ladbroke House, 62-66 Highbury Grove, London, N5 2AD Email: [Jow031@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:Jow031@londonmet.ac.uk) Tel: 020 7133 5130 / 0773 500 8602

Thank You

Professor Liz Kelly ([l.kelly@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:l.kelly@londonmet.ac.uk)) or Dr. Kerry Lee ([Kerry.lee@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:Kerry.lee@londonmet.ac.uk)) may be contacted regarding any aspect of this research study.

### APPENDIX 3: EXPERT INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

#### Historical Overview of Activism on CSA during the 1980s/early 1990s

Name of Researcher: Joanne Wilson

Please initial each of the boxes below:

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study

I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have these answered satisfactorily

I understand that my participation is voluntarily and that I am free to withdraw any time, without giving any reason

I agree to anonymised quotations, excerpts being used in reports and other publications

I agree to take part in the study

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

## APPENDIX 4: EXPERT(S) INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

### Interview Questions for EID1

Name:

Age:

If working within an organisation nature of position held:

Q. When was the last conference or event you attended which addressed VAW, incest/CSA in regards to African, African-Caribbean British Survivors?

Q. What was the impetus for you writing "XXXX XXXXX" during the 1980s?

Q. Do you believe that representation is a key factor in why AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women often do not access generic services?

Q. What was it like being a "black female survivor" during the 1980s? Did you access any services for support?

Q. Do you believe that African-Caribbean British survivors of incest/CSA are now ready to break the silence? If yes, why? If no, why?

Q. During the 1980s black feminists for example Marlene Bogle called for specialised services for AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women, do you believe this type of service is still required?

Q. Why do you think that there is no longer a call from within the African-Caribbean British community for specialised services for "black" incest/CSA survivors?

Q. Do you still believe that we need specialised services? If yes Why? If no, why not?

Q. Why do you feel that women of African descent tend to write about incest/CSA and sexual violence in a fictional context? (Colour Purple, I know why the caged bird sings, Gwendolen, The Un-belonging and more recently, 26a by Diana Evans)?

Q. Do you believe that the feminist movement did enough to address the invisibility of "black" incest/CSA survivors?

Q. What are your thoughts on the long held beliefs regarding black women's resilience, and strength? Do you believe they still hold true amongst AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women themselves today?

Q. Have you ever thought of writing a follow on book to "XXXXXX XXXXX"?

Q. We are coming to the end of the interview. Do you have anything further to add?

Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me today.

## APPENDIX 4.1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EXPERTS

### Interview Questions for Expert Interviews

Name:

Age:

If working nature of post held:

Q. Do you work in an industry related to VAW? (Optional question)

Q. When did you last attend a conference or event which addressed VAW, incest/CSA in regards to African Caribbean British/ black survivors?

Q. Were you ever a member of a black feminist group?

If yes, what was the impetus for joining?

Q. Do you recall which year you joined the group?

Q. What were the factors that led you to become a Black feminist?

Q. How many members were there in the group?

Q. Was there any reason why you did not join a generic Feminist group?

Q. Did the group ever collaborate with 'white' feminists organisations?

If yes, do you recall on what issues?

If no, what was the reasoning behind black feminists wanting to stay autonomous?

Q. Do you recall which issues the group were active, or campaigned around?

Q. How did the feminist mantra of the '**personal is political**' manifest with BWG's during that period?

Q. Did the subject of child sexual abuse/ SV ever become an issue for black British feminists?

Q. Did you ever hear black women; disclose experiences of CSA or domestic violence openly within the group?

Q. Do you believe that AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH/black survivors experience and deal with CSA differently from other groups?

If yes, how and

Why?

Q. Why do you believe that there is (was) an assumption that CSA/incest is rife with black communities?

Q. How could the societal factors such as racism affect AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH sexual abuse adult survivors in the quest to name and speak the truths of their lives?

Q. What are your thoughts on the long held beliefs regarding black women's resilience, and strength? Do you believe they still hold true amongst AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women themselves today?

Q. Do you believe that the feminist movement did enough to address the invisibility of "black" incest/CSA survivors?

Q. Why do you feel that African women tend to write about incest/CSA and sexual violence in a fictional context? (Colour Purple, I know why the caged bird sings, Gwendolen, The Un-belonging and more recently, 26a by Diana Evans)?

Q. Do you believe that representation is a key factor in why AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women often do not always seek help from generic VAW services like Rape Crisis?

Q. How could we encourage more women to break the silence in regards to SV particularly CSA?

Q. During the 1980s black feminists for example Marlene Bogle, and Melba Wilson called for specialised services for AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women, do you believe this type of service is still required?

Q. Since the activism of Black fems during that period specific services for AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH survivors have dropped off the political agenda. Why do you think that is?

Q. Do you feel that AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women are catered for within existing support service provision?

Q. Do you believe that AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH communities feels that they **belong** in the UK, and therefore there is no longer any need for specific services?

Q. Do you believe that the dynamics of race and gender should be a starting point for any analysis of child / adult survivor maltreatment? If yes why? If no why?

Q. Why do you believe AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH adult survivors are still often reluctant to disclose?

Q. How can we encourage AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH victim- survivors to come forward and break the silence?

Q. What do you believe happened to the black feminist activist voice which existed during the 1970s and 80s? Is there a sense that it is no longer needed?

Thank you for taking part today, is there anything you wish to add before we wrap up?

Thank you again.

## APPENDIX 5: INFORMATION SHEET: SOUR MILK: AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH(AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH) SURVIVOR'S EXPERIENCES OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE

### Information Sheet

This sheet explains the projects aims and what is required of those who choose to take part in the research. Additionally, the sheet will outline how the information given by participants will be used in the future.

If there is any aspect of the study that you are unsure about or feel that you may like to discuss, do not hesitate to contact the researcher. See contact details below.

**PARTICIPANTS CAN WITHDRAW AT ANY STAGE OF THE STUDY, WITHOUT GIVING ANY REASON**

The Study is funded by the London Metropolitan University's Vice Chancellor Studentship Awards.

Researcher: Joanne Wilson

Tel: 0779 504 8672

[wilsonj3@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:wilsonj3@londonmet.ac.uk)

Q. What will the interviews ask about?

The interview will ask you about your experiences of childhood sexual abuse- how you made sense of the act(s), who you told, what role did your culture play in how you coped with your experience. You will not be required to give actual details of any abuse, as the research aim is to explore how it affected your life choices.

Q. What are the interviews for?

- The interviews are primarily aimed at giving a voice to African-Caribbean British(black) survivors of childhood sexual abuse; as their experiences have not been heard to date.
- My long term aim is to use the information gathered (anonymously) to influence future policy and service provision for AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH survivors. Additionally, the information can be used in the future to both understand cultural factors which may assist external agencies in safeguarding the wellbeing of children at risk of harm, and support survivors with any specific cultural needs.
- I am currently studying at London Metropolitan University at the Department of Applied Social Sciences (DASS), based at The Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit (CWASU) conducting this project.

Q. How the information will be gathered

In the event that participants consent to take part in the study, all interviews will be recorded with an audio tape recorder. The researcher will also take notes.

Q. What will happen to the information I give?

All recordings will be typed into transcripts so that there is an accurate and full record of what you said. All recordings, notes and transcripts will be kept safely. All identifiable information for example, names, age, will be removed to ensure confidentiality and keep identities secret. You will asked to choose a

name for the interview. The researcher will use this name in all aspects of the research process, for example for quotes.

Once the information has been processed for the purposes of the research, participants can request to have their own transcripts returned to them.

An executive summary will be made available to all participants' at the end of the research process. Participants' should keep the researcher's contact details, in order to request a copy. The researcher will inform all those who are interested in receiving a copy of the best time to request one.

Q. How long will the interview take?

The interview should take 2-3 hours. The interviews will be conducted at the University or at the Women's Library.

Q. What if I have any concerns, or get upset?

The well-being of all participants' is paramount to this study. If participants are concerned about any aspect of the research process they should feel free to approach the researcher, at any stage, before, during and after the interviews to discuss any concerns or issues that they might have.

To ensure that no participant is harmed or overly upset by the research process, the researcher will explain to the participant throughout the process what they are being asked to comment upon. The researcher will require all participants' to give their consent (in writing/ spoken) in order to continue. The researcher will respect the pace set by the participants'. Interviews can and will be stopped if a participant so requires, either to take a break or if a particular question causes too much distress.

Participants' can withdraw from the study at any stage, and do not have to explain why.

Q. Who should I contact if I have further questions about the interview and its use?

Joanne Wilson c/o CWASU, London Metropolitan University, Ladbroke House, 62-66 Highbury Grove, London, N5 2AD Email: [wilsonj3@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:wilsonj3@londonmet.ac.uk) Tel: 0779 504 8672. *Thank You*

## APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SOUR MILK VICTIM-SURVIVORS

### Outline of study

The aim of the research is to give a voice to women of African-Caribbean British descent who have experienced: any act(s) which involved forcing or enticing them to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they were aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact (penetration/ buggery etc.) and non-contact acts of a sexual nature (non-contact activities, such looking at children, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways).

The research came out of the need add the AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH voice and experiences to already existing knowledge on sexual violence and early experiences of non-consensual sexual assault of children.

It is important to me as a researcher and to the study as a whole, that you feel comfortable and secure during the interview process. Therefore let me stress at this stage that:

- All information is confidentially throughout all stages of the study, and will only be reviewed by myself. Your personal details will not be used in any way which may identify you (will only be used by me in order to contact you and provide transcripts or an executive report at the end of the research process if you so wish).
- Throughout, you are free to stop/ or take a break during the interview at any stage, without explanation in order to safeguard your wellbeing.

The interview will ask you about your experiences and how you made sense of the act(s), who you told, what role did your culture play in how you cope (d) with your experience (s). You will not be required to give actual details of any abuse, as the research aim is to explore how it affected your life choices. There are no wrong or right answers; whatever you tell me is valid and important. Is that okay with you? If yes, let's begin.

Q. Can I just ask why you agreed to take part in this study?

Q. How would you describe your ethnicity?

### Representation/Visibility

Thinking of AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women, which words do you believe are best used to describe them?

Can you list them?

Q. Which of the words you listed do you believe best describes you as a person?

Q. Which word do you believe best describes AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women who have experienced unwanted sexual contact during their childhoods?

- Victim
- Survivor

Why?

Q. Do you believe that AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH/black women can be victims?

Q. Have you ever read a book or seen a film or seen an advertising poster campaign i.e. for a charity showing a black child or woman has a victim of CSA/ sexual violence?

If yes which one, ask to describe.

Which?

- Book
- Film
- Advertising campaign poster

If book or film stated for example The Colour Purple or Precious ask:

Q. Why do you feel that the black community addresses experiences of unwanted sexual contact in a fictional way, as a story or a film?

If not seen or read anything ask:

Q. Why do you feel you haven't seen any?

Q. Can you recall any poster or advertising campaign featuring a black child, woman or man for any large organisation for example: a charity?

If yes which one, ask to describe.

Q. Can you think of any celebrity black or white who has spoken out about their experiences of unwanted sexual contact whilst they were a child?

If yes which ones?

Q. In your opinion why do you believe that AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women are so rarely, depicted as victims of rape or CSA?

At this point I would like to ask some questions about the sexual activities you experienced as a child. Let me stress again at this point that if you feel that it is all getting a little too much then we can **stop, and take a break until you feel more comfortable.**

Is that okay with you?

Introduce CSA section starting now. Check on interviewee's wellbeing

Q. Can you tell me a bit about your childhood?

Q. Would you say it was a traditional AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH upbringing? Could you explain how it was typical of how African, Caribbean parents and raise their children?

Where did you grow up? Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Q. Would you say it was a happy time in your life? Do you recall what was happening in the country/ world around you? Did you enjoy school?

Q. Sexual activity with young children is very common has it ever happened to you?

Q. Do you recall the age you were when it began?

Q. Do you recall roughly the age of the person who sexually assaulted you?

Q. Who was this person to you?

Q. Do you recall how long the sexual activity continued for? Did it happen more than once?

Q. Have you ever told anyone about what you experienced as a child? If yes whom? If no; why not?

Q. Who was the first person you told?

Q. What was their response?

Q. How old were you when you first told that someone?

Q. What factors influenced you to tell someone?

Q. Have you ever told a member of your family? (Optional, depending on answer to previous question)

Q. What was their response? Did you believe that they would respond in that way?

Q. Do you think they could have responded differently? Why do you feel they reacted in this way?

Impact on Self

Q. When did you first realise that you had experienced sexual assault? At what age roughly?

Q. What factors played a part in your understanding of what had happened to you?

Q. How did you think of or view yourself before you could put a name to your early sexual experiences?

Q. How did you make sense of your early experiences of sexual activity?

Q. Do you believe that your culture played a role in how you made sense of your experiences?

Q. Looking back were there any particular ways of being, or thoughts that you would use to make sense of your experiences whilst you were a child?

Q. Do you believe that your early experiences of CSA have affected you in adult life? If yes; could you outline in which ways?

- The way you see and feel about yourself?

Q. Do you believe that your experience(s) of CSA has had any impact on intimate relationships in your life?

How?

Q. Do you believe that your experience(s) of CSA has had any impact on your educational/ career opportunities and choices?

How?

Q. Do you believe that your experience(s) of CSA has had any influence on how you parent or any decisions that you make in regards to children?

How?

Q. Do you believe that your experience(s) of CSA has had any influence on your sexuality?

How?

Q. Which best describes the effect of CSA on your adult life?

- Great effect
- Moderate effect
- Mild effect
- None at all

Q. Is there any other way in which you feel that your early experiences of CSA may have affected or impacted on your life choices/decisions? For example in the ways that you view yourself or may have acted, or in the decisions you made throughout your life? (Use category they chose to explore more)

Q. Can you outline any particular negative ways of being, or decisions that you have made which you feel are directly linked to your experience(s)?

Q. Do you have any adult AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH friends who have similar experiences of sexual activity from their childhood?

If yes how many? Ask:

Q. What type of relationship (is it close?)? Do you offer support to those friends? What type of support?

Check on well-being of interviewee.

At this point we are going to look at attitudes to CSA within the AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH community

Community

Q. How would you describe the AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH community in which you grew up? Was it a close community?

Q. How would you describe the AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH community now? Has it changed in any way?

Q. In your opinion what is the general attitude towards sexual matters within AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH communities? Would you say the community is now more open to addressing sexual matters?

If yes, why? If no, why?

Q. Do you believe that your colour played any part in why you may have been sexually victimised?

Q. Do you believe that your colour, ethnicity or culture played any part in your decision to tell someone about your experiences? If yes why?

Q. Do you believe that colour, ethnicity and culture affects how a person deals with, copes or makes sense of past experiences of CSA/ sexual assault in childhood?

If yes, in what ways?

Q. What do you believe have been the AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH community's attitude towards children (do they have special status as minors)? Are parents tolerant with their children, for example if they make a mistake?

Q. Do you feel that this attitude prevents children from telling?

Q. How do you feel the community views Black woman, what is her role, strengths and weaknesses? Do you agree or disagree with this?

Many have argued that black women survivors of CSA are better able to cope with and are much more resilient/ stronger when dealing with past experiences of CSA.

Q. Would you agree or disagree with this view?

Q. Why do you believe this view exists for AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women?

Q. Do you recall any incidence of CSA being discussed within your home, church or 'community'? How was it spoken about?

Q. What do you believe are the attitudes towards CSA within the AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH community?

Q. Did those attitudes have any influence on you telling someone about your past experiences of CSA?

Q. How could the AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH community address the issue of CSA?

We are now going to look at any experiences of racism that you may have encountered

Society/ Racism

Q. Do you feel that most AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH people feel that they are citizens of this country; that they belong? If yes/ no, how is this shown?

Q. Have you ever experienced any type of abuse regarding your ethnicity/ colour or racial background? Do you recall any incidence(s) as a child?

Q. At what age did you first understand that you were experiencing abuse because of your ethnicity, colour or culture?

Q. How did this did it make you feel?

Q. Where and with who did you **most** feel safe as a child? (Home, school, etc.)

Q. Why was that?

Which best describes the effect that racial abuse had on your life as a child?

- Great effect
- Moderate effect
- Mild effect
- None at all

Q. How do you feel the wider society views Black woman? What do you believe it feels are her strengths and weaknesses? Do you agree or disagree with this?

Q. Do you believe that your experiences of racism have influenced you in any way? For example in regards to trusting or seeking help?

Service Providers

Q. What factors or things might deter you from seeking help, or advising another AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH survivor from seeking assistance from general service providers?

Q. Which types of services do you believe could be most beneficial in helping AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH survivor's cope with, and make sense of their past experiences of CSA?

Q. Do you believe that there should be specific services for AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH survivors of CSA or should it be incorporated within the existing services?

Q. What would those services look like in an ideal world?

Q. Can you name any organisation which offers support services to women who have suffered sexual abuse during their childhood years?

If none known, read aloud the list

Rape Crisis, Women's and Girl's Network, NAPAC

Q. What kind of support do you think these services offer; and to whom?

Q. Have you ever accessed these services? If yes, what were your experiences? If no why not?

Q. Can you name any organisation which offers support services to non- white women?

Q. Can you name any organisation which offers support to AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN BRITISH women who have suffered sexual abuse during their childhood years, or any other form of sexual violence?

If none stated, ask:

Q. Why do you feel that no such service exists?

Inequality

Q. In your view which should take priority in regards to addressing social inequality?

- Race /Ethnicity and Culture

Or

- Gender?

Why?

Q. What is your impression of feminism?

Q. Would you call yourself a feminist? Do you know any black feminists?

Q. Have you ever been a member of a political group, parent group etc. that addresses racial inequality?

Q. If yes, ask which one?

We are now coming to the close of the interview;

Q. Is there anything that you wish to add to or remark on regarding this interview or CSA as a whole?

Thank You for taking part in this study. Your participation is greatly appreciated and valued.

Closing Questions

Age:

Place of birth:

If different from UK:

At what age did you arrive in the UK?

Current residency (city/area) in UK

Educational attainment level:

Qualifications held:

If Degree level establish if:

Q. Straight path from school or as mature student: If mature why the choice to delay straight pathway?

If working, nature of post, and position held:

Dependants: If yes, How many?

Marital Status:

Sexual Orientation

## APPENDIX 7: CONSENT FORM FOR VICTIM-SURVIVOR INTERVIEW

Sour Milk: Experiences of child sexual abuse within African-Caribbean British communities

Name of Researcher: Joanne Wilson

Please initial each of the boxes below:

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study

I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have these answered satisfactorily

I understand that my participation is voluntarily and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason

I agree to anonymised quotations, excerpts being used in reports and other publications

I agree to take part in the study

Name of Participant (Optional)

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature



## APPENDIX 9: REFERRAL DETAILS

## Support Agencies

## National

## Rape Crisis

0808 802 9999

Helpline open daily: 12-2.30 and 7-9.30pm

## National Association of People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)

0800 085 3330

Website: <http://www.napac.org.uk>

## North London

## North London Rape Crisis (NLRC)

Solace Women's Aid: 020 7619 1369

Rape Crisis: 0808 802 9999

## Areas covered:

- Haringey
- Islington
- Camden
- Kensington & Chelsea
- Barnet and Enfield

Solace Email: [rapecrisis@solacewomensaid.org](mailto:rapecrisis@solacewomensaid.org)

South London

Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC)

Croydon: 020 8683 3311

Helpline open every day including weekends and Bank Holidays: 12-2.30pm and 7-9.30pm.

Website: <http://www.rasasc.org.uk>

East London

East London Rape Crisis

020 7683 1210

Mon, Wed, Fri 10am-1pm / Tues, Thurs 1-4pm

Website: <http://www.niaproject.info>

West London

Women and Girls Network (WGN)

020 7610 4345

Mon 10-1pm Tues 6.30-9.30pm Wed 6.30-9.30pm Fri 10-1pm Sat 10-1pm

Website: <http://www.wgn.org.uk>

## APPENDIX 10 : SURVEY

## Rape Crisis Centre Online Survey

My name is Joanne Wilson and I am a Doctoral student with The Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit (CWASU) based at London Metropolitan University. This survey is part of my research to understand how African Caribbean Black British women deal with their experiences of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA).

I wish to understand whether any barriers exist which might prevent female CSA survivors of African Caribbean descent from approaching and accessing Rape Crisis services.

Additionally, the research aims to identify where culturally specific provision exists under the Black Minority Ethnic (BME) or Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) categories, areas of good practice, which have supported the needs of women from these communities.

I realise that you are incredibly busy, and so Thank You in advance for agreeing to take part in this survey, which should take no longer than 15 minutes. Your contribution is most valued, as it will enable a greater insight into any unmet needs which may exist for potential service users from the African-Caribbean British community.

This research has been approved by the London Metropolitan University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any queries or questions about the survey, please contact me on 0207 133 4125/ 0779 504 8672 or by email: [joannewilson@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:joannewilson@londonmet.ac.uk)

You may also contact my supervisor Professor Liz Kelly on [l.kelly@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:l.kelly@londonmet.ac.uk) if you have any concerns about the research.

Top of Form

Top of Form

\*1. Name of 'your' Organisation

\*2. Your role in the organisation

3. Number of years or months worked at organisation

## 4. Geographical location of organisation

## 5. Does your organisation provide support for survivors from more than one geographical area?

- Yes (please go to Q6)
- No

## 6. If yes please state other areas covered

## \*7. What types of service(s) does your organisation provide?

	Yes	No
Telephone Helpline	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Helpline Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Helpline No
Face to Face Counselling	<input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face Counselling Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Face to Face Counselling No
Online/Email support	<input type="checkbox"/> Online/Email support Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Online/Email support No
Group work	<input type="checkbox"/> Group work Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Group work No
Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy No

Other (please specify)

Bottom of Form

Black Minority Ethnic (BME) / Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) service Provision

Top of Form

8. Does 'your' organisation provide specialised services for women under the BME/BAME category?

- Yes (please go to Q9)
- No
- Don't Know

9. Please outline the type of service offered and the length of time it has been operating, in the box below



\*10. Do you believe that African-Caribbean British women are included for under the BME/BAME category?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Other (please specify)

Bottom of Form

Specialised provision for African Caribbean Black British survivors of CSA

Top of Form

\*11. Does the area you serve have an African Caribbean black British community?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

12. Have you made specific efforts to reach African-Caribbean British women?

- Yes (go to question13)

- No
- Don't Know

13. Please briefly outline

\*14. How many African-Caribbean British survivors of CSA were supported by your organisation in the last 12 months?

15. In your opinion are there any additional issues that African-Caribbean British survivors of CSA might encounter?

- Yes (please go to Q16)
- No
- Don't Know

16. Please outline in box below

Specialised Service Provision: Barriers and Possibilities

Top of Form

17. Are there any barriers that might prevent African-Caribbean British survivors of CSA from accessing your services?

Please outline in box below

- Yes (go to question 18)
- No
- Don't know

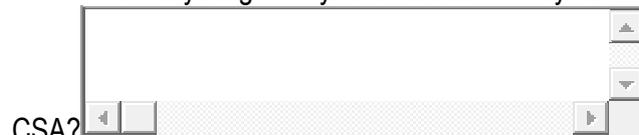
18. Please outline in box below



\*19. How might Rape Crisis Centres better meet the needs of African-Caribbean British women?  
(please outline in box below)



20. Is there anything else you would like to say about supporting African-Caribbean British survivors of



CSA?  
survey

Thank You for taking the time to complete this

## APPENDIX 11: EXAMPLE OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

Spare Rib Publications 1980-1995														
Issue	Year	Month	Title	Child Maltreatment	CSA	Rape	Domestic Violence	Colour	Racism	Ethnicity	Where in Journal	Location	Context	pp
90	1980	January	Dangerous Contraceptives are Big Business			Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Newshorts		Immigration/ Police racism	15
											Short List		Health Course	30
											Short List		Papers used for conference	30
91	1980	February	Nuclear Power gets under your skin						Yes	Yes	Letters		TV Racism- Review	5
											Looking beyond the Veil		Review by Nina Kapoor	21
											Letters		Complaint re: R4 comment	25
											Short List		Black Women and the Law/ Conference	28
											Short List		International Women's Day/ Campaigns	28
92	1980	March	Roots of Liberation- What's it like in a consciousness raising group			Yes			Yes	Yes	Classified		NW London feminist discussion group	37
											Fighting Inhibitions		Review: Two readers write	49
92	1980	March	Roots of Liberation- What's it like in a consciousness raising group						Yes	Yes	Features		Passage from Nawal Saadawi's book: "The hidden Face of Eve", on Clitorridectomy	6
											Spare Rib: Afterword		Supporting women who have undergone practice	9
											Newshorts		In support of "96 Asian women workers at Chix factory"	19
											Newshorts		Case Study: "Seeing sex as a rape"	20
											Newshorts		Case of Lori Johnston who was sued by her rapist	20
93	1980	April	Women set the heather alight			Yes			Yes	Yes	Classified		Opening of Manchester Rape Crisis Line	37
											Events		Second National Black Women's conference: March by OWAAD	
94	1980	May	Working with Girls		No	Yes	Yes			Yes	Features	Third to last page	Off the Boat: Irish Women talk about life in England	52
											Newshorts	Seven pages from front	Italy: a woman's law on rape	9
95	1980	June	Oil Rigs, Violence & Women in Revolt	Yes (Genital Mutilation)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Newshorts (GM)	Sixteen pages from front	Infibulation: Breaking the Silence	17
											Features (DV)	Four pages from back	Battered Women: In defence of Self defence	52
											Newshorts	Seventeen pages from front	It's just my colour	18
											Features	Seven pages from rear	Black Women Fighting Back	49
											Newshorts	Thirteen pages from front	Breaking Out in Ireland	15
96	1980	July	Older Women living together-independent yet not alone	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Reviews (Books)	Ten pages from rear	Violence Against Wives	45
											Newshorts	Six pages from front	Abortion Victory in Queensland	9
											Newshorts	Twelve pages from front	French Feminist Protest about Afghanistan	13
											Newshorts	Thirteen pages from front	300 women march to protest against rape	14

												Features	Fifteen pages from front. Two page article	A Heroin from Haiti	16-17
97	1980	August	Summer Reading Special: stories and poems to set you afloat	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes		Letters	Three pages from front	Ireland a People's Struggle	4
													Three pages from front	IRA: sexist and Nationalist	4
													Three pages from front	Rape as Fun	4
												Newshorts	Twenty pages from front (Full page article)	South Africa's Women's Day	21
98	1980	September	Why High Heels Hurt	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes		Features	Eight pages from front. (Four page article)	Interview: Leila Khaled (United Nations Notices Women)	11
													Twelve pages from front. (One and a half page article)	Interview: Domitila (United Nations Notices Women)	15
													Thirteen pages from front. (One and a half pages)	interview: Natalia (United Nations Notices Women)	16 (cont'd on p.39)
99	1980	November	Women & College Life	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes		Features	Twenty-six pages from front (Three page article)	Women in Northern Ireland: three different views, from women living there	31-34
												Newshorts	Eight pages from front	Work Permit Plight	9
													Nine pages from front	Iraq: we must shed light	10
														Mexico: feminist front	10
														India: girls die first	10
														Brazilian state of Minas Gerais: women start women's defence centre after two are killed by possessive husbands	10
100	1980	November	Talking to women from 10 to 100	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes		Features	Forty-one pages from front (One and a half page article)	The Pandemonium: A young Asian woman's experience of racist attacks	42
													Forty-three pages from front (Three page article)	Third World Development Policies: how they oppress women	45
101	1980	December	Look Back in Agony	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		Features	Twenty-one pages from front. (Three and a half page article)	What me? White women and racism	24
												Features	Thirty-one pages from front. (One full page)	Anwar Ditta: Battling to bring her children over	33
												Newshorts	Eight pages from front.	Women's Building Bombed	9
Issue Numbr	Year	Month	Title	Child Maltreatment	CSA	Rape	Domestic Violence	Colour	Racism	Ethnicity	Where in Journal	Location	Context	Page(s)	
102	1981	January	Bristol centring on women: socialist feminists meet on imperialism	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Newshorts	Ten pages from front. (One page article)	Men off the Streets: Women in Leeds protest Against Violence Against Women	11	

												Eight pages from front. (One page article)	Irish women Stand up!	9
											Features	Twenty-one pages from front. (Four page article)	What's Imperialism got to do with me? The need for an anti-imperialist framework	23
												Fifty pages from front.	Women in Bolivia	52
103	1981	February	Women Against Violence Against Women	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Features	Four pages from front. (Four page article)	Providence and Prostitution: Image and Reality for women in Buddhist Thailand	5
												Twenty-one pages from front. (Two page article)	Women Against Violence Against Women	26
											Letters	Nineteen pages from front.	Racism	22
104	1981	March	Sex with men-having it our way	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Features	Eighteen pages from front.	Rape, Age of Consent, Indecent Assault	23
												Twenty-six pages from front. (one page article)	Conspiracy & Corruption: Pedophiles in Court	31
											Letters	Four pages from front.	Racism Replies	5
											Features	Twenty-eight pages from front. (two page article)	A Russian Marriage	33
											Features	Eight pages from back cover. (One page article)	Jiang Qing's Trial-what's it all about?	49
											Newshorts	Eight pages from front cover.	I'm an attitude problem: Racism, mental health and the prison system.	9
													Don't ask a policeman: the death of twelve black teenagers in a fire in Deptford	9
105	1981	April	Linda Marchiano Now: Linda Lovelace Then: Battered, Beaten, Raped	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Features	Thirty-two pages from front. (One and a half page article)	How to be British: the new nationality Bill: (Nationality Bill- discrimination on and between the lines)	39
											Newshorts	Nine pages from front.	Boycott rape fashions: 'Victims against rape' conference at Teeside Polytechnic	10
												Nine pages from front.	Rape Report: Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre publishes first report	10
												Twelve pages from front (Full page article)	European parliament hold debate on Women. Piece on Tatiana Mamonova; Soviet Feminist	13
												Thirteen pages from front. (Two slim columns)	Action on Jobs, on on racism	14
											Features	Twenty-six pages from front. (Three page article)	Victory was like a dream for us ( Downfall of Somoza dynasty /US imperialism in Nicaragua)	33
106	1981	May	Sexual Abuse of children	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Features	Five pages from the front. (Three full page article; cont'd on p.31)	Sexual Abuse of Children	p.6-7 & 31
											Features	Eight pages from front cover.	Women's Lives in El Salvador: An interview with Miriam Galdemez	9

## APPENDIX 12: THEMATIC STRUCTURE FOR EXPERTS

Theme1: What happened to the activism on CSA by black feminists in the UK during the late 70s-to mid-1980s	Age, Ethnicity	Quotes	Elements, Dimensions	Concepts	Comments, Interpretations
EID1, African American 60 years					
EID2, African Caribbean British 50+ years					
EID3 West African British Age: 53					
EID4 African Caribbean British Age: 56 years					
EID5 African Caribbean British / Dual Heritage Age: 60 years					

## APPENDIX 13: EXAMPLE OF THEMED EXPERTS PAGE FROM ORIGINAL ANALYSIS IN APPENDIX 12

CSA, Sexuality, Activism : 'Enduring Silence' Theme 1	Quotes	Elements/ dimensions	Comments/ interpretation	Concepts
EID1				
EID2				
EID3				
EID4				
EID5				

## APPENDIX 14: EXAMPLE OF THEMED EXPERTS PAGE FROM ORIGINAL ANALYSIS

The Struggle: Race over Gender Section 2	Quotes	Elements/ dimensions	Comments/interpretation	Concepts
EID				

APPENDIX 15: VICTIM-SURVIVOR EMERGENT CONCEPT THEMATIC STRUCTURE

Words to describe Black women	Strong	Others	Words outlined which they identified with themselves	Notes							
Sar	√	Powerful	Strong	But feels more complicated because she is dual heritage							
Bianca	√	Love, reliable	Strong, reliable, love, smart	Began to add smart to her list for black women but refrained adding that black women are not smart. She did define herself as smart.							
Maria	X	N/A	Refused	Refused to define herself or women within prescribed labels. She is just "me".							
Ciara	√	Independent	Independent								
Porsha	√	Powerful, bossy	Strong	It is cultural. She was raised to handle things.							
Angel	√	Gifted, bossy, taken for granted	Taken for granted	Black men take black women for granted. We are always there for them but they don't act the same.							
Sharon	X	N/A	N/A	Just spoke at length about her abuse.							

